

REALTORS® & Smart Growth

# on common ground

WINTER 2011

## Placemaking and Economic Development

**Celebrating the Local**

**Building on a Small Town's Strengths**

**Food Markets**

**Attracting Talented Workers**



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION of  
REALTORS®



Reading Terminal Market

# A New Path to Economic Development

There was a time when the term “economic development,” as used by most public officials and business leaders, referred to the practice of luring firms and jobs to a jurisdiction by selling companies on the benefits of that community — such as favorable tax rates — and providing monetary incentives to locate there. Now, communities increasingly are realizing that the quality of the places within the community are playing a larger role in today’s economic decisions.

It may be surprising, in an age when much work can be done through a fast internet connection, that location and place seem to be more important than ever. But, in fact, many communities understand that in a world where a job can be located anywhere, people need to have a good reason to choose their city or town.

English consultant and writer Charles Landry stresses the economic importance of place, especially of commercial streets that provide a compelling experience and bring people together. He makes the case that places need “distinction” — emphasizing what is unique about them; “variety” — of people, businesses, culture, buildings; and “flow,” the ability of people to choose their own walking paths at their own pace. Landry makes a direct link between these physical manifestations of place and attracting talent and business.

In this issue of *On Common Ground*, we consider the role placemaking plays in economic development today. From celebrating the uniqueness of a place to bringing amenities such as food markets to make more complete walkable neighborhoods, placemaking is becoming a leading economic development strategy.

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# On Common Ground

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Photo provided by Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau

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# Placemaking



Placemaking is the best way to generate lasting prosperity at a time when technology gives people and companies greater freedom to work and do business wherever they please.

## A Community's Appeal Drives Economic Prosperity

By Brad Broberg

Is a city appealing because it's prosperous or is it prosperous because it's appealing?

That may sound like a chicken-or-egg question, but in this case, there's a right answer — or at least a growing awareness that creating vibrant public spaces is a winning economic strategy.

As a report by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) points out, place has always mattered. The first cities, after all, emerged because people gathered at crossroads, creating lively hubs to exchange goods and ideas.

The basic premise holds true today. Cities need appealing places — parks, plazas, main streets, markets — where people can interact. Provide them, and prosperity — in the form of jobs — will follow.

"This is what businesses seek," states the PPS report. "They want places that are attractive to employees, places where connections can happen, where productivity and creativity increase and where the professional networks foster collaboration and innovation."

The report, "Putting Our Jobs Back in Place," argues that placemaking is the best way to generate lasting prosperity at a time when technology gives people and companies greater freedom to work and do business wherever they please.

"There's a realization ... that capital and people can go where they like more than ever before," says Ethan Kent, a vice president with PPS, a nonprofit organization based in New York that helps cities create public spaces. "For that reason, place matters more than ever."

## Placemaking is a go-to strategy for driving prosperity — and smart growth.

That's made placemaking a go-to strategy for driving prosperity — and smart growth.

A place that attracts people will also attract development. And that gives cities an opportunity to exercise smart growth principles such as density, walkability, mixed-use, access to transit and green design/construction as additional development occurs. "We think placemaking is often the best way of accomplishing smart growth," Kent says.

The redevelopment of Campus Martius Park in downtown Detroit showcases how placemaking, smart growth and economic development can go hand-in-hand.

"Right from the start, Campus Martius was meant to be a new place for economic development in the heart of downtown anchored by a major public space," says Robert Gregory, president of the nonprofit organization overseeing the park and one of the people who led the effort to build it.

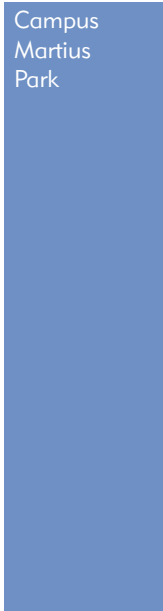


Mission accomplished. "It's exceeded expectations," Gregory says. "We get calls from places all over the country that want to repeat what we've done."

What Detroit did — with help from PPS — was turn a tangled intersection into a 2.5-acre park that draws 2 million visitors a year and won an urban open space award from the Urban Land Institute. But that's not all. Since opening in 2004, the \$20-million park has triggered an estimated \$700 million of adjacent development — including a new headquarters for business software maker Compuware Corp.

Compuware's desire to move its headquarters from the suburbs to a more central location paralleled the city's interest in building Campus Martius Park, which enabled the two projects to proceed as one. "The fact that they were planned together made a big difference," Gregory says. "It created a critical mass of momentum."

More than 2,200 Compuware employees work in the high-rise that is 1.2 million square feet. They were joined this summer by 1,700 employees of Quicken Loans, which moved its headquarters from the suburbs and now leases four of the tower's 16 floors. Coming to an adjacent building over the next few years: 500 employees of GalaxE.Solutions, a New Jersey-based business software maker that's expanding to Detroit.



## Placemaking is an emerging economic development strategy.



All of that adds up to a shot in the arm for an ailing community. “Detroit is a very hurting city, but right around the park there’s been an infusion of restaurants and small shops,” says Bill McGraw, director of media relations at Compuware. “The park has helped create a sophisticated urban feeling.”

Slowly but surely, it’s also creating a neighborhood where people don’t just work, but want to live as empty retail and office buildings are being converted to housing. “So far, we’ve had 15 or 20 employees move into the city ... and we have a ton of other people looking into it,” says David Carroll, vice president at Quicken.

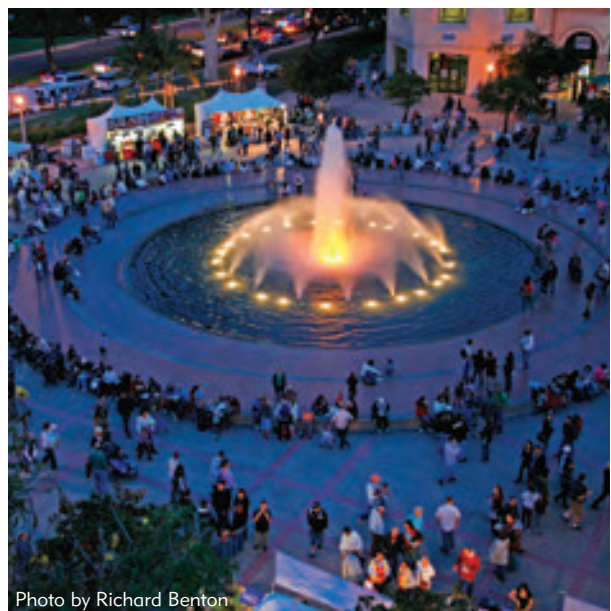
The pairing of the Compuware building with Campus Martius Park is a case of one plus one equaling three, Carroll says. “The building is great. The park is great. We really looked at it as a package deal.”

Campus Martius Park offers many placemaking lessons. The most important: give people lots to do throughout the day, week and year. Besides providing benches and tables for people to hang out, Campus Martius Park hosts music, movies and other events plus a cafe. In the winter, people flock to an ice skating rink.

“Eighty percent of the success of a public space is how it’s managed,” says Kent. “Focus on what people are going to do there, then support that with the design. If design leads, you’re limited. That’s where some of these (projects) have gone wrong.”

A century ago, before it was carved up and covered by roads, Campus Martius was considered the heart of the city, a green gathering space in the middle of town. And so it is again. “Most every city has an area like Campus Martius that could become a great public space,” Gregory says.

While placemaking is not new, doing it “on purpose” is an emerging economic development strategy. “We know we’re not reinventing the wheel,” says Karin Sommer, project manager for Placemaking Chicago. “In some communities, (placemaking) happens organically, but in others, it needs a little help.”





Bike to Work Week in the Polish Triangle in Chicago, Ill.



Placemaking Chicago is a collaboration between the Metropolitan Planning Council and the PPS. Its mission: promote grassroots placemaking through outreach, education, collaboration and advocacy.

Many of the projects supported by Placemaking Chicago are modest compared to Campus Martius, but the hope is they will blossom into something bigger. “One of the ideas of placemaking is to start with the petunias — start with something small and generate energy,” Sommer said.

Placemaking Chicago recently helped local residents develop a plan to turn an unappealing plaza above an underground train station into a welcoming entry to their urban neighborhood. While thousands of people pass through the quarter-acre plaza — a.k.a. the Polish Triangle — every day to catch the train or hop on a bus, they rarely tarry as the plaza offers few reasons — a fountain, metal benches and some trees — to linger.

“It’s not a great place right now, but we came up with a realistic plan based on what residents said they would like to see in that space,” Sommer says.

The plan is being acted on in bits and pieces, but one goal is to boost nearby retail by making the plaza a better place to visit through improved lighting, more attractive landscaping and ongoing activities such as art fairs and musical performances.

One of the ideas of placemaking is to start with something small and generate energy.

Oakland County Economic Development in Michigan takes a micro and a macro approach to placemaking, assisting specific communities with specific projects like downtown revitalization while also branding the county and its distinct geographic environs with place-based identities. “If we don’t establish Oakland County as a place people want to be, all the local stuff we do won’t matter,” says Doug Smith, deputy county executive.

In the late 1990s, Oakland County began billing itself as Automation Alley to reflect the deep pool of high-tech manufacturing talent within the auto industry. More recently, it launched a Medical Main Street initiative to spotlight the growth of the health care industry in the area — fueled over the years by the generous medical benefits of auto workers.

DestinationOakland.com highlights seven place-based environs within the county ranging from Natural Rivers to World Crossroads — each with unique social, natural and economic qualities that appeal to different people. “We use



Downtown placemaking initiative in Owensboro, Ky.

Owensboro employers will be better able to compete with employers in larger cities for talent, thanks to placemaking.

that all the time in economic development,” Smith says. “With some small high-tech companies, the trail system is sometimes more important than the taxes.”

Authenticity is the key. “How you brand is critical, but branding has to have reality behind it,” Smith says. “You have to take a critical look at your geography and resources and understand what your place-based assets are.”

That’s what Owensboro, Ky., is doing. “Owensboro is a river town that had really lost touch with its connection to the river and its understanding of how downtowns are important to the quality of life,” says Fred Reeves, executive director for the downtown development authority.

Working with Gateway Planning Group out of Fort Worth, Texas, Owensboro launched a downtown placemaking initiative. The plan: restore a 4-acre park on the Ohio River that had been gnawed in half by erosion; create a plaza connecting the park to the downtown; establish a regional farmer’s market in the plaza; build a new convention center; and convert a federal highway that bisected downtown into a local street.

“Every one of those pieces is in some stage of moving forward,” says Reeves. One of the expected benefits: Owensboro employers will be better able to compete with employers in larger cities for talent, thanks to placemaking.

“We will have the most beautiful destination park on the Ohio River ... and when employers bring job candidates in, they’re going to see a really neat downtown, and they’re going to like it,” Reeves said. ●

Brad Broberg is a Seattle-based freelance writer specializing in business and development issues. His work appears regularly in the Puget Sound Business Journal and the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce.



Photo courtesy of South Side Local Development Company



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



# REALTORS® Fund Placemaking Study

Placemaking makes sense, but a study by the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute will explore whether it makes dollars. Supported by a \$75,000 grant from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the study will look at how key placemaking outcomes influence home values in three Michigan cities.

The specific cities and data involved still were being worked out at press time, but qualities of place likely to be considered include walkability, mix of uses, population density and access to transit, said Mary Beth Graebert, program development manager at the institute. Look for results sometime next year.

Gilbert White, a Lansing, Mich., REALTOR®, is the past executive in residence at the land institute and leads the advisory committee for the placemaking study. Although he looks forward to seeing the results of the study, he believes the market already has rendered its verdict on how placemaking can create value. “If you look at residential prices in urbanized areas with transportation options, they’ve held up much better,” White says.

After 70 years of auto-oriented sprawl development, people are hungry for something different, says White. “There’s a huge supply-and-demand imbalance in the market,” he says.

That’s why REALTORS® need to understand the power of placemaking, says White. “I’m sure a lot of REALTORS® are suffering in this economy and part of that is because they’re still trying to sell the same old same old,” he says. “Wouldn’t you rather have a contract to sell (homes) in a mixed-use building than an auto-dependent suburb?” ●



Above: Campus Martius Park



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith

# Building on Small Towns’ Heart & Soul

By G.M. Filisko

After the residents of Damariscotta, Maine, blocked development of an 187,000-square-foot Walmart in 2006, the town with roughly 2,000 year-round residents was left battered and divided. It also faced a “What now?” dilemma.

“Our local government is run by selectmen in a very New England form of government,” explains Mary Kate Reny, whose husband’s family has owned a department store, R.H. Reny Inc., in Damariscotta for more than 60 years. “If they get paid, it’s a pittance. These guys had the wherewithal to say, ‘We don’t have the ability to deal with these huge issues.’ They wanted to do better next time.”

Thus the Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee, known as DPAC, was born. Residents and business owners from Damariscotta and neighboring communities united to wrestle with the question of how small communities such as theirs can encourage development while retaining the qualities their residents cherish.



Residents and business owners united to wrestle with the question of how small communities can encourage development while retaining the qualities residents cherish.

## Damariscotta, Maine

Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation



The (development) planning uses storytelling for people to be involved in a process they've never been involved in before.

With guidance from the Orton Family Foundation's Heart & Soul Community Planning Program, Damariscotta asked its residents to tell tales about their hometown. "The planning uses storytelling as a different kind of entry point for people to be involved in a process they've never been involved in before," says Betsy Rosenbluth, director of northeast projects at the Middlebury, Vt., foundation. "Not a lot of people get excited about a planning department hearing. But they can get excited about storytelling to share their reflections of why they live where they do, what about their community is important to them, and their aspirations for it."

What's emerging in Damariscotta is a community consensus on the future of development in the picturesque town just 12 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Residents in four other small communities — Golden, Colo.; Victor,

Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation



Idaho; Biddeford, Maine; and Starksboro, Vt. — have been doing the same soul-searching, though Starksboro residents are storytelling through art, not words.

"The problem for small towns is becoming Anywhere USA," says Rosenbluth. "How does a community change while still holding onto its heart and soul, or its unique community identity? Rather than be run over by or reactive to development, communities are trying to come together to decide what they want to be. Instead of saying no to a particular development, they're determining what they're saying yes to."

### **If not Walmart, then what?**

Though it might look different from small towns in Montana or New Mexico, Damariscotta's development experience is typical of speck-on-a-map towns throughout the country.

"Damariscotta is a service center for this area and the peninsula," says Reny. "But land use has been developed by centralized villages, sort of like pearls on a string along the coast." So when Walmart announced plans to build a supercenter on the outskirts of town, most casual observers would have bet on the megaretailer. That would have been an unwise bet.

“Two women created a local group and rallied to get a 35,000-square-foot retail size cap in Damariscotta and three nearby villages before Walmart could deliver its proposal,” says Reny. “We were successful because while our residents love their local commerce, they could also shop at Walmart somewhere else — and the Walmart would have put a lot of people out of business.”

The fight left divisions within Damariscotta, especially among those who want to influence local development and those who want no development at all, says Robin Mayer, a DPAC member. Mayer and her husband retired to Damariscotta from Maryland’s eastern shore just after the Walmart war ended but tracked the fight from afar through the Damariscotta newspaper. “There will always be a segment of the population anywhere that’s averse to change,” says Mayer. “Now we’re trying to convince those last holdouts that because change will happen, we want it to be by choice, not by chance.”

DPAC turned to Heart & Soul for guidance. “We knew there was a large development called Piper’s Point coming to Damariscotta,” says Reny. “That, combined with the lack of expertise in how to handle this in a collaborative way, is why DPAC applied for the Heart & Soul grant.”

### Identifying values through storytelling

Heart & Soul is in its infancy, with the first five towns still working through place-based community planning, which seeks to identify what makes a place unique and shape development in a way that honors those features.

Towns are chosen through a competitive application process. “We invite communities that have a willingness to experiment with new tools and methods; to really involve voices, businesses and residents who haven’t been involved in traditional planning processes and that are committed to not only partner with us, but with their community members,” says Rosenbluth.

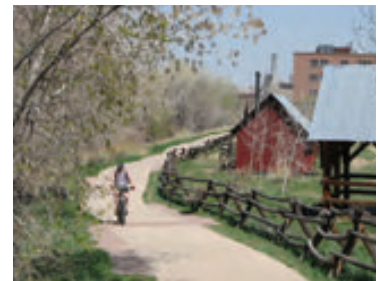
Heart & Soul also seeks communities on the cusp of showing progress by taking action to enhance the heart and soul of their community, says Rosenbluth. That action could be the creation of new codes or zoning plans or a downtown master or transportation plan — even



Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation

Heart & Soul seeks to identify what makes a place unique and shape development in a way that honors those features.

Right: Golden, Co.  
Below Right:  
Damariscotta,  
Maine



Photos provided by the Orton Family Foundation

a trail system or sidewalks. The foundation provides technical assistance and funding, but it requires towns to match. “Sometimes the match is through cash from the town or raised from other sources,” says Rosenbluth. “But much of it is through in-kind staff time.”

The key to Heart & Soul is storytelling. “There are two major threads for gathering and sharing stories,” says Rosenbluth. “One thread is one-to-one interviews. In Damariscotta, we trained residents to interview their neighbors and capture them on video. We then had a pot-luck supper for residents to see the stories and use them as feeds for other stories. The second thread that’s been very successful is story circles. Residents come together in small groups, share stories and talk about the themes from those stories. It’s a starting point for dialogue about what’s important and what people want to hold onto.”

Josephine Power, who with her husband has acted as a caretaker at a farm in Biddeford since 2008, never thought she’d get involved in community planning. Yet she volunteered to help videotape residents’ stories and has been energized by the experience.

“I moved a lot as an adult and never really felt rooted,” says Power. “But I really enjoyed gathering the stories, and I really feel rooted to the Biddeford community. I’ve learned how master plans have traditionally been done and how they can be done. I’ve also learned that it’s a lot of work to get people in a community the size of Biddeford, with 22,000 people, involved. Biddeford is divided into different areas — the downtown, the oceanfront area with both wealthy families and fishermen, the University of New England area, the area with strip malls, and a rural farming community. We’ve begun the process of connecting those groups. There’s a long way to go, but the program has at least begun.”

Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation



Above: Damariscotta, Maine. Right: Biddeford, Maine.

Story circles are a starting point for dialogue about what’s important and what people want to hold onto.

Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation





Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation

Storytelling at Pierre's Playhouse in Victor, Idaho.

It was story circles that helped bridge gaps among the roughly 1,100 residents of Victor. “Victor is a small town on the other side of the Teton Pass from Jackson, Wyo.,” explains Rosenbluth. “Jackson has had tremendous development pressure, and Victor was starting to feel it. But residents hadn’t really come together, especially some of the old timers — traditionally Mormon families who’ve lived on ranches for a long time — and the newcomers. The divide was pretty intense.”

Through storytelling, residents learned that old-timers and newcomers shared values and appreciated the same things about Victor. “Storytelling was a way to identify the town’s values and issues, but one of the strongest benefits is building relationships and bridging divides so a community is more ready to talk about an agreed-on vision for the future,” says Rosenbluth. “Not everybody will agree, but bringing back a civil dialogue and agreeing on actions you can take is very important.”

In fact, after many residents’ stories fondly recalled a shuttered downtown theater, Pierre’s Playhouse, the owners reopened it. “Now they’re having plays and community events,” says Rosenbluth. “It was an exciting step for Victor’s main street.”

One of the strongest benefits of storytelling is building relationships and bridging divides so a community is more ready to talk about an agreed-on vision for the future.



Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation

The whole idea of the Heart & Soul process is to build consensus about what the town wants to see happen in the future.

### Developers' role in Heart & Soul

Where do developers fit into the Heart & Soul program? Admittedly, gathering stories and identifying values takes time, which draws out development timelines.

"It's a long process to try to build consensus in the town," says Rob Nelson, a former DPAC member and president of Ecological Development LLC in Newcastle, which neighbors Damariscotta. "The whole idea of the Heart & Soul process is to build consensus about what the town wants to see happen in the future. If that's successful, it makes development easier. If you're proposing something that doesn't meet that vision at all, you're in trouble. But if the town's vision is articulated, at least in principle, it can make things a lot easier. You can say, 'This is what we've heard townspeople say. Here's what I'm proposing, and it fits that vision in these ways.'"

In fact, Nelson is now adopting the Damariscotta model in Newcastle. "As we try to engage the public and build consensus," says the chair of the land-use ordinance review committee in Newcastle, "the fact that this process took place in Damariscotta with participation of some people in Newcastle will give us a leg up in developing consensus on the issues we face."

Though Heart & Soul communities haven't yet finished their planning, residents are confident they're on their way. "We've done the community conversations, the storytelling and exercises in what we love — which includes Reny's, downtown and the gorgeous river," says Reny. "Now we're deciding what that means when we're talking about new development. Place-based planning is messy and hard to quantify. We're still not sure how the implementation part is going to play out. But I'm pleased about where this is going. Orton also doesn't know where the implementation will end up, but it's letting places be who they are." ●

G.M. Filisko is an attorney and freelance writer who writes frequently on real estate, business and legal issues. Ms. Filisko served as an editor at NAR's REALTOR® Magazine for 10 years.



Top: A video crew interviews a local resident about Golden, Colo.

Below: Children participate in local treeplanting in Victor, Idaho.

Photos provided by the Orton Family Foundation





Photo provided by Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau

Farmer's Market in Little Rock, Ark.

# Markets Make It the Right Place to Live

Public Food Markets Enhance  
the Quality of Life in a Community

By John Van Gieson

Early in the country's history, Americans bought much of the food they didn't grow themselves from local farmers at public markets that were a focal point of their communities. Many of those markets faded away in the last century, but now public markets are roaring back.

Public market advocates say that Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in a room he rented overlooking a public market in Philadelphia. Could it be that Jefferson's stirring call for American independence was inspired in some way by the sound of farmers and their customers haggling over the price of cabbage and tomatoes? It's an intriguing possibility.

Over the years, outdoor markets evolved into ornate market halls in many cities, but most of the public markets disappeared, due largely to advances in refrigeration and transportation that allowed supermarkets to sell year-round food produced in distant places. Strawberries out of season in Philadelphia? No problem. We'll get them from farmers in Florida, California or Chile.

Public markets are undergoing a huge revival all over the country. More than ever, savvy American consumers want to buy their fruit, vegetables and other food stuffs, much of it produced organically, from local farmers at local markets.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported earlier this year that there are 6,132 public markets across the country — a 16 percent increase in just one year. The New York-based Project for Public Places (PPS), reported that the number of open-air farmers markets increased from 1,700 to more than 5,000 in just 15 years. PPS assists and advises governments and groups interested in developing public markets all over the world.

"Public markets are not just places of commerce," PPS said in an article on its website, [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org). "Successful markets help grow and connect urban and rural economies. They encourage development, enhance real estate values and the tax base, and keep money in the local neighborhood. Public markets also offer low-risk business opportunities for vendors and feed money back into the rural economy where many vendors grow, raise and produce their products."



Another benefit is the way markets bring people from different backgrounds together, allowing them to mix and mingle comfortably, PPS said.

“A lot of people find one of the great amenities in a neighborhood is having a market in the neighborhood that you can walk or bike to,” said PPS consultant David O’Neil, former manager of the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia. “Markets are very social. People tend to go to the market with other people.”

Public markets operate from one to seven days a week. Many are seasonal, especially in colder cities, but some operate year-round. The number of farmers who sell their produce at the markets can range from a handful to more than 100. Attendance ranges from a few thousand to the 200,000 pedestrians who crowd the area around the Union Square Greenmarket in Lower Manhattan on summer Saturdays.

The vast majority of the markets operating today are open-air farmers markets where local farmers sell their produce from stalls or booths. About 100 of the grand old market halls that once dominated the urban food-scape have been preserved and restored. At least one of them, Pike Place Market in Seattle, is a must-see tourist attraction where fishmongers delight visitors by hurling hefty salmon over the counters.

The Union Square Greenmarket in a popular New York park located just north of Greenwich Village is probably the best known farmers market in the country. The Union Square market is one of 51 greenmarkets operated by GrowNYC in all five of the city’s boroughs,

assuring New Yorkers that fresh local produce is readily available no matter where they live.

Union Square Greenmarket is open four days a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, attracting farmers from up to 250 miles away. Greenmarket advocates said the two-acre market has resulted in the preservation of 30,000 acres of farmland in the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania area.

“We have a producer-only market, meaning we’re an opportunity for small family farms,” said Jeanne Hodesh, publicity and special events coordinator for Greenmarket. “Our mission is twofold: to generate a steady source of produce to the New York City market and to provide steady sources of income to small family farmers.”

Once rundown, squalid and populated by drug dealers, Union Square Park has been revitalized since the Greenmarket opened in 1976 and the neighborhood now ranks as one of New York’s hottest retail areas, even in the midst of the national recession.

“The Greenmarket has been a huge part of the reason why the neighborhood has fared as well as it did during the economic downturn in the last couple years,” Jennifer E. Falk, executive director of the Union Square Partnership, told the New York Times.

The Union Square Greenmarket boasts an extra added attraction that few other farmers markets can match — top New York chefs or their “foragers” come to the market first thing in the morning to buy produce for their restaurants. Hodesh said they use specially designed bicycles and carts to haul the produce back to their restaurants.

The Greenmarket has been a huge part of the reason why the neighborhood has fared as well as it did during the economic downturn in the last couple years.



Union Square Greenmarket in New York City



Reading Terminal Market  
in Philadelphia, Pa.

Photos provided by the  
Reading Terminal Market



Once a quarter, she said, Greenmarket sponsors a “Tours and Tastes” event where a chef leads groups of 15 to 20 people through the market, encourages the farmers to talk about their crops and takes the group back to his or her restaurant to whip up a gourmet meal featuring produce purchased at the market.

The Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia is a farmers market located in a 78,000-square-foot market hall built in 1892. The building was owned by the defunct Reading Railroad, which operated a train station on the second floor above the market.

General Manager Paul Steinke said the Reading Terminal Market attracts about 115,000 visitors a week, about 5.7 million a year. “We’re very careful to try not to cater too heavily to tourists,” he said. “We don’t have any souvenir stands. We don’t have any chains or franchises at all. It’s all locally owned businesses.”

The market is open seven days a week year-round, flying in produce from California, Florida and South America in the winter, Steinke said.

The Reading Terminal Market attracts about 115,000 visitors a week, about 5.7 million a year.

In 1980, after the railroad folded, the market was down to 20 vendors and was close to collapse. A couple of managers from the Reading Co., the real estate company that succeeded the railroad, drove out to Pennsylvania Dutch country west of Philadelphia, and invited about a dozen Amish farmers to sell their goods at the market. The Amish farmers revived public interest in the market, and the Reading Co. invested heavily in restoring it. Thirty years later, 13 Amish farmers are among the 78 vendors who sell their goods at the market.

Pike Place Market, the sprawling market district on the edge of downtown Seattle, also has a no chains policy, but with one notable exception: The first Starbucks, dating to 1971, is located in the market.

Pike Place is a market behemoth, comprised of 23 buildings spread out over nine acres. Eight buildings have residential components, mostly apartments for low-income seniors.



Photo provided by the Reading Terminal Market

The market was targeted for demolition in the 1960s by politically connected developers who wanted to build a hotel, apartments, four office buildings, a hockey arena and a parking garage on the site. Market lovers rose up in opposition and passed a 1971 initiative preserving the market and creating The Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority to run it.

About 100 farmers rent tables by the day with 40 more setting up outside on “Farm Days on the Cobblestones” during summer Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Pike Place is much more than a farmers market, however. The district is also home to more than 200 year-round commercial businesses, 190 craftspeople, 70 restaurants, four fish markets and 240 street performers and musicians.



Charlie Schuck for the Pike Place Market PDA



Charlie Schuck for the Pike Place Market PDA

visitors and generated \$100 million in sales. The Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau advises on its website that “No trip to Seattle is complete without a trip to Pike Place . . .”

PPS’ O’Neil said the River Market, a few blocks from Bill Clinton’s Presidential Library in Little Rock, Ark., is an excellent example of a market that has contributed to revitalization of a downtown neighborhood in a smaller city. The market includes a market hall that opened in 1996 and a farmers market under two pavilions that’s open two days a week from May to October.

“It’s extremely popular,” said Sharon Priest, executive director of the Downtown Little Rock Partnership. “If you go down there early in the morning you have to squeeze



Photo provided by Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau

Above: River Market in Little Rock, Ark.  
Left: Pike Place Market in Seattle, Wash.

Pike Place is much more than a farmers market. The district is also home to more than 200 year-round commercial businesses ...

Responding to charges that customers buying produce were being gouged by merchants, Seattle politicians created the Pike Place market in 1907. The market’s website says that eight farmers drove their wagons to the market on opening day — and were overwhelmed by 10,000 eager shoppers.

Last year, said Scott Davies, public information specialist for the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority, the district attracted 10 million

through the crowds. We’ve been trying for years to make that critical mass happen.”

Doug Smith, a Little Rock REALTOR®, said he and his wife love the farmers market and go there often. Smith has taken up canning and buys the okra he likes to pickle at the market.

“It’s a really cool farmers market,” Smith said. “They’ve got a wonderful pavilion where they have it. It’s a very cool destination.”

The French Market in New Orleans is one of the oldest continuously occupied market sites in the country, with the original buildings constructed by the Spanish in 1779. The market is located near the Mississippi River at the eastern end of the French Quarter next door to the Café du Monde, famous for its delectable beignets.

The market's status as a farmers market is greatly diminished with most of the space now occupied by a flea market, tourist souvenir shops and prepared food stands. It may be a good place to buy gumbo, but not to buy the ingredients to make your own gumbo.

Amy Kirk, marketing director for the French Market Corp., said competition from other markets, some of which were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, and a drop in the population of the French Quarter due to rising housing prices, were factors in the decline of the food market that once served much of the city.

"We're trying to get farmers to come here, but they are not seeing the kind of traffic they used to see," Kirk said. "I would say it would be a year before they begin to come back." ●

John Van Gieson is a freelance writer based in Tallahassee, Fla. He owns and runs Van Gieson Media Relations, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith

## Urban Groceries — a boon for economic development in downtowns

A revitalized area of downtown St. Louis where young professionals and empty nesters are moving into renovated loft apartments had a lot going for it, but one thing was missing — a grocery store. In fact, there were no grocery stores in downtown St. Louis.

That changed on Aug. 11, 2009, when Schnucks, a St. Louis-based supermarket chain with 105 stores in seven states, opened a prototype urban grocery called Culinaria.

"It has a trendy upscale look," said Gail Brown, a St. Louis REALTOR® who specializes in the downtown area. "It's very hip, very urban. It fits right in, I think, to the lifestyle that people who want to live downtown enjoy. It's wonderful asset to the downtown community."

Many downtown and inner city neighborhoods are "food deserts" lacking grocery stores where residents can buy good food conveniently at reasonable prices, but that is rapidly changing. Many supermarket chains, including trendsetters Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, are opening smaller urban stores in cities across the country. Even big box giant Walmart is reportedly working on plans to build 300 to 400 downsized urban groceries in the 20,000-square-foot range.

Urban groceries typically run in the range of 10,000 to 25,000 square feet, although Rouses, a supermarket chain with 37 stores in Louisiana and Mississippi, is building a 40,000-square-foot store in an old Cadillac dealership in downtown New Orleans, which has seen a surge of condo and apartment construction. Suburban supermarkets usually range 40,000 to 50,000 square feet, with some running as large as 80,000 square feet, said Larry Lund, a Chicago supermarket consultant.

Culinaria has two levels, a 21,000-square-foot grocery store on the first floor and a 5,000-square-foot wine bar and market upstairs. Lori Willis, Schnucks communications director, said the wine bar has become a popular place for downtown office workers to meet for lunch and drinks after work.



Culinaria in St. Louis, Mo.

“We created the store in the belief that downtown would continue to grow and evolve and that will sustain the store,” Willis said. “Culinaria is successful in many different ways. At this point in time it is not what you would consider profitable because it is so new and is trying to find its niche in the downtown area.”

Urban groceries compensate for the lack of space in smaller stores by limiting the numbers of brands on their shelves. Instead of half-a-dozen brands of soup or potato chips, they may stock just one, usually their house brand.

“We’ve been able to come up with an inventory of over 22,000 products,” Willis said. “We’re able to offer the same breadth of products, but not the same variety.”

Urban groceries are usually owned and operated by supermarket companies, but a coalition of local and national nonprofits and government agencies came together in Flint, Mich., to open a new urban grocery store called Witherbee’s Market & Deli. Built at a cost of \$1.8 million, the 10,000-square-foot store opened in June in a former tire store.

“It was created to address the food desert that we have here in the city,” said Judith Christenson, program director for the Flint Neighborhood Improvement & Preservation Project.

The Flint office of the Local Initiatives Support Corp. approached NIPP three years ago with the idea of forming a coalition to build an urban grocery in Flint’s downtown area. LISC gave NIPP a \$900,000 construction loan, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation contributed \$165,400 to help buy the building and the state of Michigan’s Cit-



Trader Joe’s in Madison, Wis.

For the neighborhood it’s produced a healthy food choice. Residents can walk to the store where before they had to take taxis or buses to get to the stores on the outer fringes of the city.

ies of Promise program provided a grant and tax credits totaling \$385,000. NIPP owns the building and leases it to Demeter’s Horn LLC, which is a partnership between David White and Perry Compton — two local neighborhood residents who operate the store.

“For the neighborhood it’s produced a healthy food choice for them and given them more control over their environment, if you will,” Christenson said. “They can walk to the store where before they had to take taxis or buses to get to stores on the outer fringes of the city.”

Trader Joe’s opened an urban grocery in 2006 in a commercial area on Monroe Street in Madison, Wis. A store that had served the area for years closed in 2001 when the owner retired, and merchants and residents in the neighborhood were eager to replace it.

Trader Joe’s is a quirky, upscale grocery where the employees all wear Hawaiian shirts. The Madison store was built on the site of the store that closed, occupying the ground floor of a five-story building with 52 condos upstairs.

“It’s been a great hit,” said Carol “Orange” Schroeder, chair of the Monroe Street Merchants Association. “Because it’s the only Trader Joe’s in Madison at the moment we get a lot of traffic from the rest of the city which helps the businesses on the street.” ●



Photo courtesy of Transit for Livable Communities

# *Transit Options*

## Supporting Communities During Tough Times

By Judy Newman

Throughout the United States, housing and commercial construction have slowed to a crawl, as banks have tightened lending and consumers have cut back on spending.

Construction spending nationwide hit a 10-year low of \$805 billion in July, according to an analysis of Census Bureau data by the Associated General Contractors of America.

But, even during these tight times, at least one kind of development continues to roll out: projects close to a transit rail line. Though the recession has impacted them as well, many of the projects built over the past decade associated with rail accessibility are still popular and holding their property values relatively well, officials say.

Many of the projects built over the past decade associated with rail accessibility are still popular and holding their property values relatively well.



Photo courtesy of Dallas Area Rapid Transit



Photo courtesy of Dallas Area Rapid Transit

- In Dallas and in Charlotte, N.C., studies have shown light rail lines have spurred billions of dollars in development and planned extensions of the lines are triggering construction projects, years in advance.
- In suburban Minneapolis, Bloomington Central Station boasts that it is Minnesota's first urban village built along a light rail line and light rail has prompted new housing and new jobs.
- In Sacramento, plans are moving forward for 2500 R, a proposed development of 34 highly energy-efficient homes that will sit next to a light rail line.
- In Grayslake, Ill., Prairie Crossing residents grow native grasses on their front lawns and dine on organic veggies from the farm behind their homes, in a green development built next to a commuter rail station.

### By the Numbers

There is Texas-sized proof that light rail has kept construction crews busy in the Dallas area. A 2009 study by University of North Texas (UNT) economists Terry Clower and Bernard Weinstein projected that a planned 45-mile expansion of DART, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, doubling the reach of the rail line by 2013, would generate \$4 billion in development between 2009 and 2014.

In Plano, the announcement of a station has been the catalyst for reinvestment and growth in a neighborhood.

“Dallas Area Rapid Transit’s light rail operations continue to be one of the best examples of the growing importance of transit, in all modes, to sustainable economic and community development,” the study said.

Residents are riding the rails: DART recorded 19 million passenger trips on its 48-mile light rail system in the 2009 fiscal year.

Light rail has changed the face of suburban communities such as Plano, Clower said, in an interview. “We certainly have seen areas where the announced location of a station has been the catalyst for reinvestment and growth in a neighborhood,” he said.

Once a farming community, Plano has experienced significant growth since the 1970s. However, Plano’s downtown had seen better days, as of a decade ago, and was left with a number of run-down buildings and empty shops. When plans were announced for a light rail station there, “investors started to buy property. And the properties have done well,” Clower said.

The city of Plano razed some of the older buildings and created parks as developers built mixed-use projects. “It was a reinvigoration of the commercial district,” said Clower, director of UNT’s Center for Economic Development and Research.

Studies in Charlotte, N.C., have shown that since the Lynx light rail system opened in late 2007, \$810 million worth of development has been built or is under construction near light rail stations.

“It was very interesting. On the southern line, there were areas that had been a little depressed, and it’s really a trendy place now. And all that development is along the light rail,” said Alison Royal-Combs, government affairs chair for the Charlotte Regional REALTOR® Association.

Plans are in the works to extend light rail to northern parts of the Charlotte area, including the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis, a public-private venture for biotechnology and nutrition research at the site of a former Pillowtex Corp. factory. Royal-Combs, a REALTOR® with Allen Tate Co. whose business is focused in that vicinity, has been attending meetings about the planned rail line since the 1990s, she said.

“That whole corridor has already started some development in anticipation of this,” Royal-Combs said.

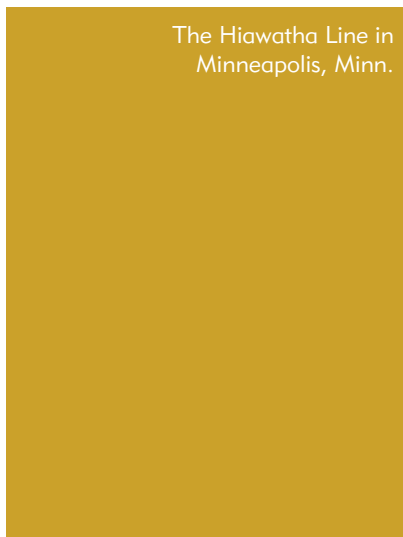
Ridership on the Hiawatha line in Minneapolis has been an astounding 50 percent above projections.

### Selling on the Rail

In Minnesota, the Hiawatha light rail line, running from downtown Minneapolis to suburban Bloomington, has been a huge success since it began operating in 2004, according to the nonprofit organization Transit for Livable Communities. Ridership has been an “astounding” 30,000 passengers a day; 50 percent above projections, said Dave Van Hattum, the group’s policy and advocacy program manager.

“In the Twin Cities, we have a lot of new ‘T,’ as in the transit piece of transit-oriented development. It’s shifting our region’s development approach from one that is highway dominant to one more focused on transit, biking and walking,” Van Hattum said.

A location near a Hiawatha light rail station has been a good draw for some of the housing developments around the area, said REALTOR® Jay Anderson, of Coldwell Banker Burnet. “Absolutely. It’s a huge selling feature for us.”







Property values for single-family homes within a half-mile of light rail stations in south Minneapolis are, on average, \$5,000 higher than comparable homes.

Anderson was a sales representative for the Olin Crossings condominiums during 2004-2007 and for the Corridor Flats condos in 2007-2008. Both are adjacent to the Hiawatha line.

When he began marketing the developments, he had targeted a specific demographic of potential clients but soon tossed out the guidelines. “All sorts of persons were attracted (to the projects) for all sorts of reasons,” Anderson said, ranging from young families to downtown employees to adults looking to downsize their homes. It was clear that the light rail line was important. “That’s what the whole purpose was, the walkability factor and being able to use the light rail,” he said.

Single-family homeowners also have been interested in moving near the Hiawatha line stations, Anderson said, but their preference has been to live six to eight blocks away. “If it’s that type of person to use the light rail, they don’t mind walking (to the station),” he said.

Property values for single-family homes within a half-mile of light rail stations in south Minneapolis are, on average, \$5,000 higher than comparable homes in a control group, according to research by the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies. The reports also showed that more than 2,000 jobs were created near downtown Minneapolis Hiawatha line stations, even as the number of jobs decreased, overall, throughout the region.

Affordable housing is being built near some of the new light rail stations still in the planning stage, said Van Hattum, of Transit for Livable Communities. “There is early investment in housing along the western end of the line, near the University of Minnesota. The new stops open the possibility of affordable housing — and housing is much more affordable when you don’t have to have a car to get around,” Van Hattum said.

Light rail helps sell the point that we have transportation available for people who can walk to the light rail station and walk to work.



Photo courtesy of Dallas Area Rapid Transit



Photo courtesy of Dallas Area Rapid Transit

### Promoting Energy Conservation

Light rail was not the impetus for Pacific Housing, of Sacramento, to draw up plans for 2500 R. The project, at 25th and R streets, will feature 34 prefabricated, single-family homes built to produce as much energy as they consume. But it plays an important role in the concept for the project and may help get it built, says Mark Wiese, president of the nonprofit development company.

“I view being on the light rail line a plus. It helped make this site the perfect storm for what we want to do,” Wiese said.

Aimed at the first-time buyer, 2500 R homes will be 1,400 square feet, have a one-car garage, up to three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms and will sell for \$310,000 to \$320,000. They will be built by Zeta Communities, a San Francisco company with a factory about five miles away from the development, eliminating the need to transport materials long distances. Sunverge Energy, of Stockton, will supply photovoltaic solar panels for the roofs and lithium batteries to store energy inside the homes for use when the sun doesn’t shine.

The property is 180 feet from a light rail station, Wiese said. “I think it will help in today’s world of people trying to move away from fossil fuel or from oil,” he said.

Noise studies are in progress. Wiese said he hopes the project will get the go-ahead from the city of Sacramento by the end of the year and construction can begin early next spring. Financing 2500 R is not yet complete. “We have some commitments and some interest” from private sources, Wiese said.

“All funding is terrible (since the recession). Does light rail help? It helps sell the point that we have transportation available for people who can walk to the light rail station and walk to work,” he said.

In Grayslake, Ill., Prairie Crossing is a far cry from the office towers, shopping centers and densely-packed homes in the Chicago area. A conservation community that broke ground in 1992, Prairie Crossing features a

Photo courtesy of Maryanne Natarajan



Prairie Crossing in Illinois

People will want live near trains when the economy comes back.  
People will be more frugal, will have fewer cars, and they will use trains.

natural lake and marsh grasses; an organic farm used for teaching sustainable farming practices and for providing fresh produce to residents; a community center where forums and concerts are held; and an alternative school. Two commuter rail lines stop at Prairie Crossing; one goes to downtown Chicago, the other, to O'Hare International Airport. All 359 of the development's single-family homes, equipped with geothermal heating, are sold as well as half of its 36 condominiums.

"The idea is to build in harmony with the land, build in a way so that the land is enhanced, the environment is enhanced and people's lives are enhanced at the same time," said Vicky Ranney, president of Prairie Holdings Corp., the development company.

A study showed 30 percent of the residents ride the train on a regular basis. "Having the train there is a real asset for us and for the people who use it," Ranney said. "I can get from Prairie Crossing to Chicago in one hour and ten minutes or less; there are times when it's two hours to drive in rush hour."

### **Tight Economy Slows Development**

To be sure, development is not a sure thing, even if it's near rail, especially in the current economy. A huge project that would have turned a former General Motors plant into a mixed-use development near rail transit in Doraville, Ga., crashed recently when public funding was turned down. Plans to add two more phases of housing to the Olin Crossings condo development in Minneapolis are on hold. Efforts to sell the remaining condominiums at Prairie Crossing in Illinois have dried up, for now, and several specialty shops closed their doors. But Ranney, of Prairie Crossing, said she thinks interest will revive when the economy improves.

"I do believe so. People will want to be living near the trains. When the economy comes back, people will come back, and they will be more frugal. They will have fewer cars and they will use trains," Ranney said. ●

Judy Newman is a newspaper reporter in Madison, Wis.



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



# CULTIVATING THE ARTS

| Cities benefit from using the arts as an economic development tool. |

*By Steve Wright*

From almost the beginning of time, the arts have been supported by everyone from monarchs to popes to commoners because of its humane, beautiful, spiritual and life-affirming qualities.

In these challenging economic times, an equal argument can be made for valuing the arts like precious infrastructure, as important to cities as walkability, transit and parkland, and as essential as streets, water and sewer lines.

Countless cities — from obscure to famous, from modest to sophisticated — have used the arts to revitalize old neighborhoods, create nightlife in fading downtowns and spur economic development in tough times.

In Ventura, Calif., the arts are at the center of a landmark development that combines market-rate condominiums, affordable space for artists and even transitional housing for formerly homeless people — all in a LEED-certified green building that is just a few blocks from both downtown shopping and the Pacific Coast beach.

The \$61 million mixed-use, mixed-income utopia is called WAV — Working Artists Ventura. It has 54 live-work units for artists with monthly rent starting at \$400. The top floor features market-rate lofts selling for more than half a million dollars per unit — which helps subsidize the cost of the affordable units. There are also 15 units of transitional housing available for low-income renters who do not have to be artists.

“The WAV is an economic engine and a cultural force,” said Ventura City Manager Rick Cole. “It brings scores of artists into permanent residence in our downtown, provides an accessible new performance space, provides a home to individuals and families climbing out of homelessness, and represents an exciting mix of uses and incomes. On top of all that, the LEED certification validates the vision that brought this unique community-within-a-community into being.”

“At a time when every other mixed use and housing development stalled, the WAV opened to rave reviews,” Cole added. “It has kept the momentum going by bringing exciting new life to our historic downtown.”

The sustainable structure — developed by the Minneapolis-based nonprofit PLACE (Projects Linking Art, Community & Environment) — has 6,100 square feet of ground floor space for arts-friendly businesses such as coffee houses, galleries and sidewalk cafes.

WAV provides affordable living and working space for more than 100 artists of every kind including painters, sculptors, dancers, poets, musicians and filmmakers. The WAV Theater Gallery offers performances, art openings and public gatherings.

REALTOR® Doug Moe, of Keller Williams Realty, has been selling homes and taken an active role in the Ventura community since 1976. Charged with selling the market rate, solar-powered, double-floor, loft condominiums at WAV, he is a huge supporter of the diverse development.

“When I really found out exactly what was going on at WAV, I thought ‘man, somebody did something great to get Ventura this fabulous project to completion in this economy,’” Moe said. “There were 800 applicants for the 54 units of artist housing — that tells you how popular this is.”

“This is very important to the residents of Ventura — we see what’s going on with the environment; we want a higher quality of living,” he continued. “WAV addresses so many issues important to us — affordable housing, having different segments of society living here. WAV also demonstrates that you can build affordable housing that is LEED certified and that you can build a mixed-income gem like this without the city pouring money into it.”



The WAV is an economic engine and a cultural force.





McGuffey Art Center



Progressive cities view the arts and artists as part of the fabric of the community and as a vital cog in the engine that drives economic vitality in core neighborhoods.

Chris Velasco, who founded PLACE in 2005 and serves as its president and executive director, has been actively engaged in the creation of innovative communities and sustainable facilities for 16 years. He has worked in more than 200 communities, creating more than \$350 million worth of new, arts-centered facilities.

“Art is fundamentally a process and not a product,” Velasco said. “There is a strong temptation to go to a museum and say ‘this is where art lives,’ but it really takes place over a cup of coffee talking with an artist over their canvas, or in a loft with the dancers creating their dance. That is why I have spent nearly two decades of my life building very specialized spaces for the arts.”

Charlottesville, Va., may have fewer than 50,000 residents, but its vibrant arts community creates a quality of life that ranked the home of the University of Virginia as the best place to live in the United States in the book “Cities Ranked and Rated.”

In 1976, the city of Charlottesville turned a decommissioned 1916 federalist style brick school building into the McGuffey Art Center — a vibrant place where dozens of artists rent studio space far below market rate.

In return for low rent, artists agree to open their studio spaces to the public for a required minimum of at least 17.5 hours per week.

“It humanizes the process — people walk right in to your studio and begin to realize there are flesh and blood people making these things, and these people have a role in the community,” said sculptor Jim Respass, who has been at McGuffey for two decades and chairs its gallery committee. “It’s a nice fit: we have a really nice exhibition space, but the lion’s share of what goes on at McGuffey is people can walk in ‘and see the dirt on the floor’ — the process (of making art) unfolding.”

Respass said progressive cities view the arts and artists as part of the fabric of the community and as a vital cog in the engine that drives economic vitality in core neighborhoods.

“One of the issues we wrestle with is ‘how do you maintain the artistic integrity of the building with downtown rents around it going through the roof?’ It’s tough for the city, because the city is not getting property tax from us,” Respass explained. “The city has been very, very supportive of what’s going on at McGuffey. We benefit from a city council and city environment that has embraced the idea of the artistic process at the core of the city. The people here understand that our presence is as important as the objects we make.”

Respass praised city leaders who support the art center and its recent designation on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

“I feel very fortunate to be here, and I take McGuffey very seriously,” he said. “It is a beautiful old federal style building. If you took it away, you would destroy something that is homegrown and part of daily life in the downtown of one of the most special cities anywhere.”

Photographer Will Kerner, an associate artist who exhibits at McGuffey, but does not have studio space there, agrees that the arts are key to making downtown Charlottesville a viable district where land values have appreciated.

Kerner has been instrumental in starting several stalwart live performance and other artistic nonprofits in the center of Charlottesville.

“When we started 20 years ago, downtown was a quiet place after dark. Very few businesses were open past 5 (p.m.) and maybe only three or four restaurants were open,” he recalled. “Along with a downtown pedestrian mall, the arts have made this a hub of activity for the community. Now there are 15 or more restaurants open after dark downtown. Several developers have converted old buildings into loft living spaces, and others have built new buildings for very upscale downtown living.”

Two decades ago, Kerner founded Live Arts, a community theater organization that started in an old building offered at below market rent by a savvy landlord who knew that cultivating an arts community would eventually give him a large return on his investment.

Today, Live Arts is located in a modern, funky, steel building know as the Community Center for the Contemporary Arts, which houses gallery and performance space worthy of a city 10 times the size of Charlottesville. Live Arts produces everything from traditional to experimental theater that fills the space about 100 nights per year.

“When you support the arts with money, space and volunteers, pretty soon you become known as a regional spot where a lot of cultural activity is happening,” Kerner said. “And now you have lots of downtown living — with significant conversions, renovations and brand new construction over the past 20 years. The once sleepy downtown now has dwellings selling for a half million dollars.”

Minneapolis-based Artspace has developed affordable artist live-work spaces in dozens of cities across America. The national nonprofit developer arose out of an advocacy group trying to protect cheap spaces for artists in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

“Finding and retaining affordable live-work space is an age-old problem for artists, painters, sculptors, dancers and others who require an abundance of well-lit space in which to work. Many artists gravitate to old warehouses and other industrial buildings, but their very presence in an industrial neighborhood often acts as a catalyst, setting in motion a process of gentrification that drives rents up and forces the artists out,” Artspace explains on its website.

When you support the arts with money, space and volunteers, pretty soon you become known as a regional spot where a lot of cultural activity is happening.

Charlottesville, Va.



Sailboat Bend, Fla.  
Photo by Vincent Frato



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



There is a great benefit when the community invests in a strategic asset of long-term, affordable space for artists.



Striking the delicate balance of uplifting industrial, warehouse and forgotten areas through the arts — while not gentrifying working class artists out of the very neighborhoods they pioneered — is an ongoing challenge.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has transformed from a sleepy beach town into the hub of an immensely-populated county — where lots of high-priced, high-rise housing has crowded into the city’s modern downtown along the historic New River.

In a public/nonprofit partnership with the Broward County Cultural Division and the city of Fort Lauderdale, Artspace created 37 units of affordable live-work studios for individuals and their families in Fort Lauderdale’s historic Sailboat Bend neighborhood.

The Sailboat Bend Lofts project was the result of a decade of work in the community. In addition to the newly constructed lofts, the project also renovated the Historic West Side School, built in 1923, as the new home for the Broward County Historical Commission. This new facility is located within walking distance of downtown Fort Lauderdale and its many cultural facilities.

“There’s a lot of very strong inherent value in artists and the arts and the creative sector,” said Bill Mague, vice president and portfolio director for Artspace. “But one could argue by the colloquialism ‘starving artist’ that we don’t value that enough in our society.”

Mague said Artspace has been successful in underscoring the value of artists in dozens of cities in America.

“We demonstrate that value is delivered when there’s a congregation of artists. We show cities that they need to protect the people who are participating in art,” he continued. “There is a great benefit when the community invests in a strategic asset of long-term, affordable space for artists.”

Urban-focused REALTOR® Carson Brooks, owner of EXIT Realty Metro in Minneapolis, links the arts with sustainable economic recovery and the future of our cities.

“I made a huge move out of a large suburban real estate office where I was managing broker into a small start-up in the city. We opened our office next door to a nationally known contemporary art museum and public sculpture garden,” Brooks said. “A big part of my initiative in doing this was about the major shift our economy is forcing on



It is an amazing concept when a tired, quasi-industrial area of a city can germinate an artist-friendly neighborhood.

all of us. Urban sprawl was a part of our nation expanding beyond its means. The infrastructure, in most cases, remains in our cities, and needs energy and rejuvenation.”

Brooks said the rejuvenation at the core of many of our nation’s large cities begins with arts and culture.

“It is an amazing concept when a tired, quasi-industrial area of a city can germinate an artist-friendly neighborhood,” he explained. “It can begin with affordable studio space in old warehouse buildings and grow with coffee shops and retail in the same locations where pre-WW II grocers and corner bars once thrived.”

“My city, Minneapolis, has at least two such areas: the more urban warehouse district in the North Loop, and the quieter Northeast area of Minneapolis. The arts movement in each of these areas has brought about a growing need for housing and services in what were tired and rundown urban neighborhoods,” Brooks continued. “The accessibility of culture, localized retail and great restaurants have brought new buyers looking for a friendly, walkable neighborhood without a commute to the downtown business districts. This has stabilized and improved property values in many of these urban neighborhoods.”

Brooks praised cities that are rebuilding transit with light rail and other options where city residents can get to airports and suburban resources without a car.

“Our national economic slump will not last forever, but the way we live in and around our cities may be changed for the long haul,” he observed. “Those little arts quarters growing in our cities may be a great piece of the solution to re-building our nation.”

Ogden, Utah, a railroad town of the old west, is thriving again after pinning much of its economic rebirth on the arts. Matthew R. Godfrey, mayor since 2000, has worked hard to strengthen Ogden’s historic downtown through the arts.



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith

The various arts available in Ogden, Utah, continually draw crowds into the city.



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith

“Ogden City embraces art as a vital part of our economic development and our community,” said Carolyn Brierley, Community & Events Coordinator for the Ogden City Corporation. “We were the first city in Utah to implement a Percent for Art program whereby we set aside 1 percent of all capital improvement projects to create public art installations. The city council also allocates funding every year to give arts grants to local organizations (including non-arts organizations) for arts projects or for general support.”



“The mayor implemented a Mayor’s Awards in the Arts program whereby he recognizes a few individuals each year for their contributions to the arts,” she continued. “We hold an annual arts town meeting to bring art organizations together to network and learn about each others’ programs. We have a mayor-appointed arts advisory committee that oversees all of these projects. The committee is made up of individuals representing the eight major art disciplines — music, dance, theater, design, literary arts, visual arts, folk art and media arts.”

The arts have played a big role in the resurgence of 25th Street — the heart of Ogden’s Historic District. The 1923 Italian Renaissance Union Station has been transformed from an important rail hub to the hub of downtown, with museums and events housed within its refurbished walls. Historic 25th, as 25th Street is known, offers galleries, dining, boutique shopping, a comedy club, amphitheater and national comedy acts at the historic, 1920s Peery’s Egyptian Theater.

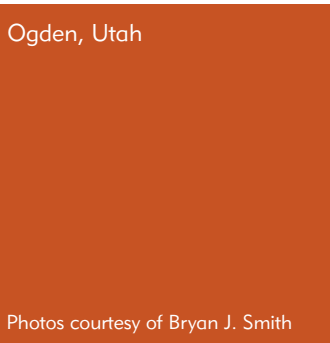
“The historic district in Ogden is also known as the arts district. Numerous art galleries thrive there and all participate in a monthly gallery stroll that brings hundreds if not thousands of people to the downtown

district,” Brierley said. “Each features a new artist each month. Public art installations outdoors have increased our tourism. The district has a renewed vitality, and businesses are striving to move into the area to take advantage of that vitality.”

Brierley said performance and visual arts events bring citizens together for a common cause and give downtown businesses the opportunity to market themselves to an audience that may not otherwise visit the area.

“Our Historic 25th Street and the upper east side of the city have increased greatly in value,” she said, noting that numerous historic dwellings have been remodeled and upgraded thanks to the arts renaissance. “25th Street used to be known as a very dangerous place where prostitutes, alcohol and drugs were the mainstay. Now retail shops, restaurants, businesses, a comedy club and an amphitheater fill the street.”

The arts have played a big role in the resurgence of 25th Street — the heart of Ogden’s Historic District.



In the 1990s, a chunk of Downtown Los Angeles was dominated by drug dealers and gangs. Artists, art galleries and like-minded urban pioneers helped fill vacant buildings and vacant lots while taming the mean streets of LA's Main Street.

Tom Waits wrote a song about The Nickel, an oddball ode to the hustlers, lost souls and worse who inhabited 5th Street. No corner was worse than 5th and Main — before the arts changed everything.

“In the late ‘90s, more drugs were sold on that corner — 5th and Main — than anywhere in the world,” said Brady Westwater, a character as big and over the top as the star-struck and quake-prone City of Angels, who calls himself the unhired, unpaid “curator” of Downtown Los Angeles. “On the longer blocks, 80 to 90 drug dealers were out leaning against a building or standing on the sidewalk waiting for cars to drive up to buy drugs 24 hours a day. They had tents there that they rented to people to crawl in and do their drugs.”

Westwater, a 60-something urban cowboy, and a few other arts-minded entrepreneurs all landed within a few blocks on 5th and Main when the area was at its most drug-deluged and decrepit.

Westwater and others went about convincing landlords that they would get a large return on their long-term investment if they started cleaning up the area by offering studio, gallery and living space to artists for very low rent.

“The renowned Bert Green Fine Art gallery moved from West Hollywood to Downtown, and soon there were five popular art galleries in the area of 5th and Main,” Westwater said. “We kept clearing the drug dealers out and then we tackled Winston, a small street near 5th and Main so dangerous that people wouldn’t cross a half block of it in the daylight.”

In downtown Los Angeles, artists, art galleries and like-minded urban pioneers helped fill vacant buildings and vacant lots while taming the mean streets.

The area still has plenty of rescue missions and social service agencies, but they share the former mean streets with chic restaurants, hip bars and galleries that make up one of the most popular monthly art walks in the nation.

“Believing in the power of the arts to transform, I helped found Downtown LA's Gallery Row, Art Walk, Neighborhood Council and Downtown Fashion Week,” Westwater said, noting that a half dozen new loft residential spaces have also opened in the once abandoned and lawless historic core. “I also did most of the leasing of the art galleries and then the fashion stores in the area, pro bono. The arts community took the worst part of the downtown heroin district and turned it into the creative heart of Downtown.” ●

Wright frequently writes about Smart Growth and sustainable communities. He recently participated in the prestigious Forum on Land and the Built Environment: The Reinvented City sponsored by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Contact him at [stevewright64@yahoo.com](mailto:stevewright64@yahoo.com).



# ZONING FOR PROSPERITY



Photo courtesy of Buffalo Niagara CVB and KC Kratt

## STREAMLINED REGULATIONS AND URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

*By David Goldberg*

In the lore of urban America, Buffalo, NY, is often held up as a poster child for the post-industrial decline of the once mighty cities of the so-called Rust Belt. Founded on the eastern shore of Lake Erie in the late 1700s, Buffalo enjoyed more than a century of boom times that began with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, and flourished until its once world-leading steel and other industries began to lose out to international competition in the late 1900s. The 8th largest American city in 1900, Buffalo hit a peak population of 580,000 in 1950.

By the 2000 census, Buffalo had lost nearly half those residents, with a population closer to 293,000. Today, roughly 14,000 vacant housing units mar Buffalo neighborhoods, and the city has demolished 4,000 dilapidated buildings this year alone, according to Brendan R. Me-haffy, executive director of Buffalo's office of strategic planning. But Buffalo has one thing many other places

Buffalo is investing in a sense of place, around schools, parks, neighborhood shopping districts — the features that attract people to neighborhoods.



Buffalo,  
New York



Photo courtesy of Buffalo  
Niagara CVB and Angel Art Ltd.

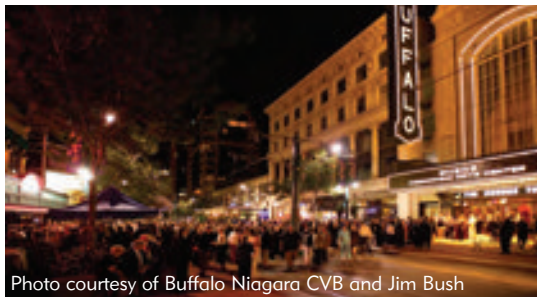


Photo courtesy of Buffalo Niagara CVB and Jim Bush

The city wants a code that forms the foundation of a new, place-based economic development strategy.



Photo courtesy of Buffalo Niagara CVB and Angel Art Ltd.

do not have, Mayor Byron Brown says: “Excellent bones.” Indeed, few cities can boast a similar quantity of well laid-out, traditional neighborhoods and high-character architecture. The older parts of the city attract national and international interest for their walkable charm.

In those assets Mayor Brown figures he has located the seeds of economic revival. If the city can succeed in replicating that level of quality as neighborhoods change and redevelop, he and others there believe, Buffalo can expand its reputation as a great place to live and do business, thereby attracting more people and businesses. But to get there, Brown says, Buffalo has to throw out its zoning code and replace it with what the mayor calls a “Green Code”.

“We have been talking about reforming our antiquated, overly complex, non-user friendly zoning codes for quite some time,” Brown says. “It has not been updated in any meaningful way in 59 years. We want a code that forms the foundation of a new, place-based economic development strategy.” Conventional zoning, which focuses almost exclusively on separating land uses —residential from shops, business from institutional — mandates anything but traditional, walkable environments, and has been tarred as the DNA of placeless sprawl.

The “Green Code” will focus more on the form of neighborhoods, the urban design elements that go together to determine character — how far buildings are setback from the street, whether parking goes in front or back, how multi-story buildings step down to low-rise as they move away from a busy street. “We want design that will be walkable, will be built with materials that are environmentally stable, that will encourage public transportation. We will invest in a sense of place, around schools, parks, neighborhood shopping districts — the features that attract people to neighborhoods.”

While the Green Code moniker belongs to Mayor Brown, roughly 300 cities around the country have, in the last few years, begun to adopt similar “form-based codes,” usually as voluntary overlays for certain districts, but increasingly as mandatory guides to urban design. And nearly all of them have done so, at least in part, as a way to make themselves more attractive to economic development, according to Hazel Borys, a form-based codes expert with PlaceMakers consulting.



## Some places such as Taos, N.M., depend on their urban charm to draw visitors and support an economy based on tourism.

Good urban design both generates more tax revenue and saves money on infrastructure, Borys contends. “In general, zoning is written to drive a tax base,” she says. “Experience shows that walkable, compact, mixed-use, connected neighborhoods are going to be worth more over the long haul than sprawling, placeless areas.”

Local governments often chase the revenue from developments such as big-box retail — the Walmarts and Best Buys — only to find that those stores become obsolete after a period of years, after which the stores move or close, revenue plummets and the tax base never recovers. Well-designed, mixed-use town centers may see a variety of uses come and go over the years, but the core value remains as people continue to live, work or shop in the area. A recent study of property tax yields in Sarasota, Fla., found that compact, walkable areas — such as a downtown or Main-Street town center — produce several times as much revenue per acre as conventional strip shopping centers, big-box or other single-use development. At the same time, spread-out, automobile-oriented development costs about a third

more in roadway, water and sewer infrastructure, many analyses have shown.

Some places — such as Taos, N.M., and Kona, Hawaii — depend on their urban charm to draw visitors and support an economy based on tourism. Borys, whose firm worked to develop form-based codes for both those places, said coding for good urban design has proved essential, as outside developers have threatened to introduce a standardized, car-oriented formula that undermine the character of such communities. “They want to preserve the existing character because they know that’s what generates the revenue, not sprawling strips that could be anywhere.”

For other places, where “sprawling strips” tended to dominate the landscape, form-based zoning reform may be part of the answer to restoring value to out-of-date commercial corridors. That was the approach taken in Arlington County, VA, to revitalize the Columbia Pike corridor connecting the county to Washington, D.C. Beginning in 1998, the county worked with a stakeholder

Taos, N.M.



Arlington County, Va.



In Arlington County, gradual redevelopment has transformed parking lots and single-story buildings into a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood.

organization to create a long-range plan for economic redevelopment, zoning and urban design reform and investment in transportation and other infrastructure. What emerged was a vision of gradual redevelopment that saw parking lots and large single-story buildings remade as a walkable corridor of mixed-use, multi-story edifices. After an extensive public involvement process, the county adopted a form-based overlay for Columbia Pike in 2003. Today, much of the envisioned redevelopment has occurred, to the point that local jurisdictions are pursuing funds for a streetcar that will evolve a street from “cars only” to a more appealing and safe street for people on foot or bicycle.

Less obvious, perhaps, is the role that thoughtful planning and well-articulated development codes can play in recruiting and retaining corporations and entrepreneurs — especially for places that traditionally have had little in the way of either land use planning or economic development. Louisiana is a state with many such communities. When hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck in 2005, 21 of 64 parishes (or counties) had no zoning ordinances on the books, and most did little or nothing to

plan for growth and development. In trying to promote post-hurricane revitalization, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development recognized this as a serious impediment to recruiting investment from outside, says Boo Thomas, executive director of the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), a Baton Rouge nonprofit that works to help Louisiana communities plan for sustainable growth and development.

“They had done a survey and found that one of the largest impediments to recruiting industry was the lack of planning and consistent regulatory processes,” Thomas said. The department created an initiative called “development-ready” communities, and contracted with CPEX to develop model form-based codes that could be readily adapted to individual jurisdictions, most of which did not have resources to hire consultants to develop such codes on their own. With support from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, CPEX and consultants held dozens of community meetings and researched the traditional urban design in numerous Louisiana towns to develop the Louisiana Land Use Toolkit, which is now being implemented on a pilot basis in two parishes.

One of those is Tangipahoa Parish, about 45 miles north of New Orleans. A sleepy parish of 100,000 when Katrina hit, Tangipahoa suddenly saw an onslaught of new subdivisions to accommodate roughly 30,000 souls who moved there in the wake of the storm. With no zoning or comprehensive plan, parish residents could only watch as rapid development transformed the landscape. Since then the county hired its first planner and is now navigating the shoals of creating its first zoning ordinance as a test case of the Land Use Toolkit.

“After the storms we got inundated, with no codes in place. Anything could happen, and did,” says Alyson Lapuma, Tangipahoa’s first planning director.

Today, five years after the storms and in the midst of a prolonged recession, the parish is once again struggling to attract the right kind of economic growth, she adds. “Our director of economic development has told us we’ve lost businesses because they don’t want to come to an area where they don’t know what’s going to happen on either side of them. To me, economic development is the biggest reason to do this.”

Despite recent experiences, change still comes hard, Lapuma says. “Now that the Katrina development has gone, some people have the idea that we don’t want to do anything that might stop development, so we’ll take anything.”

For Buffalo, an older city with scads of accreted regulations, the task is both to streamline and simplify approvals, while ensuring that development proposals are shaped by a clear knowledge of what the community wants to see, says Mayor Brown.

“The new code will provide predictability for developers and residents alike. Developers and investors will know when they want to do a project that it is likely to be supported by the community,” he says.

The reform is critical to ensure the city can compete, Brown continues. “For the last 50 years Buffalo has lost population to the surrounding suburbs, and now the region as a whole is losing population. So one of the goals is to put us in a position where we more effectively compete with other cities and regions.”

The mayor acknowledges that the code alone, while necessary, is not sufficient to ensure residents and investors that the city’s neighborhoods will remain stable and well

Five years after the storms and in the midst of a prolonged recession, the (New Orleans suburb) is once again struggling to attract the right kind of economic growth



New Orleans, Louisiana







Buffalo, New York

Photo courtesy of Buffalo Niagara CVB and Nancy J. Parisi



It took a while for Buffalo to adjust, but now we have a good city with great quality of life and people who are passionate about the city.

cared for. As one other element, the city is investing \$10.4 billion to rehabilitate schools so that they are state-of-the-art facilities that can once again be sought-after neighborhood anchors. And the city has cut property taxes by 15 percent, with the expectation that hoped-for redevelopment will build the overall tax base.

There are signs the strategy may pay off. “The fastest growing neighborhood in the city is downtown,” Brown says, “where we’re converting an old warehouse of office buildings to apartments and condos. Part of our plan is to make it a 24/7 live, work, play environment. We seem to have new projects coming online despite the real estate downturn.”

Mehaffy, Buffalo’s strategic planning director, says he believes that success can be spread to other areas, in part via the Green Code.

“Buffalo took its hits, undoubtedly, in the late 70s and early 80s, and tens of thousands of jobs left,” Mehaffy says. “It took us a while to adjust but we are adjusting. And now we have a good city with great quality of life and people who are passionate about the city. You’re talking to a biased guy, but I have to say I think our economic prospects are good.” ●

David A. Goldberg is the communications director for Smart Growth America, a nationwide coalition based in Washington, D.C. that advocates for land-use policy reform. In 2002, Mr. Goldberg was awarded a Loeb Fellowship at Harvard University, where he studied urban policy.



Photo courtesy of Buffalo Niagara CVB and KC Kratt

# Celebrating the Local

A community's heritage and diversity spurs home-grown economic development

By Christine Jordan Sexton

There was a time when cities and towns looked to developers and manufacturers and the service sectors to bring in jobs and to help revitalize the economy.

But there is a growing recognition that art, entertainment, food and culture can drive change and can generate significant levels of residential and commercial economic value for municipalities, philanthropists and the private sector that is willing to make the investment as well as promote smart growth principles.

There may be no better example of a city that is investing in its rich musical heritage than Nashville.

The capital of Tennessee has long been known as Music City, because of the Grand Ole Opry and its status as the center of the country music industry.

But now, Nashville is striving to show it's much more than that. Bluegrass has moved its way south from Kentucky to Nashville and the area also attracts Christian contemporary, jazz and blues artists. Jack White — founder of the garage band the White Stripes — also now calls Nashville home.

In fact, no metropolitan area in the United States or Canada has a larger concentration of music related jobs and industry than Nashville. And a study commissioned by the Nashville Chamber showed that in 2006, the mu-



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Nashville, Tenn.



[www.flickr.com/photos/exothermic](http://www.flickr.com/photos/exothermic)

There is a growing recognition that art, entertainment, food and culture can drive change and can generate significant levels of residential and commercial economic value.

music industry had a \$6.38 billion impact on Nashville's economy and that 35,000 jobs were directly tied to music production and music related tourism.

To ensure the city maintains its brand as a music mecca and, moreover, ensures that music continues to help drive the economic engine, Mayor Karl Dean in 2009 created a 46-member think tank of sorts to help spread the word to artists that there's no better place to live, work and play than Nashville.

"Nashville is not any city, we're 'Music City'. We have an opportunity to grow that identity and benefit both our city and the music industry in the process," Dean said when announcing the Music Business Council. "My goal is to make Nashville the destination for music performances, festivals, business and education."

The council meets quarterly and in many ways is still in its organizational phase, having broken itself into four separate committees. The council's creative talent committee has bandied about a plan that would draw young artists to the areas by offering more affordable housing. In addition to providing shelter, the idea is to also develop a pocket of artistic talent that, once fully developed, would help develop more talent.

While music is now a driving part of the economy, REALTOR® Shirley Zeitlin remembers a day when Nashville didn't always embrace the 'Music City' moniker. "The feedback outside of the city was a Hee Haw image," she said, adding that within the last decade all that has changed. Today, there's no doubt the artists are an integral part of the neighborhood and nothing to be ashamed of.

"Our country music people are very sophisticated and educated and are part of the community," she added.

Zeitlin, owner of the self named firm that employs 100 REALTORS® in two counties, is also the president elect of the Arts and Business Council of Greater Nashville. The council was formed in 2007 to foster better relationships between area artists and the business community through a variety of different programs, including one called Volunteer Lawyers and Professionals for the Arts, which provides pro bono legal services to low-income artists.

"New Orleans has the French Quarter, San Francisco has the Wharf and trolley cars and Nashville has the music," Zeitlin said.

While Nashville is trying to enhance its branding through music, Yale, Michigan has successfully taken advantage of its food heritage. And that ain't no baloney.

In Nashville, Tenn., music is now a driving part of the economy.



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Nashville, Tenn.



Yale Bologna Festival in Yale, Mich.



## The festival in Yale, Michigan continues to prosper, despite the economic downturn across the nation.

For more than 20 years the Chamber of Commerce in Yale, population 2,000, has sponsored an event centered around the well-known sandwich meat that draws more than 10 times that amount of people to the area, some as far away as Canada, said Yale Chamber of Commerce President Barb Stasik.

Indeed, the annual Yale Bologna festival draws crowds of people who over a three-day period buy and eat more than two tons of bologna. It's available on a stick, in a quarter pound barbecue grilled sandwich on a bun, or in a cheese snack pack.

Stasik, publisher of the Yale Expositor, said the event was initially started 21 years ago by the Chamber which was looking for an event to promote the town. Yale, which was settled by German and Polish immigrants, has been making bologna since the 1800s.

It was started with a \$2,000 budget and was put together "on a wing and a prayer," she said. The Chamber now pumps between \$30,000 and \$40,000 into the festival to pay for the costs of tents, bands and other

activities — such as the crowning of the Bologna King and Queen, outhouse races, a street dance and fireworks and a parade down Main Street.

The only thing that people pay for, she said, is the bologna, which is provided by Yale Bologna, also known as C. Roy Inc., and the T-shirts that are sold.

Owners Nancy and Dick Roy start butchering the bulls that will be used for the bologna in the spring. The recipe belongs to Dick Roy's great grandfather, T.J Minnie, who emigrated from Canada.

"I thought it would never survive the first year," Nancy Roy said of the festival. "When the Chamber approached us (about supplying the bologna) I said 'sure, uh huh.' They have done wonderful work keeping it alive."

Not only is it alive, it continues to prosper, despite the economic downturn across the nation, especially Michigan.

Stasik said the chamber has never analyzed how much money the event has brought into the city, but she's confident it exceeds the \$30,000 the chamber targets toward it. Folks who attend the festival meander through the town and shop at other locally owned businesses such as furniture shops, as well as the pubs where they can wet their whistle.

"It wasn't thought of as an economic boom for the town. We kind of did it tongue and cheek. It turned out to be exactly what we needed," she said.

On the west coast in San Jose, Calif., there is the Mariachi and Mexican Heritage Festival, a weeklong celebration of Mexican and Mexican American heritage complete with music, art, film and dance.

The event showcases Mexico's vibrant history and culture said President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mexican Heritage Corporation Marcela Davison Aviles. "We're not just tamales, rice and beans, we're just as diverse and complicated as America is," she said.

It always is held in the fall, he said, to take advantage of the pleasant weather in Northern California. Upward of 50,000 people attend the weeklong event, which funnels about \$6 million into the local economy from festival goers who spend the weekend in hotels and eat at area restaurants and play golf at the local courses.

"The downtown (San Jose) merchants love us," said Aviles. "And people do make money off this festival."

The Mexican Heritage Corporation uses the proceeds from the event to support mariachi music education in



Above:  
San Jose, Ca.

Right and  
Below: The Jazz  
and Arts Festival  
in West Oak  
Lane in  
Philadelphia, Pa.



Studies recommend that investments be made in community-based creative activity to enhance a community's placemaking role and to increase it potential.

two San Jose schools, and there is a request to expand the program into three more. Additionally, the Mexican Heritage Corporation sponsors youth music and dance programs in the summer. In all, Aviles expects the corporation's efforts will reach 800 students this year.

There are other similar festivals across the United States celebrating a city's heritage.

A weekend festival called the Jazz and Arts Festival in West Oak Lane — a Philadelphia neighborhood — is featured in the article 'Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Investment,' written by Jeremy Nowak, president and chief executive officer of The Reinvestment Fund, a leader in the financing of neighborhood revitalization.

Nowak teamed up with the Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania to explore what he calls the power of "placemaking" or the way "households, businesses, government and civic and cultural institutions can combine to increase economic opportunity, the quality of public spaces, and investment and development activity in distressed places."

The 2007 monograph analysis recommends that there be investments in community-based creative activity to enhance a community's placemaking role and to increase its potential. Specifically, Nowak recommends that investments be made in creativity, development and knowledge.

The West Oak Lane community in Philadelphia is an example Nowak holds out as a successful attempt at placemaking. Nowak notes that the West Oak Lane neighborhood in Philadelphia for years had "been losing ground," as middle income African American families moved to the suburbs and left behind abandoned houses and storefronts. But a concerted civic action addressing public safety, school quality and property condition helped stabilize the neighborhood.

"The festival reflects and facilitates these changes. The current Jazz and Arts Festival attracts thousands of people from both inside and outside the neighborhood. Dozens of bands perform for free and commercial booths are set up for art exhibitions, food and children's activities," the paper notes. It "defines local identity and serves as a market signal about renewal."

Harrisburg, Pa., — which is abuzz with art galleries and restaurants — also is an example of successful placemaking. Midtown Harrisburg — once blighted — now is bustling with activity.

As Harrisburg native, photographer, and co-owner of the Gallery Blu art gallery, Christina Heintzelman-Jones notes, “there’s almost a panache to living here now,” she said only half jokingly adding that the presence of artists in a neighborhood, even one in transition, often helps mitigate what could be seen as a risky investment.

Christina Heintzelman-Jones and her husband Bluett Jones, bought an older building — she believes it once was a shoe store — renovated it and opened Gallery Blu in the developing Third Street Corridor Art District in Harrisburg about 18 months ago.

The gallery is one of many art studios that has emerged in midtown Harrisburg and is a regular stop for folks who attend “3rd n the Burgh,” held the third Friday of every month when galleries stay open late displaying art work and providing refreshments and wine for after hours patrons.

Heintzelman-Jones and her husband are extremely active in the neighborhood and have held three fundraisers at the gallery, including the most successful dubbed “Sweet Salvation” where almost \$10,000 was raised for the local Salvation Army through a silent auction of art work.

Gallery Blu also hosted two fundraisers for Cathedral School, a Catholic school in Harrisburg. The money raised for the school is, not surprisingly, targeted toward its arts program.

“We’re not even Catholic but it doesn’t matter. We wanted to help the arts program,” she said.

They also want to help other artists living in the areas. Heintzelman-Jones said she and a coalition of other art gallery owners have started bandying about the idea of developing an arts incubator that will help provide artists with the supplies and the space they need to work. “We are a cohesive group. We all are working together to talk about advertising and outreach. There is cooperation between all the players.”

Heintzelman-Jones attributes much of the enthusiasm occurring in Harrisburg to the decision of HACC — or Harrisburg Area Community College — in 2001 to bring its curriculum to midtown Harrisburg. Although the community college had a presence in the greater Harrisburg area it wasn’t in the urban center.

She’s not alone in thinking it made a difference in the town. “It’s transformative to the neighborhood,” said Former Harrisburg Mayor Stephen R. Reed. “It’s catalytic. It brings a critical mass of people very quickly at one location and it creates instant synergetic benefits and spinoff that attracts additional investment.”

The remarks were made by the mayor at a dedication ceremony for HACC’s Midtown 2 building. The building initially erected in 1917 once housed the Evangelical Press Building, where Christian literature was published. After Evangelical Press shuttered its doors, it was a municipal building housing city workers, then stood vacant for months.

The Midtown 2 building was purchased in 2006 by GreenWorks Development LLC and is being leased long term by HACC. A \$19 million rehabilitation of the 130,000-square-foot building was made possible with help from the state, the city and HACC. The space is used for trade and technology programs for both degree and non-degree programs.

Midtown Harrisburg, Pa.

Photos courtesy of Central Pennsylvania Community College



Local parade  
in Ogden, Utah.



Photo courtesy of Bryan J. Smith

An “urban meadow” or block long pedestrian walkway connects the Midtown 2 building to HACC’s initial real estate — appropriately called Midtown 1. That building — the former worldwide headquarters of AMP — was donated to the community college in 2001.

The urban meadow was funded in part by Dauphin County and it provides green space for students and also is used by the community college in its horticulture and landscape design programs.

It’s no wonder the financial commitment from players like those helped spawn the development of a slew of restaurants and a spate of art galleries as well as a the Midtown Movie Cinema that shows small independent films and a large bookstore called Midtown Scholar Bookstore.

Nancy Rockey, HACC vice president of college and community development, is a self described Harrisburg “lifer.” Rockey, 52, grew up in the suburbs just outside of Harrisburg and recalls as a child jumping on mass transit and taking the 20-minute trip into town to shop for shoes at the trendy shoe shop in the city.

Rockey recalls a “thriving” Harrisburg in the 1960s when she was growing up, followed by what she described was a ghost town in the 1980s and 1990s.

All that has changed, said Rockey, who attributes the revitalization to a partnership of not only the community college and local and state government, but a commitment to work with the business and residents who never left the area.

“We didn’t close our doors up,” Rockey said. “We opened our doors to the community.”

Bill Fontana, executive director of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, says Harrisburg deserves praise for the successful revitalization of its midtown area. Penn-

sylvania Downtown Center is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides outreach, technical assistance and education services in order to help communities revitalize their central business districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods. PDC embraces the “Main Street Four Point Approach,” among other programs, touted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The four point approach is a community-driven strategy that encourages communities to focus on design, or capitalizing on a city’s best assets such as historical buildings; promotion — or marketing unique characteristics through advertising and retail promotion activities or special events and local festivals; organization, or having everyone work on common goals; and economic restructuring, such as using unused space and turning it into productive property and expanding existing businesses.

Fontana gives Harrisburg as an example of revitalizing its urban center. With community partnerships, such as HACC, the arts, festivals and local heritage all play a significant role in attracting people to midtown. He noted at one point there was no activity in midtown Harrisburg once people left work for the evening.

“Now on the weekends you can’t even get parking spaces in downtown Harrisburg,” he said noting that restaurants, celebrations and the art galleries draw crowds.

“At one time it was the first or second most distressed small city in America, and now it constantly makes the list of best places to work and invest in and live in. There’s no question that region has made tremendous strides.” ●

Christine Jordan Sexton is a Tallahassee-based freelance reporter who has done correspondent work for the Associated Press, the New York Times, Florida Medical Business and a variety of trade magazines, including Florida Lawyer and National Underwriter.

# Attracting the Talent

## The Creative Class Is Key to Current Economic Development Trends

By Brad Broberg

In today's evolving economy, the road to prosperity requires an on ramp for the creative class. This well-educated, highly skilled, well-paid group of people, who think for a living, will drive roughly half of all U.S. job growth through 2018, according to author and scholar Richard Florida.

The question for cities is how to steer the creative class — especially its young core — in their direction. Florida, professor at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, believes he has the answer. “In the global hunt for talent, I expect we will see a stronger emphasis ... than ever before on the importance of quality of place,” he says.

Florida ought to know. As author of the 2002 best-seller “The Rise of the Creative Class,” he defined this growing legion of 35 million workers and has followed his first book with several related titles, including his latest, “The Great Reset.”

The Cliff Notes version of Florida's work: Prosperous cities typically have a burgeoning creative class and are characterized — not coincidentally — by the “three Ts” of talent, tolerance and technology. (See Page 52.)

The recession has only strengthened Florida's opinion. “If you look at regions that have fared better than others, you will notice they have a large percentage of creative workers,” he says.

Something else that sets many of these regions apart? They exhibit qualities of place that both satisfy the desires of creatives and reflect key principles — density, walkability, mixed-use, access to transit, concern for the environment — of smart growth.

Prosperous cities have a burgeoning creative class and are characterized by talent, tolerance and technology.







Photos by S. Rick Armstrong and courtesy of South Side Local Development Company



## Attracting young creatives is as much about offering the right quality of life as it is about employment.

“There’s definitely a strong correlation between those principles ... and what the (creative class) is looking for,” says Molly Foley, lead consultant with Next Generation Consulting, a Madison, Wis., market research firm. “We live in a time where talent is what drives economic prosperity and talent is clustering in communities that offer ... the amenities they value.”

No community makes that case — and demonstrates the power of placemaking — better than Arlington County, Va. The Washington, D.C., suburb didn’t set out to become a model for attracting the creative class when it began planning a string of transit-based urban villages 30 years ago, but guess what? “We inadvertently became the headquarters for the creative class,” says Terry Holzheimer, director of Arlington Economic Development.

Step one of Arlington’s plan routed a new Metrorail line through a decaying commercial corridor rather than along a freeway. Step two placed five stations, each a half mile apart, up and down the line. Step three rezoned the land around the stations to increase density, ensure a mix of office and residential uses and reserve the ground floor of buildings for retail. Step four brought grocery stores to each of the five locations.

Arlington overlooked only one thing, “We didn’t give a lot of thought to who was going to live there,” Holzheimer says. Although it took time, Arlington

ultimately proved to be fertile ground for the creative class. “We never consciously did it, but we created the Petri dish for it to grow by creating these urban villages,” Holzheimer says.

No doubt Arlington profits from its proximity to Washington, D.C., which is an employment magnet for creatives from across the country. But that only partly explains why Business Week magazine recently called Arlington “the best place to weather a recession in the U.S.” The big key to Arlington’s prosperity was creating vibrant urban villages — and attracting the creative class — through placemaking, Holzheimer says.

Although the creative class is not defined by age, cities salivate most over young creatives. “The 25-34-year-old demographic is to economic development what bandwidth is to the Internet,” says Angelos Angelou, CEO of Angelou Economics, an Austin, Texas, consulting firm serving technology companies and communities seeking to attract them. “It is the economic capacity of the future.”

Attracting young creatives is as much about offering the right quality of life as it is about employment. “They will move to a city they like without a job in confidence they will find a job when they get there,” Angelou says.

Employers are mindful of that when deciding where to locate. “Companies pay attention to the young demographic, particularly technology companies,” Angelou says. “Those cities that are attractive to young professionals are attractive to businesses at the same time.”

In many places, the challenge is more about retaining existing talent than attracting new talent. “They have the pipeline (of young creatives), but they don’t have the

infrastructure, they don't have the perks and they may not be aware of how important that demographic is to economic development," Angelou says, in describing communities and cities looking to develop and keep a talent base.

A study conducted by the Martin Prosperity Institute, a think tank led by Florida and affiliated with the University of Toronto, looked at the factors that cause people to remain in their current community. Based on a sample from a larger survey, the study concluded that place-based factors such as the physical appeal of the community and the ability to meet people and make friends mattered considerably more than economic conditions.

The question for cities with creative class envy is how to compete with places like Austin and Boston and other three T towns. "You can start by redeveloping your downtown," Angelou says. "These folks are not likely to be living in suburbs. They want to be downtown and they want to walk to work and they want an active night life."

They also want to be involved in the decisions that will shape their community. "This is a very civic-minded generation," Foley says. "They want to feel like their voices can be heard and they can make a difference."

An emerging concept called crowdsourcing is helping one developer hear those voices as it decides how to breathe life into 17 acres of mostly vacant land in downtown Bristol, Conn. The idea is to invite the public to participate in the planning process from start to finish — something that was possible only on a limited scale before the Internet made the whole world a focus group.

"What does the market want? That's where crowdsourcing comes in," says Brandon Palanker, director of new business development at Renaissance Downtowns, the New York firm chosen to lead the Bristol project. "Crowdsourcing isn't studying the market. It's engaging the market. It's a back and forth."

Crowdsourced placemaking is tailor made for engaging young creatives. They have both the will and the way — think Facebook and Twitter — to chat, blog and tweet about the qualities of place that appeal to them.

"The executives who are making decisions might not understand what a 23-year-old wants," Palanker says. "You might think they want granite counters when what they really want is bike rack outside. If you don't engage them in the conversation, you're probably going to fail."

## Quality of place is paramount to young creatives.



Ultimately, whatever gets built must pencil out. However, simply listening to young creatives can be its own reward. "At the end of the day, if they feel they have ownership, you will have salespeople on the street that you don't have to pay," Palanker says. "

While quality of place is paramount to young creatives, cost of lifestyle is a growing concern. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, they flocked to big — but costly — cities like New York, Seattle and Chicago because the economy was booming and they were comfortable living on credit, Foley says. Now, they're looking for cities that are large enough to offer the amenities they seek but not so hard on their wallets.

“We’re seeing an outmigration of talent from the major metros, Foley says. “The smaller, mid-size cities are well-positioned against the bigger cities.”

Availability of employment also has become a bigger factor. That’s because companies aren’t as eager as they once were anymore to follow young creatives to their cities of choice, says Foley.

“The cost of moving may not be feasible in today’s economy or they’re laying off more people than they’re looking to attract,” she says. “However, as we start to see the baby boomers retire in numbers starting in 2013, we probably will see a shift in companies starting to chase talent once again.”

In the meantime, cities might want to steal a page from Madison’s playbook. Home to the University of Wisconsin, it consistently ranks among the best cities for young creatives to live in. But it’s also committed to generating jobs.

“It’s a normal concern of any college town to retain their graduates,” says Kathy Bartels, a REALTOR® with Coldwell Banker Success in Madison. “There was a time where we were educating them and they were leaving. Now, we’re going after businesses to keep them.”

Madison’s main job engine is University Research Park, a place where basic science from the university is transformed into products and services — and jobs. “We know if they have good opportunities for employment in this city, they will stay. If they don’t, they’ll go to Chicago or Minneapolis,” says Mark Bugher, the park’s director.

Founded in 1984, the park grew slowly at first, but is now home to 32 buildings housing 100 companies employing 3,500-4,000 people with an annual payroll of \$250 million. Work has started on a second phase that will add 54 buildings, doubling the number of tenants and generating 10-15,000 more jobs.

And not just any jobs, but cool jobs with early stage tech companies that make young creatives drool. Average pay within the park: \$64,000 a year.

“I would encourage any city that is looking to attract this kind of employee to ... create a robust environment for entrepreneurship and technology transfer,” Bugher says. “That’s the magnet that brings these kinds of employees.” ●

Mid-size cities are well-positioned against the bigger cities to attract talent.



Above: University Research Park in Madison, Wis.

Left: The capitol building is a hub for business and tourism in downtown Madison, Wis.

Brad Broberg is a Seattle-based freelance writer specializing in business and development issues. His work appears regularly in the Puget Sound Business Journal and the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce.

# The Value of Place

## Characteristics valued most by 20-40-year-olds

- **Cost of lifestyle** – Includes all of the variables in the national cost of living index such as food and housing.
- **Earning** – Future job growth, percentage of jobs in knowledge-based sector, household incomes.
- **After hours** – Places to go and things to do after work and on weekends.
- **Vitality** – Air and water quality, green space, overall health of residents.
- **Learning** – Education expenditures, public library use, wifi hot spots.
- **Around town** – Walkability, commute time, mass transit opportunities.
- **Social capital** – Voter participation rates, percentage of women and minority-owned businesses.

\*Source:  
Next Generation Consulting

## Best places to live and work for 20-40-year-olds

### Mighty Micros – Population 100,000-200,000

- Fort Collins, Colo.
- Charleston, S.C.
- Eugene, Ore.
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Springfield, Ill.

### Midsized Magnets – Population 200,000-500,000

- Madison, Wis.
- Minneapolis, Minn.
- Colorado Springs, Colo.
- Atlanta, Ga.
- St. Paul, Minn.

### Super Cities – Population over 500,000

- San Francisco, Calif.
- Seattle, Wash.
- Boston, Mass.
- Washington, D.C.
- Denver, Colo.

\*Source:  
Next Generation  
Consulting

## The three Ts of economic development

**Talent:** “The driving force behind any effective economic strategy is talented people. We live in a more mobile age than ever before. People, especially top creative talent, move around a lot. A community’s ability to attract and retain top talent is the defining issue of the creative age.”

**Technology:** “Technology and innovation are critical components of a community or organization’s ability to drive economic growth. To be successful, communities and organizations must have the avenues for transferring research, ideas, and innovation into marketable and sustainable products. Universities are paramount to this and provide a key hub institution of the creative age.”

**Tolerance:** “Economic prosperity relies on cultural, entrepreneurial, civic, scientific, and artistic creativity. Creative workers with these talents need communities, organizations and peers that are open to new ideas and different people. Places receptive to immigration, alternative lifestyles and new views on social status and power structures will benefit significantly in the creative age.”

\*Source: Richard Florida

# Marketing Your Community Talent

Cities that attract the creative class have more to crow about than other cities — namely the talent and education of their work force — and they use it to great advantage in their economic development activities.

Example: “Think Arlington,” a marketing campaign by Arlington Economic Development. The campaign and its slogan, “Brainpower: Arlington’s Alternative Energy,” positions the Northern Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C., as a fertile ground for tech firms and other companies that need knowledge workers.

Ann Arbor, home to the University of Michigan, is launching a campaign called “MichAgain” with the slogan, “We Want You Back.” The campaign encourages out-of-state business leaders with past ties — such as attending one of the area’s colleges — to return. One big reason to come back? The brainy workforce.

“We use that as our number one selling point,” says Elizabeth Parkinson, vice president of marketing and communications with Ann Arbor Spark, a regional economic development organization that created the campaign. MichAgain ads will appear in alumni magazines of area universities and be used during recruiting events in other cities.



Even when brainy cities don’t mount specific campaigns, they make a point of bragging about their workforce whenever possible. “We talk about our workforce all the time,” said Sonya Moste, director of marketing and public relations at Atlanta Development Authority. “Our airport and our workforce are the number one and two assets of our city.”

Enterprise Seattle gets the point across through competitive analysis reports on various industry clusters that highlight the talent level of the workforce in various sectors. It recently completed a report on digital media and is working on a report about fashion and apparel, says Jeff Marcell, president and CEO.

In Boulder, Colo., the Economic Development Council let’s the press do much of the bragging about its brainpower. “We get a lot of publicity on it naturally, so we’re blessed not to have to spend a lot of advertising money doing it,” Draper says. ●

Even when brainy cities don’t mount specific campaigns, they make a point of bragging about their workforce.



# HIGH-TECH CLUSTERS



## ARE SCIENCE DEVELOPMENTS IN HARMONY OR CONFLICT WITH SMART GROWTH?

By Steve Wright

A high-tech software company wants to bring its company headquarters — and all the great-paying jobs and growth of the 21st century economy with it — to your town.

A research corridor already flush with good, clean jobs could expand to bring a top-flight Life Sciences Center and master-planned mixed use development into your area.

Unemployment is the highest in decades and a prolonged recession is taking away the factory and other traditional jobs of the 20th century.

Is it time to strike up the band and set off the fireworks in celebration of science-oriented employers coming to town with thousands of modern-era professional jobs?

Well, it all depends on who you ask. One person's job generator may look like a smart growth dream while others see high-tech clusters as a not-so-green and sustainable sprawling nightmare.

In Maryland, Montgomery County officials touted the vote to approve the Great Seneca Science Corridor (GSSC) Master Plan as a way of creating a Life Sciences Center (LSC), anchored by a Johns Hopkins University (JHU) development and served by transit, housing and commercial uses.

But the plan for the county in the greater Washington, D.C. area had a coalition of neighborhood groups opposed to what they said will create development “the size of 4.4 Pentagons on property that is only one and a half times as large,” according to its Scale-it-Back.com website.

Donna Baron, coordinator of the Gaithersburg-North Potomac-Rockville Coalition, said residents support science research, hospitals and affordable housing, but they cannot accept a plan that they say was “contrived to aid Johns Hopkins University's real estate” holdings by allowing overdevelopment.

“The Gaithersburg West Master Plan is the poster child for a disaster master plan from many different perspec-

Belward Farm, Montgomery County, Md.



tives,” Baron said of the master plan that was renamed the Greater Seneca Science Corridor plan shortly before the Montgomery County Council voted unanimously to approve it in May. “It’s a head shaker for anyone involved in land use planning. They made up a master plan to make it (bowing to Johns Hopkins’ desires) happen, but they had to jerry-rig the numbers and speak gibberish for over three years because none of it made any sense at all.”

“There was wide-spread opposition from not only the residents but the adjoining jurisdictions of Rockville and Gaithersburg and many of the civic, environmental, transit and smart growth organizations,” Baron said. “Some of the politicians are still touting the Science City as smart growth and transit-oriented even though the smart growth and transit organizations say it is none of the above and never will be.”

Baron said for years area residents have looked forward to having Johns Hopkins in the community, but soured on the huge scale of the plan, especially when “the community was not involved in any of the decision-making.”

“The roads are highly congested now and the area is full of residential subdivisions,” Baron continued. “The county is telling us we will be subjected to 20 to 30 years of commercial and infrastructure construction, and the end result will be an average speed of 9 miles an hour on roads that now have a speed limit of 45 mph.”



Photo provided by the Orton Family Foundation

Some of the politicians are touting the Science City as smart growth and transit-oriented.

Royce Hanson, the Montgomery County Planning Board Chairman when that body reviewed the GSSC before forwarding it to the County Council, said the 2010 update of the Master Plan is a sustainable move away from sprawl.

“The 2010 Plan recommends transforming the LSC from today’s suburban research park (single purpose uses surrounded by surface parking) into a more dynamic mixed-use center served by transit and focused on fostering businesses and institutions involved in the life sciences. This county — and progressive jurisdictions around the country — have moved away from suburban office park development to more sustainable, transit-oriented, mixed-use development and the (GSSC) Master Plan strives to achieve this objective for the future of the county’s premier Life Sciences Center,” said Hanson, who retired from the Planning Board after it reviewed the plan.

Hanson said the plan provides opportunities for growth and expansion of existing enterprises as well as land to attract new businesses. He said the plan ensures the proper infrastructure and services are in place to support future development. It also creates an extensive and connected open space system.

“The county is already home to the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration, and two significant research universities (Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland) have substantial presence in the Life Sciences Center,” said Hanson. “Proximity to regulatory agencies, research universities, and a highly educated workforce are keys to any growing technology cluster. Montgomery County is fortunate to have all three.”

The plan provides opportunities for growth and expansion of existing enterprises as well as land to attract new businesses.

Hanson said the GSSC creates new housing near jobs to help balance the jobs/housing ratio in the immediate area and promote the use of transit, walking and biking. He noted a rigorous staging plan that will not allow development to proceed until the transit is funded/under construction.

David Alpert, creator of GreaterGreaterWashington.org — a website devoted to improving the vitality of Washington, D.C. and the walkable cities and neighborhoods in the Washington metropolitan area, said the LSC site is too far from the existing rail transit for many people to realistically commute by Metro.

“There are many underutilized parcels around Metro stations in Montgomery County and even more in Prince George’s County, but Hopkins wanted to build on this site and Montgomery bent over backwards to accommodate that,” he observed.

Diane R. Schwartz Jones, assistant chief administrative officer for Montgomery County, said expanding a place for knowledge-based jobs is good stewardship for the future of Montgomery County. “These jobs allow for better paying employment opportunities in a job sector with recognized growth potential. The county is placing them where a major transitway is planned and in a live/work environment to reduce reliance upon our road networks,” she said.

The GSSC was adopted with a maximum density of 17.5 million square feet of commercial development. Schwartz Jones said the plan for the future of Life Sciences Center in Montgomery County is positive because it addresses environmental, transit, economic development and fiscal impacts.





Stewart Schwartz, executive director of the greater Washington, D.C.-area watchdog Coalition for Smarter Growth, said Montgomery County could have done better.

“(The GSSC) exacerbates the jobs/housing imbalance in Montgomery County,” he said. “In the western part of the county, the need is for housing, but this creates more jobs there. Some of the best ways to resolve traffic problems is to increase the number of jobs in eastern section and increase the amount of housing in western corridor — and add transit-oriented development.”

Schwartz praised Montgomery County for undertaking a long master planning process, but he said he’s not convinced the transitway planned for the GSSC will work efficiently for commuters.

“The state highway administration is now proposing a \$3.2 billion expansion of Interstate 270 — in a region where the transit agency is bankrupt — partly due to the magnitude of auto-dependant jobs they are proposing in the Science City,” he said.

On Pittsburgh’s Southside, the reviews are nothing but positive for the aggressive redevelopment plan that replaced an abandoned riverfront steel mill with high-tech jobs, corporate headquarters, retail, and housing, and replaced nearly 150,000 lost manufacturing jobs with close to 175,000 science-related jobs.

Because of the close proximity to University of Pittsburgh’s and Carnegie Mellon’s adjacent research centers, the once-blighted area took advantage of the universities’ needs for a science cluster that would house bioengineering, biotechnology and spin off companies related to the advancing research.

A majority of the new jobs in the science-cluster development, called South Side Works, are in these fields plus education and medically-related. South Side Works is located directly across the Monongahela River from downtown Pittsburgh’s thriving Technology Center, so the reborn neighborhood is a natural for high-tech expansion.

In the past decade, the development has attracted numerous biotech industries including the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center’s Distribution Center and Sports Medicine Facility — home of renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. Freddie H. Fu — and The McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

Montgomery County



Photo courtesy of Clearly Ambiguous

Expanding a place for knowledge-based jobs is good stewardship for the future of Montgomery County.

Photos by S. Rick Armstrong and courtesy of South Side Local Development Company



The Institute serves as a single base of operations for the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's leading scientists and clinical faculty working to develop tissue engineering, cellular therapies, biosurgery and artificial and biohybrid organ devices.

It also is host to the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse, a biomedical incubator that supports life science startups — such as Cardiorobotics, Flexicath and Blue Belt Technologies — developing health care products, tools and diagnostics.

In order to make the neighborhood attractive to relocating talent for the high-tech industry expansion and new startups, the aggressive redevelopment plan capitalized on the existing infrastructure, and The South Side Local Development Company also revitalized a beautiful corridor of Victorian shop fronts from 50 percent vacancy rates to a renewed historic hotspot with upscale restaurants, bars, shops and more — with virtually no vacancies.

“The South Side LDC used historic preservation as the lever for the economic redevelopment of the area,” said Rick Belloli, the nonprofit's executive director. “It is smart growth because it is capitalizing on and reusing the existing infrastructure of existing roads, sewers, housing stock, commercial building, etc.”

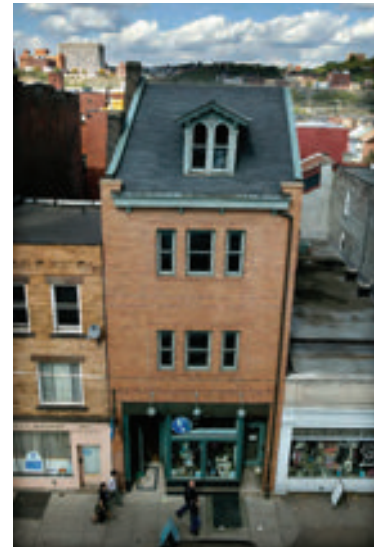
The South Side Works is a \$500 million mixed-use development of new, properly-scaled buildings housing retail, residential, offices and a hotel plus green space, a town square and Pittsburgh Steelers practice field on 110 acres that used to house an LTV Steel plant on the Monongahela River.

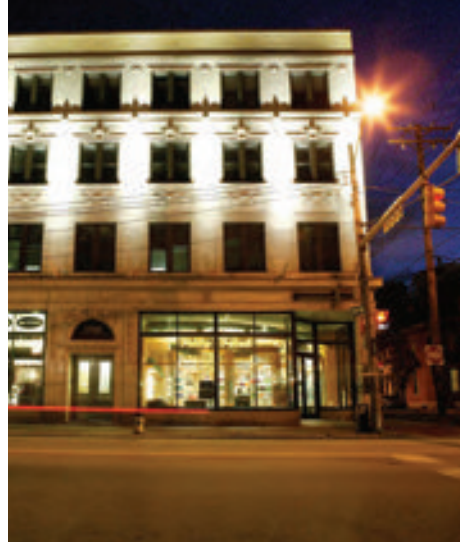
“The site, at completion, will equal or exceed the number of jobs that the steel plant had before it closed down in the 1980s,” Belloli said of the 75-percent completed project. “The South Side Works has 3,800 jobs on site now and 75 percent of those are office jobs. The site has been recognized by EPA, Urban Land Institute and profiled as a success story in the New York Times and the Economist.”

In addition, The South Side Works has landed blue chip tenants such as regional headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the headquarters of American Eagle Outfitters and the headquarters of a large construction firm.



Photos by S. Rick Armstrong and courtesy of South Side Local Development Company





The success of the South Side Works is the result of partnerships and very intense work with the residents of the area.

Photos by S. Rick Armstrong and courtesy of South Side Local Development Company

When a CEO moved his software development company from an isolated airport corridor location to the South Side Works, he told the New York Times that his creative workers would benefit from “an environment where people are excited about being at work and going out after work, further praising the reborn neighborhood for its “sense of vitality and beautiful surroundings, and everything’s within walking distance.”

Belloli said the success of the South Side Works, plus the neighboring Carson Street historic commercial strip, is the result of partnerships and very intense work with the residents of the area.

“When South Side LDC started its work, homes in the area were valued below the median price in the city of Pittsburgh. Now, the existing housing stock plus the new condos and townhouses are valued about 2.5 times the median in the city,” he said.

Belloli said part of the area’s success has been working to program new retail in the South Side Works that doesn’t steal customers from the Carson Street commercial corridor. Another factor has been an insistence on sticking to the area’s master plan and fighting to preserve parkland and riverfront access.

“There is a tremendously large retaining wall on the Monongahela River — left over from the steel works. The wall is probably 10 feet thick, 40 feet tall and 500 feet long, but we are going to carve through parts of it to provide access to the river,” Belloli said.

“We love having the Steelers’ practice field here and it is only 80 yards long because to get 100 yards, it would have taken away riverfront park space,” he said. “To

get the Steelers, in Pittsburgh, to build a practice space shorter than the NFL field they play on: that’s a strong partnership and commitment to sustaining a neighborhood,” he said.

In greater Madison, Wis., medical recordkeeping software giant Epic Systems’ move to a 350-acre suburban campus from several locations in central Madison sparked a controversy.

The campus, on former farmland in suburban Verona, Wis., has been criticized by Brett Hulsey, a longtime supervisor in Dane County, in which both Madison and Verona are located, and an environmental expert with 30 years of experience including a position as environmental policy advisor to President Clinton.

“It’s sprawl on an Epic scale,” Hulsey told the Isthmus alternative weekly newspaper in 2002, when the suburban location was chosen.

“There’s no way you can do campus-style office buildings and pretend that you really care about the environment. I’m sorry. You can’t say you’re ‘green’ because you have a solar panel on your roof, when you’re sitting out in the middle of a cornfield,” Rob Kennedy, a transportation consultant and member of the Regional Plan Commission, told the Isthmus in the same article.

Verona Mayor John Hochkammer sees things differently.

“It keeps great jobs local, is environmentally friendly, and it can be served with mass transit,” said the mayor of the city of 10,000 people located 10 miles from the center of Madison. “Some people were upset that the company left Madison, but most people now understand that Verona is part of the larger Madison metropolitan area

— and keeping companies in the Madison area and surrounding counties is good for everyone in the region.”

Some have criticized the more than \$10 million in incentives Verona gave to Epic to lure the still-growing high-tech firm to town. Mayor Hochkammer disagrees.

“The city of Verona did not ‘give away’ anything. The city made completely legal use of Tax Increment Financing

Economic success lies within high-technology industries as they yield a tremendous rate of return in terms of investment.



dollars, the only economic development ‘tool’ available to us,” he said. “Simply put, the city agreed to direct taxes generated by the Epic development to pay-down the debt for utility and street improvements that were needed by Epic, as well as an underground structured parking facility to eliminate a huge surface parking lot.”

“This arrangement was agreed to by all jurisdictions that receive taxes — the schools, the county, the state, the city,” Hochkammer explained. “Epic pays full taxes — they get no ‘break’ — but those taxes go to pay off the ‘up-front’ costs until they are paid in full (in) about 12 to 15 years. After that, Epic continues to pay full taxes.”

Mark A. Olinger, director of Madison’s Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development, said

the city tried to retain Epic by offering large urban sites at an industrial park, a plot adjacent to the regional airport and a downtown office tower left vacant when a large utility company relocated to a suburban office park.

He said Epic’s founder wanted a self-contained campus that required three times the acreage that Madison could assemble at any single site. He said the downtown convention center and hotels may suffer some because Epic used to pack both with people attending its meetings, but now the Verona campus has its own conference center.

In Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, people are applauding Docksider Green, an amazingly sustainable, compact, mixed-use development, which utilizes high-tech science to support its infrastructure, on 15 acres of former marine industrial land that required an environmental cleanup.

“The government wanted to preserve and support the shipyard trade on the land adjacent to the harbor, but they also wanted this adjacent site to be the greenest community in America,” said Robert Drew of Busby Perkins + Will, the Vancouver firm that designed the environment and buildings at Docksider Green.

Docksider Green’s office space was targeted for high-tech users to light industrial to serve and sustain the shipbuilding industry next door. All the heating and hot water for the mixed-use community is supplied by an on-site biomass plant that uses clean wood waste left over from local construction, landscaping and other sources.

The development is one-third built, with four mid-rise residential towers, two commercial buildings and a local bakery restaurant and coffee shop. Every structure is a green building, with collected rainwater used to flush the toilets and an underground wastewater treatment plant on-site. Modern green technology treats wastewater so it can be used to supply a man-made water feature that runs through the mixed-use development with harbor views.

“From our point of view, it is less environmentally friendly to develop on a suburban site instead of an urban location,” Drew said. “The urban site — with harbor views, restaurants, shops, culture and constant activity — gives quality of life for workers. Greenfield sites usually take away natural land and turn pastures into developments that require you to run water, sewage, gas, electric and roads to.”

In Albany, N.Y., the Harriman Research and Technology Development Corporation (HRTDC) has undertaken the task of transforming an underutilized 130-acre site with offices for 7,500 state workers into a “regional growth engine for New York state’s ‘Innovation Economy’ and a world class research and technology park that will spur economic development, grow the tax base and create high quality jobs in the capital region,” said Jola Szubielski, spokeswoman for Empire State Development and its subsidiary, HRTDC.

“We believe the state’s future economic success lies within high-technology industries as they yield a tremendous rate of return in terms of investment and job creation. We hope to build on our partnership with of the University at Albany, a leader in scientific research and technology development, for attracting related businesses to the campus,” Szubielski said, noting the Harriman campus will be reprogrammed with mixed-use development that focuses on tenants that support the area’s emerging industry clusters including, but not limited to, nanotechnology and bio/life sciences.

HRTDC officials believe the existing transportation infrastructure, various surrounding neighborhood amenities and proximity to the University at Albany’s main campus, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, and the growing SEMATECH complex make the Harriman Campus an ideal combination of high-tech job creation site and smart growth.

“Our ‘Innovation Community’ idea is a smart growth concept, defining a place where creative people work, live and play unlike what is available from the conventional urban/suburban commuting patterns,” Szubielski noted. “This concept of a mixed-use community hav-

ing a university-based economy at its focus has proven to be a successful catalyst for improved residential and commercial property values and the attraction of entrepreneurs, both established and startup companies who would benefit from the region’s research and technology attributes. This ‘Innovation Community’ would promote smart growth and sustainable communities, drive economic development and job creation, and put the campus on equal footing with a new generation of university-affiliated research parks.”

The HRTDC Corporate Board has accepted a letter of intent from Columbia Development Cos., of Albany, the leader of a team that won the rights to redevelop almost half of the Harriman Campus. Columbia has proposed offices for tech companies, a hotel and upscale condos on 130 of the Harriman campus’ 330 acres. The remainder will continue to be used by state agencies. ●

Wright frequently writes about Smart Growth and sustainable communities. He recently participated in the prestigious Forum on Land and the Built Environment: The Reinvented City sponsored by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

Below: Planned Harriman Campus in Albany, N.Y.



This concept of a mixed-use community having a university-based economy at its focus has proven to be a successful catalyst for improved residential and commercial property values



# Meds & ED

*Medical Centers can draw talent, spur development and revitalize an area*

Beyond providing life-saving care and essential research, medical centers are being recognized as powerful economic engines that can drive the development of an entire region and revitalize core urban communities.

“Do we think of hospitals as open and collaborating with its neighbors to create a place of beauty and healing, or do you become a fortress walled off from the community? Are hospitals places to treat illness, or should they have a broader goal to improve the community?” asked Dougal Hewitt, senior vice president of Bon Secours Richmond Health System in Virginia.

Hewitt — a doctoral candidate at the University of Miami, researching the way that the built environment affects our health and wellbeing — answers his question with a resounding vote in favor of hospitals that embrace their surroundings.

“At Bon Secours, we believe our institutions flourish when the neighborhood we are in flourishes. Safe, attractive, healthier neighborhoods make for healthier hospitals,” he said. “We are at a very interesting moment in health care. Institutions that are part of their communities are in better positions to recruit the best workers.”

Bon Secours holds neighborhood planning sessions to create health care campuses that are connected to the community and walkable, which can help combat the rampant obesity problems in America.

“When you create a place of beauty that develops a reputation of being a place of healing and refreshment, you are able to differentiate yourself from your competition,” he said. “Health care is a competitive field. If you frame who you are, that you are not just a suburban developer, you will attract more innovative and more community-focused individuals to your workforce.”



Doctor Jose Andres Restrepo, assistant professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Miami School of Medicine and chief of Rehabilitation at the University of Miami Hospital, was drawn to working in Miami’s urban core because of the University of Miami’s commitment to improving the urban realm.

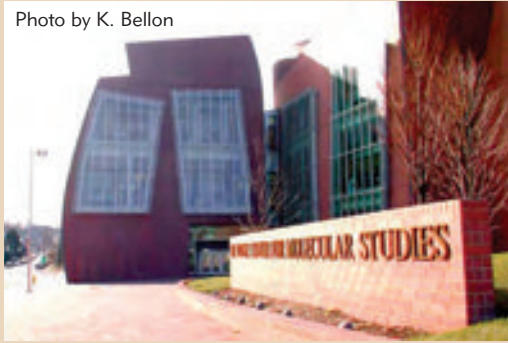
“With the new University of Miami Hospital, the medical school campus will blossom as the recession gets better,” Restrepo said of the university that upgraded an old urban hospital rather than building a new facility in the far-flung suburbs. “And, with the construction of two green buildings, the CRB (Clinical Research Building) and BRB (Basic Research Building), the medical school is committed to set an example (of sustainability and campus improvement.)”

“With its prime location and easy accessibility, the medical campus allows all residents of Miami-Dade County to (access) top medical services,” said Restrepo, who was educated in Bogota, Columbia, and served his residency at Saint Vincent’s Hospital in New York. “With the Medical School leadership and the importance of diversity in its work environment, it is fun to come to work.”

Dover, Kohl & Partners of Coral Gables, Fla., created a plan for the University of Miami to make it a premier health center in the United States and the world. The plan addresses the existing urban campus’ lack of cohesive framework and recommends complementary uses that could make it a vibrant, attractive and economically successful community.



Photo by K. Bellon



“Medical centers are often perceived as needing their own space rather than being integrated into existing cities, communities or neighborhoods. In current planning practices, it has become all too common to separate land uses and create large, stand-alone, and disconnected destinations,” said Andrew M. Zitofsky, of Dover, Kohl & Partners.

“Great examples of urban medical centers, such as the New York University Medical Center and Mount Sinai Medical Center in Manhattan, demonstrate how institutional uses can be blended within a framework of compatible uses and urbanism. Medical facilities are, by default, both large employment centers and destinations of many daily visitors,” he continued. “They have the potential to be powerful economic drivers, to become neighborhood anchors, to create town centers, and to act as catalysts for economic development and investment.”

Mike Ball, director of planning and implementation for the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, said the Consortium of nine medical, research and academic institutions that make up the campus, opened positions on its governing board for neighborhood leaders, to ensure strong community input.

“Some of these institutions have been around 100 years, but when they came together 10 years ago, improving the relationship with the neighborhoods was paramount,” he said. “If a building is going up, reach out to the neighborhood to make sure the street connections are there and that we build in a way that doesn’t wall off our edges.”

Ball said, in working with the community, the Consortium has won two prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants — to design active living communities that are more walkable and bikeable, which promote healthy physical activity, and to make healthy, affordable fresh food available in urban areas.

“We are working with the neighborhoods to create a place where people want to come to work and come for care, and that feels safe and easy to access,” said Ball, noting that the Consortium has a public art program and works tirelessly to maintain curb appeal. “A healing environment outside the building where you go inside for care is a big part of staying competitive.”

In Cincinnati, the Uptown Consortium is dedicated to restoring and revitalizing a culturally diverse and historic area

comprised of three large medical centers, the University of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Zoo.

The Consortium works to promote economic development while creating a sense of place and better access between the neighborhoods and the major medical, academic and cultural institutions. The nonprofit works to make Uptown a safe, attractive and walkable community for its residents, employees, students and visitors.

“The medical campuses championed economic revitalization in Uptown. Since then, over 60 blighted structures have been removed from the neighborhood and \$85 million in mixed-use development is either completed or underway,” said Consortium spokeswoman Andi Ferguson. “The medical campuses, so vital to research and development, have a natural synergy with their neighborhood partners who specialize in entrepreneurialism (CincyTech and Bio/Start, for example, provide support and incubation for tech and bio-tech companies, respectively) and innovation (University of Cincinnati).”

Joanna Lombard, a professor at the University of Miami School of Architecture, is an expert on the impact of the built environment on health and wellbeing.

“Medical centers bring a steady stream of staff, patients and visitors, but the design of the center determines whether that consistent flow provides an economic benefit. The conventional medical office building located in a parking lot is an isolated unit. So is the hospital,” she said. “Typically, people might even drive from one to the other rather than walk across a vast parking lot. This is health care sprawl and the economic benefits are limited to the transactions that take place within the buildings.”

Lombard said health care urbanism planning offers an alternative.

“Within these plans, medical buildings are designed to provide sidewalks and streets instead of just parking lots. Parking is contained behind ‘liner buildings,’ which not only hide the parking, but also make it easy for drivers to navigate, as well as quickly enter the facilities through covered walkways. Second, buildings house a lively mix of shops and restaurants that serve the staff, patients and visitors, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.”

Lombard said a medical center can be transformed into a town center with amenities that enhance the daily lives of the medical and local community.

“Busy staffers can pick up supper at a deli on the way to the car. The pharmacy can move out of the back hall of the hospital to become more like the neighborhood’s corner drugstore, complete with a lunch counter and a book store nearby,” she said. “All of the necessities of life within walking distance encourage everyone to walk, supporting greater physical activity and social interaction,” two key contributors to health and wellbeing.” ●

# REALTORS® Take Action

## Making Smart Growth Happen

### REALTORS® Promote Sustainability and Smart Growth

The Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® (NVAR) believes that building green and focusing on sustainability is important.

But the group, which represents 10,200 REALTORS®, will be the first to work hard to beat back any mandate for green requirements, no matter how big or small.

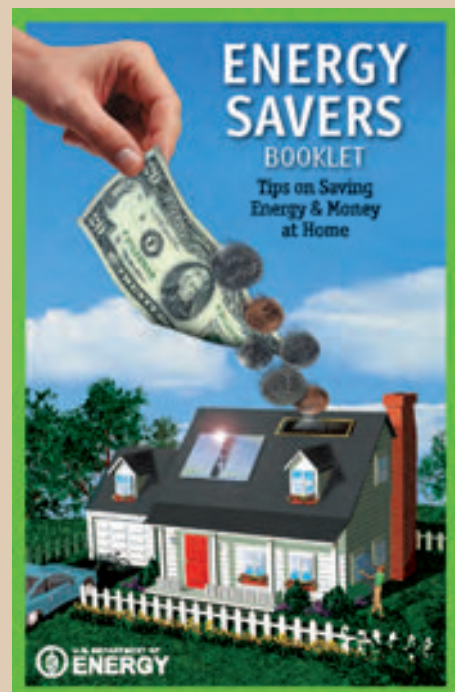
NVAR Senior Vice President of Public and Government Affairs Mary Beth Coya says that the association and its members see the wisdom in building environmentally sound housing and the association is constantly advocating smart growth principles. Mandates, though, often are ineffective and can drive up the costs of doing business.

That doesn't make them obstructionists, however. Indeed, they are anything but. The REALTORS® are working hard to spread the word, through a variety of different innovative efforts, that sustainability and smart growth are where it's at.

The association received a \$5,000 Smart Growth Action Grant in 2009 and used the funding to purchase 5,000 Energy Savers booklets that were published by the United States Department of Energy.

The NVAR branded the guides with a new "green" logo it developed and will use the guides to enhance its smart growth advocacy efforts. While the group still uses its red and blue lettered logo with a yellow starburst, the association has developed a similar logo with green lettering. The starburst has been replaced with a tree branch.

The 33-page book shows homeowners how to reduce energy use at home and offers homeowners a variety





of ways to reduce their energy use and increase their savings. NVAR members have taken a pledge, Coya said, to distribute the guides at closings.

The guides were handed out at the association's 2010 annual convention and will be distributed to those who tour the organization's new Fairfax, Va., headquarters. The 24,000-square-foot building was built to the United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, standards.

Among the features in the new building are windows that reduce the penetration of heat while allowing in light. It also has an underground parking space that is landscaped at the plaza level. Initially, the NVAR constructed the building with a LEED silver certification in mind but NVAR executive Christine Todd said the better gold rating, "is well within reach."

Coya also has distributed the branded guides to a variety of elected officials in the municipalities in which their members sell properties.

"It has helped our image. It shows we are part of the community and that we care about the environment," Coya said of the association's distribution of the guides.

The NVAR also is working on another tool for property owners and homebuyers, an energy audit disclosure form for real estate transactions. Coya says that the NVAR has an internal committee working on the form now and that she's hopeful it can be completed by the end of the year.

The idea is the brainchild of NVAR member and chairman of the association's "green task force," Adam Gallegos. Gallegos is the broker and founder of Arbour Realty, a real estate company that states on its homepage that it is "the DC area's first green real estate company."

Gallegos got the idea from clients who took advantage of an energy audit coupon he would provide them in a closing basket that was chock full of goodies.

Gallegos often heard from homeowners, who utilized the coupons and said that they wished they had the energy audit before they had finalized the purchase so they could have addressed some of the issues the audit uncovered before closing.

Similar to a home inspection that can reveal flaws in a property, Gallegos maintains that energy audits, where blower door tests and infrared technologies are used to diagnose the energy efficiency of a home, are an equally important tool for homebuyers because they can reveal areas in a home that waste energy which means higher costs.

With that information in hand, Gallegos approached the NVAR to discuss what, if anything, the association could do to produce a uniform disclosure form that every area REALTOR® could include as an option for homeowners to consider.

Similar to a home inspection Gallegos said, the buyer would have to affirm they wanted the audit.

While the Arbour Realty homepage stresses that the company takes its "commitment to the environment seriously" Gallegos said he doesn't "have any intention or interest in seeing this become mandatory. Not everyone wants one."

Gallegos, who chairs the NVAR's green committee, said the association is "really receptive."

Arlington County Virginia Board Chairman Jay Fissette acknowledged that he'd like to see energy audits be mandated at the point of sale, but said that if energy audits were to take off the way home inspections did, he'd be pleased. "It's become accepted standard practice," Fissette said of home inspections. "I applaud the NVAR for getting ahead of the curve." ●

# REALTORS® Take Action

Making Smart Growth Happen

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



The village of Waterford's downtown district has what some would call "good bones." The Wisconsin village has lakes, rivers, green spaces and a well-traveled, state-maintained highway running through Main Street that makes the village of Waterford easily accessible.

But, as Mike VanderBunt, executive of the Lakes Area REALTORS® Association (LARA) notes, "it feels like an area that is not living up to its full potential."

That's not news to Village of Waterford Administrator Rebecca Ewald, who last year took advantage of an offer by the LARA to help a municipality in either Walworth, Racine or Kenosha counties that wanted to redevelop or revitalize a downtown and adhere to smart growth principles.

The 590-member Lakes Area REALTORS® Association was offering to one lucky municipality a "photomorph," or slide show of pictures that shows layer by layer, how planning decisions can impact an area.

The initial picture in the photomorph is of the existing space. The pictures that follow show how the space changes when certain design elements are added to the existing space, and the last picture in the photomorph shows the multi-layered effect of all the changes.

The photomorph helps bring to life the planning discussions so people can better visualize what sometimes can be complicated planning and zoning talk.

LARA couldn't have made the offer at a better time for the village of Waterford, which had just convened an ad hoc Design Guideline Committee. The group was charged with making recommendations to the village of Waterford planning committee on what improvements should be made to SH 83/20, a two-lane highway that runs through the town.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has targeted the road for a makeover in the next five to 10 years and the village wants to ensure that the DOT doesn't focus its efforts on only laying more tar. Ewald said that Waterford wants to ensure that there are accommodations made for pedestrians and that the state takes smart growth principles into consideration when improving the road.

The goal, she said, is to make the area more pedestrian friendly and to improve the aesthetics of Main Street, which will ultimately draw more people to the area, which in turn will help economic development. Specific recommendations made by the ad hoc committee include enlarging sidewalks and narrowing the traffic lanes to focus on pedestrians.

The photomorph project LARA was offering was made possible, in part, by a \$5,000 Smart Action grant awarded to the LARA by the National Association of REALTORS®. VanderBunt said LARA initially had planned to work with a developer who had a "beautifully designed mixed-use development that was a perfect example of smart growth." The sour economy, though, sidelined the development.



Waterford Photomorph

“We decided that instead of canceling the photomorph idea we should reach out and see if there was a need,” VanderBunt said.

And for that, Ewald is grateful.

“It is a brilliant tool,” she said, adding that in her 10 years as an administrator she had never seen anything like what LARA helped the village of Waterford produce.

Berkeley-based Urban Advantage worked with LARA on the village’s photomorph project. Urban Advantage founder Steve Price said he launched the company 14 years ago after serving on the city of El Cerrito planning commission.

Price says he remembers how the tone of a planning commission meeting would change when he would use photographs to try to illustrate a point. “I would talk until I was blue in the face,” he said, only half joking. “The degree of tension in the room would instantly evaporate when people were given pictures to respond to.”

The 18-page village of Waterford Main Street photomorph reflects the decisions that were made by the ad hoc planning commission, but the proposals must still be approved by the planning commission and ultimately the seven member village board.

To that end LARA’s VanderBunt has been using the photomorph in presentations before the planning commission, the local chamber of commerce and even to a group of downtown business owners.

“This photo simulation is being taken very seriously,” he said.

And now, so are the REALTORS®.

VanderBunt said by working with the village of Waterford, LARA’s “visibility, credibility and trust” has increased.

“Unless you put yourself out there and build relationships, you’re not going to get recognized as an authority in areas like smart growth and economic development,” he said.

Ewald agrees that the photomorph has raised the REALTORS® profile in the community and in the planning department at the village of Waterford.

“It’s become clear to me that we should be working together on more projects together,” said Ewald. “Essentially, their (LARA’s) goals are the same goals we want to achieve.” ●

REALTORS® & Smart Growth

# on common ground



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ASSOCIATION *of*  
REALTORS®

