Civic Participation and Smart Growth:
Transforming Sprawl into a Broader Sense of Citizenship

This paper was written by Jonathan Weiss of the George Washington University Center on Sustainability and Regional Growth* in collaboration with the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. It is the fourth in a series of translation papers sponsored by the Funders’ Network to translate the impact of sprawl upon issues of importance to America’s communities and to suggest opportunities for progress that would be created by smarter growth policies and practices. Other key issues addressed in the series of translation papers include social equity, workforce development, parks and open space, transportation, agriculture, public health, education, the environment, community and economic development, and aging.

Abstract

This article takes on a particularly important and multi-dimensional topic. It describes how the growing concern about suburban sprawl can activate a new wave of smarter growth – and broader civic participation – in regions across the country.

The article explores first how sprawl development poses various potential obstacles to broad-based civic participation. Sprawling development results in the creation of more spread-out communities that require people to spend more time driving and less time in other pursuits. This spatial separation also discourages the creation of a sense of place about where they live. Living further apart from each other, often in more homogenous communities, also makes it less likely that people will have sustained interaction with others from different backgrounds.

The paper notes that one source of change may be found in the people that are reacting to continued sprawl by becoming increasingly concerned about land-use and transportation decisions in their immediate neighborhoods and municipalities. Although this reaction is at times expressed in a narrow, limited sense without regard to an overall, long-term regional strategy, smart growth strategies can assist citizens in developing much more of a regional consciousness and in thinking beyond their own boundaries or immediate concerns. This is beginning to happen in several parts of the country, as is demonstrated by a number of examples. There also has emerged a host of new informational, visualization, and collaborative tools that can help catalyze and advance these efforts.

All of this offers hope, according to the article. Through participation in and understanding of smart growth, people can further broaden their sense of the duties and responsibilities of civic engagement – and we as a nation can move closer towards a healthier, more sustainable democracy.

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Suburban Sprawl and its Influence on Civic Participation

Suburban sprawl – the name increasingly given for the unchecked growth and outward suburban development that has distinguished land use patterns in most regions across the United States – has become the subject of much debate and study as communities and local governments attempt to confront its adverse effects. While the spatial consequences of sprawl have received obvious attention – how it can physically separate people and communities – what has been less understood have been the social consequences of such sprawl and physical separation.

Post-World War II suburban patterns of development tend to segregate different land uses – residential in one place and commercial in another – and often give residents little choice but to use their cars to commute to work and for everyday errands. At the same time, this style of development often omits accessible public spaces where people can meet and gather. With the creation of more and more suburbs using this style (along with exclusionary zoning and housing discrimination) came relatively homogeneous communities, often divided by race and class.¹

What is the impact of such development patterns on civic participation? Scholars and social observers have been hypothesizing about this impact for decades.² It has been difficult, however, to quantify. Most recently, Professor Robert Putnam in his analysis of "social capital," which he defines as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" – found that sprawl did in fact reduce civic participation, and in turn social capital.

Putnam argues that sprawl is not the primary culprit for what he views as the country's lessening social capital, but has been a "significant contributor to civic disengagement."³ He cites three reasons: first, sprawl and the consequent need to drive to most places takes time that could be used for civic purposes; second, sprawl leads to increased social homogeneity in communities, by class and race, which appears to result in reduced civic participation; and third, sprawl leads to the physical fragmentation of communities and our daily lives, which undercuts involvement in local affairs.⁴

Time has indeed become a critical element. The commute and time individuals spend on the road detract from time that could be spent for more fruitful endeavors, both for the family and the community. Evidence indicates that for every ten minutes of additional commuting time, community affairs involvement decreases by ten percent.⁵ Mothers, for example, have been even termed the "bus drivers of the 1990s" because on an average day the average mother "spends more than an hour driving, traveling 29 miles and taking more than five trips."⁶ For example, Putnam quotes one Californian as stating: "I live in Garden Grove, work in Irvine, shop in Santa Ana, go to the dentist in Anaheim, my husband works in Long Beach, and I used to be the president of the League of Women Voters in Fullerton."⁷

Additionally, the financial pressures on today's parents to provide for the family and the increase in both parents working contributes to a lack of time and energy that previously were devoted to social activities.

Another consequence of the growing reliance on automobiles is the increasing isolation of those who lack...
them, such as the elderly, disabled, low-income individuals, and youth. Architects of the “New Urbanism,” such as Andres Duany, note how sprawling development patterns in general tend to encourage people to retreat into private space. According to this view, “In the absence of walkable public places—streets, squares, and parks, the public realm—people of diverse ages, races, and beliefs are unlikely to meet and talk.”

To be sure, there needs to be more statistical research in this area. Political scientist Eric Oliver has found in a new study, however, that the more homogenous a community, the lower the expected civic engagement. He also found that economic segregation that often takes place in metropolitan areas has a strong, negative impact on civic participation. Oliver notes, “By creating politically separated pockets of affluence, suburbanization reduces the social needs faced by citizens with the most resources to address them; by creating communities of homogenous political interests, suburbanization reduces the local conflicts that engage and draw the citizenry into the public realm.”

Civic participation is directly linked to democratic participation. Civic institutions open a window of opportunity and participation into the political world. Thus, a lack of civic participation caused in part by sprawl results in a weakening of democracy.

But all is not lost.

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Rise in Concern About Local Land-Use/Transportation Decisions

Aldo Leopold long ago lamented that to build a better motor we use the human brain, but to build a better countryside we throw dice. Today, people across the country are beginning to recognize the adverse affects of sprawl and demanding that something be done in a thoughtful, measured manner. In this sense, sprawl is becoming a unifying issue that can mobilize citizens and communities.

On election day in 1998, more than 70 percent of a record-number 240 land use initiatives in 31 states were passed by citizens. Oft cited as a defining moment, these initiatives were due in large part to the work of concerned citizens in suburbs and represented a new threshold of interest about sprawl. Those election results crystallized interest that had been building for several years on the local level and are seen as the “tip of the iceberg.” Citizens are in the process of changing the face of politics in their communities.

As Keith Schneider of the Michigan Land Use Institute writes, “[The sprawl] issue is slowly restoring the willingness of Americans who have never been part of the [political] process to work with all kinds of people on local issues. Those decisions which used to be approved without anybody there are now being addressed with 80 to 100 people there in the room.”

A recent survey by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism bore this out, showing that sprawl-related issues tied with crime as the local issue Americans most cared about.

NIMBYism

While the consequences of sprawl have energized civic mindedness, it is important to note that not all reactions to sprawl’s effects have been of such quality. Often lingering in the shadows of this growing concern about sprawl is the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) syndrome.
A community’s desire to maintain the status quo and its fear of the uncertainties that come with change can give rise to NIMBY attitudes. Some members of a community resist any alteration in their neighborhood, whether it is a change in the local zoning, tax structure, environmental regulation, or a governmental annexation. In addition, the creation of new affordable housing, public transportation, or service facility can create uncertainty in a community. Residents fear that a change in their neighborhood will result in an increase in crime, a decrease in property values and quality of life, flight from the neighborhood, and/or the demise of local businesses. While some fears are unfounded, others are legitimate and need a response.

Community opposition usually occurs because of lack of information, lack of involvement, and conflicting interests. Providing information and educating the community about the reasons for the change can help to counter residents’ concerns. Inviting community participation that allows opponents to voice their fears assists in maintaining a sense of good will between the groups. In controversies arising from NIMBY concerns, it is always better to deal with a well-educated, well-informed public, and to promote open dialogue between opposing groups.

The public hearings necessary for permits or to satisfy legal requirements regarding land use concerns often resonate with local residents attacking the proposed project and banding together in opposition. Thus a great paradox. Siting for development often cannot occur without public participation, and public participation often prevents the siting of various projects. In addition, too often community groups that organize to oppose such projects disperse immediately after their “victory,” rather than continuing to maintain an active participatory role in the community.

This is not true civic-mindedness, but rather people simply trying to protect their own self-interest and perceived quality of life at the expense of others, even neighbors. In a classic example of a NIMBY case in Anderson, South Carolina, two neighboring communities pitted themselves against each other over a permit for a hazardous waste facility. One opposed the facility’s siting in their area and the other supported the siting in the other town — simply because they did not want to become a possible site for the facility if the permit was denied.

What underlies NIMBYism is a lack of community spirit in the larger sense. NIMBYism strikes out not just at landfills, but to generally restricting development without regard to broader considerations, such as the potential impact on affordable housing or on neighboring communities. At its worst, concern about sprawl can mask the most virulent forms of exclusionary zoning. It can serve as a convenient excuse to justify an individual’s selfishness and lack of moral or ethical responsibility to others.

NIMBYism is not true civic participation in a democratic sense. It indicates that the institutional mechanisms currently used in many jurisdictions are broken and preclude meaningful citizen participation in the land use decision-making process. On the other hand, however, it also serves as a signal that land use is a subject that people care about and are willing to get involved with.
Smart growth – how places can grow in a sustainable way – requires citizens to look beyond their immediate interests and develop partnerships with others. A key test of whether a community anti-sprawl measure is more than a NIMBY response is whether that measure takes into account the "3 Es" of sustainable development – the environment, the economy, and equity. Often this requires thinking beyond individual municipalities and developing a more regional approach. This is not to say that all individual municipal actions are by definition NIMBY or that actions within a municipality can not advance smart growth.

It is to say that smart growth is about more than dealing with sprawl; it is also about reinvesting in existing communities and recognizing the connections between the two. Rather than being isolated concerns, the decline of our cities and older suburbs and the phenomena of sprawl are really two sides of the same coin. This means that smart growth efforts are usually more effective when approached from a multi-jurisdictional, regional approach. This necessarily means a commitment and participation from the citizens of all affected communities.

Smart growth requires representatives of diverse interests to reach a shared vision for a successful future and to make a commitment to work together to achieve that future. And just as smart growth approaches need engaged citizens to succeed, the very act of undertaking a smart growth strategy creates an opportunity to engage the citizenry and stimulate civic participation.

The real challenge is taking that first step of mobilizing citizens and communities for the long-term and counteracting the deleterious effects on civic duty and citizenship that sprawl has helped create.16

Collaboration and participation cannot be limited to a governmental role, however, especially in light of the prevalent distrust, whether real or perceived, of government by the people. Citizens must have real influence over decisions rather than just token input for a democracy to successfully function; attacking sprawl is no different – citizens must feel that they are taking an active role in their community.17

NIMBYism demonstrates that there must be alternatives to the governmental process and other avenues of input that allow an earlier entry in the policymaking. Alexis de Tocqueville recognized that in American democracy, active citizen participation necessarily involves institutions.18 As with smart growth, there must be an organizing entity to concentrate the citizen energies into a united force.

The Topsfield Foundation, in successfully promoting engagement, offers six "views" on how to build a stronger sense of community:19

1) Give people a chance to talk about differences;
2) Honor the heritage of the area;
3) Empower people who have been excluded in the past;
4) Create projects where different kinds of people can work together toward common goals;
5) Encourage people to take pride in themselves; and
6) Insist on a basic level of respect and courtesy.

There is no single formula to follow to build a stronger sense of community. Civic participation can be initiated by any member or group in an area: the
Chattanooga Venture recently completed a "ReVision 2000" process. One of the reasons Chattanooga has been successful is because "[c]ommunity involvement and participatory planning are not hollow phrases . . . [but serve as] the basis for making important community decisions." This included use of visualization technology that allowed the residents to see and choose their vision; the county regional planning agency solicited citizen input in 1996 through its Future-scape survey. Chattanooga has built on these efforts to develop a commitment to working together as a region -- from the ChatAtlanta transportation project to the Greenways Planning Project, which aims to create a 75-mile Greenways system network.

The Silicon Valley Network Joint Ventures Vision Leadership Team, comprised of a diverse group of regional citizens from the business, government, and non-profit communities, has collected input from over 2,000 residents to help shape a "Silicon Valley 2010" vision. A framework for this vision focuses on an innovative economy, livable environment, inclusive society, and regional stewardship, with an index launched to measure and publicize quantitative changes in these areas each year. At the same time, the Network has initiated several focused projects, including bringing schools, high-tech companies, government, and nonprofit organizations together to work on raising computer literacy among the region's large Latino population.

In 1995, McColl was sitting in his top-floor office looking over the northside of downtown Charlotte. Seeing the run-down structures and public housing, he realized the market was not reaching these neighborhoods. McColl decided to buy whole parcels and become the developer to ensure that businesses and new housing found their way to this section of Charlotte. By using his influence and resources, this business leader, working with local community groups, helped begin the revitalization, and more importantly, motivate and develop partnerships with others to realize the community's potential.

Building Broad-Based Coalitions

Another concern is ensuring that the entire spectrum of the socioeconomic conditions is represented -- particularly the poor and minorities. The National Neighborhood Coalition created a new program on "Neighborhoods, Regions, and Smart Growth" to promote community-based and faith-based organizations as advocates for regional planning and neighborhood-based smart growth. Churches and other faith-based organizations, in fact, can often provide the last bastion of community participation for low-income and minority citizens, and therefore must be involved in community planning. The Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Interfaith Stewardship Plan saw synagogues and churches sponsor informational forums and citizen education in forming a strong grassroots movement to protect wetlands in the region.

Environmentalists of course can play an important role. A new concept is emerging called "civic environmentalism" that is designed to capture a more inclusive, placed-based environmental perspective. Author Bill Shutkin calls civic environmentalism "planning and implementation at the community and regional levels . . . [that] focuses on the overall health and quality of life of communities - social, economic, and environmental - and the sustainability of that health and quality of life over time."22

Partnerships, collaboration, and other types of consensus building are the building blocks to many community revitalization efforts throughout the country. While difficulties may arise because groups are not accustomed to collaboration and power sharing, the results have been highly successful. When people from every sector work together toward a unified goal, a stronger sense of community and civic pride is created. Numerous examples exist of communities and institutions recognizing the need for citizen involvement and coalition building.24

- Chattanooga, Tennessee has gone from being the "worst polluted city" in America in 1969 to a model of civic cooperation and urban revitalization. With funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation and other organizations, Chattanooga Venture was formed in 1984 in recognition of the need for citizen involvement in creating a new agenda for the community's future. Its first project was a public participation process called "Vision 2000." The process involved more than 1,700 people and resulted in the setting out of 40 major goals. It has helped lead to a revitalization of the city, an improved self-image, and lowering of
socioeconomic barriers.

• The Silicon Valley Network has instituted the Joint Venture Silicon Valley project, which received financial support from a host of foundations and organizations, to tackle regional quality of life issues in an integrated way, including education, crime, economic development, and transportation.

• Utah, in 1997, created a partnership called "Envision Utah" dedicated to regional growth issues within the Greater Wasatch Area – a region in Northern Utah consisting of 88 cities and 10 counties. The partnership includes over 100 community stakeholders from the academic, private, public, and religious sectors.

• St. Louis, Missouri has shown a civic commitment to regional smart growth issues on many levels. The East-Way Gateway Coordinating Council, the metropolitan planning organization for the St. Louis area, is spearheading the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative.

Each instance illustrates the positive results that can be achieved when citizens and communities find common ground and form supportive coalitions that extend beyond individual political jurisdictions and focus instead on larger issues that affect everyone from all socioeconomic and community sectors.

There are an increasing number of ways to help engage the public. To start, the media can play an important role in getting the message out on smart growth and keeping citizens informed, as it is a key part of information dissemination in any community. Unfortunately, many members of the media tend towards coverage of the negative aspects of any venture. Community leaders can address this media concern by involving the media outlets themselves as important components of information sharing in the project. In some cases, the major local newspaper has made a strong commitment to covering smart growth and regional cooperation as a way to fulfill its own commitment to civic participation.

Various institutions are also creating tools to successfully advance smart growth within a civic-minded framework, and the number of institutions is growing to try and reclaim the ground that has been lost. The Institute for the Study of Civic Values, for example, has put together an online manual entitled "Building Community in the American Tradition" that uses the Constitution's preamble to provide a framework for community planning. It provides newsgroup discussion lists and community examples from 16 different states.

Universities can actively participate in facilitating community work and efforts furthering smart growth and democracy by using their resources and expertise in encouraging citizen participation and public policy debate and formulation. The Assets-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University has published a manual entitled "Building Communities from the Inside-Out" advocating an assets-based approach that "inventories the many individual, associational and institutional assets that all communities – even the poorest – possess, and find new ways to mobilize them."

Indicators that measure specific aspects of a community's well being...
Unfortunately, many members of the media tend towards coverage of the negative aspects of any venture. Community leaders can address this media concern by involving the media outlets themselves as important components of information sharing in the project.

A community should try to link an indicator to policy to ensure effectiveness. These indicators can then be used to assess performance relative to that policy; this will promote meaningful public dialogue, policy discourse, and allow individual members of a community to analyze the decision-making process in a more informed manner. Indicators help to bring issues to the forefront and tell a society if they are making progress toward their stated goal. As more regions use indicators to measure their progress, this can encourage the sharing of information between communities.

The data sets compiled and used in a neighborhood indicators program can also be used in conjunction with another recent innovation that can have a tremendous impact on the future of land use planning and the widespread availability of information – Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. The ability to easily sort and categorize information by spatial units is invaluable. The rapid advances in technology have imbued desktop computers with the capacity to create and print maps that indicate a host of different factors and elements. These same advances have also accommodated a presentation format that is much more user-friendly and often more useful than traditional tabular data. GIS can be used to identify trends and areas of concern that cross political jurisdictions, highlighting the need for regionalism. It also can be used by organizations to identify both problems and answers to land use and socioeconomic problems within a community.

The federal government in particular holds the key to a large amount of information, and through individual programs and Internet access, they are unlocking the doors for citizens.

For example:
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development offers a Community 2020 software package that utilizes GIS and allows communities to "visually analyze, understand, and respond to community needs and opportunities."
- The Department of the Interior offers an Urban Dynamics land use program that documents the history and change of areas based on geographic and topographic information.
- The Environmental Protection Agency encourages community partnerships and information sharing through its Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking (EMPACT) program. It also promotes the principles and techniques of smart growth by using its Smart Growth Index, designed to simulate land-use and transportation scenarios.

Indeed, every day new, creative tools, from enhanced interactive surveying to using the Internet and scenario planning in novel ways, are being developed that can assist citizens on an individual or group basis.

All of the tools available cannot be listed here, but the point is that interest in changing the status quo, reshaping policy, and creating a sustained involvement relies on using information. Through such information, stakeholders can become more...
informed and more involved. In fact, one of the keys to developing a useful indicator system is to design it to stimulate feedback and change rather than simply act as a monitoring mechanism. Those who control the information, however, must make it easily accessible to the public. Comprehensive and accessible information for all stakeholders is vital to reasoned and balanced discussions and decision-making.

Opportunities for Funders

Foundations have played a key role in promoting greater civic education and participation in smart growth activities. There is no better time than the present for funders to explore ways to escalate that role, for we are at a critical juncture in raising civic engagement and making smart growth a lasting issue that can bring about lasting change. Foundations can provide needed support for the research and monitoring of broad-based, collaborative smart growth efforts – where citizens have been successfully engaged – and can assist groups and activities engaging citizens and building collaborative processes in the future.

Research Into What Works

With respect to research, more education is needed about the range of activities taking place in regions across the country to engage citizens and what is working. More research needs to be done on how citizen interests are activated and mobilized on smart growth issues. For instance, which regions are using which new information tools and how successful is the use of these tools? What kinds of information, means of communication, and techniques for participation are most useful to educate and engage citizens? How is citizen participation best sustained over time? Moreover, is there a particular education process that is needed to engage lower income citizens in these issues? More research is needed on how engagement in smart growth activities transfers to citizen engagement in other issues – the potential "ripple effect" of involvement.

There are also several different approaches of coalition building and more information is needed about the success and limitations of these approaches. How, for instance, do we ensure that citizens gain "real" influence rather than token input and that interests from all socioeconomic interests are represented? Finally, we need to learn more about how to change laws and policies so that citizen participation and consensus building on growth issues are built into the legal and political process.

Supporting Actions

To unleash the full potential of smart growth and thereby transform the movement evolving to counter sprawl into a broader sense of civic participation, foundations can complement a research agenda by providing support in on-the-ground smart growth areas.

Some key areas of support include:
1) informing and engaging citizens from all quarters, breaking down barriers where possible between them, and sustaining their interest and involvement;
2) leveraging and cross-fertilizing existing local institutions in each region, such as churches and civic and educational institutions;
3) changing and enforcing laws and policies to ensure that citizens gain "real" influence, rather than token input, in growth decision-making;
4) ensuring representation particularly among the poor and traditionally disenfranchised, in the smart growth debate;
5) developing regional, community-led consensus-building processes;
6) democratizing knowledge and providing enhanced education and training at all levels; and
7) developing and distributing easy-to-use tools to assist citizen input.

Foundations should seek out the leading organizations and experts with experience in some of these areas and help inform and support their work with additional tools and research. The organizations themselves should then also be encouraged to collaborate with other organizations, especially organizations that do not traditionally work on smart growth areas. Foundations need to work with strong institutional entities, such as the League of Women Voters and local leadership development programs and service clubs, to ensure that those entities are aware of and incorporate smart growth concerns in their own outreach and engagement with citizens.

At times, foundations may be more effective if seen less as outspoken advocates of smart growth and more as impartial supporters of credible information on the topic. An example is work of the Kettering Foundation to provide resources for the publication by Public Agenda of an easy-to-read nonpartisan guide called "A Nice Place to Live: Creating Communities, Fighting Sprawl." Without a widespread understanding of the issues underpinning sprawl and the benefits to be gained from smart growth, any form of civic participation is resigned to be less effective than would otherwise be the case. Foundations should also support programs and projects that draw on the vast informational tools housed within the government. Providing organizations with the funding that will allow them to educate communities on how to efficiently locate and harness these tools would go a long way to increasing effective citizen participation.

Just a cautionary reminder: there is no one right model for promoting civic participation in smart growth. There are, however, a range of strategies for a range of places. The communities know best and must lead the process. Foundations, of course, can be a catalyst and a partner but they must listen as much as they act — and listen as they act.

And when they do, what becomes possible is truly inspiring. Simply recall that it was funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation, matched by demonstrated leadership from its key officers, that played a key role in the creation of Chattanooga Venture and the broad citizen process that help make the dramatic turnaround in Chattanooga possible.

Conclusion

There are two recurring themes throughout each success story of communities battling sprawl. The first is that citizens need to be involved from the ground floor. Citizen advocacy and participation do make a difference, and smart growth can energize and activate citizens, giving them a greater sense of civic responsibility. Probably the single most prevalent way to involve the public is through dynamic civic institutions and organizations, which play a crucial role in consensus building, information dissemination, and citizen education and empowerment.

The second theme is that all long-term, successful smart growth initiatives involve continuous participation by citizens in the process. Once an initiative begins, it is not only impor-
tantalant to see the project through but it is also crucial to maintain active civic involvement to perpetuate the social capital that is realized from community improvement and investment. Citizen participation is part of our ever-adapting, potentially ever-strengthening, grass-roots democratic process.

It is indeed ironic that the issue of sprawl, which has long undermined community cohesion, is now serving as a rallying point for both individuals and organizations to join forces and work together to formulate policy for their respective communities. This reinvigoration of democratic principles is paying dividends in communities, and will continue to do so as long as citizens remain involved with their communities, resulting in a true social bonding and empowerment of communities over their own destiny.

As the simple motto that has guided progress in Chattanooga goes, "It takes all of us . . . and it takes forever."

Endnotes

1. Two of the most recent books making this point are Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community (Simon & Schuster, 2000) at page 210; Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream (North Point Press, 2000). This paper will not go into the oft made connection between sprawl and alienation in general. As author Alan Ehrenhalt writes, "The American people are coming to the conclusion that sprawl is to blame for a good deal of the discontent that attaches to end-of-the-century middle-class life." The New York Times, April 18, 1999. Suffice it to say, however, that much more research is needed in this area.


3. Putnam at 19.


5. Putnam at 213.


7. Putnam at 211.

8. Duany, et. al., at 60.


14. For more information regarding NIMBY issues, see e.g., NIMBY: A Primer for Lawyers and Advocates (American Bar Association, 1999); Herbert Inhaber, Slaying the NIMBY Dragon (Transaction Publishers, 1998).

15. "Exclusionary zoning" is the term used to describe zoning practices that have the effect of excluding lower income groups.

16. The following websites and texts may be a helpful starting point in assisting communities in promoting responsible growth. They also serve as helpful guides to citizens who want to play a more active role in shaping their communities: the National Association of Regional Councils (www.narc.org), the Institute for the Regional Community (www.narc.org/irc/), the American Planning Association (www.planning.org), the American Institute of Architects (www.e-architect.com), the Clinton-Gore Administration's Livable Communities Website (www.livablecommunities.gov), the Congress on the New Urbanism (www.cnu.org), the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (www.lincolninst.edu), the Smart Growth Network (www.smartgrowth.org), and the Sustainable Communities Network (www.sustainable.org). David Bollier, How Smart Growth Can Stop Sprawl (Essential Books, 1998); Michael deCourcy Hinds, A Nice Place to Live: Creating Communities, Fighting Sprawl (Public Agenda, 1999). There are many other helpful websites and texts as well.


19. Topsfield Foundation, Building Strong Neighborhoods at 12-13 (1998). The Topsfield Foundation helps communities organize "study circles" in small-group peer-led discussions that bring together diverse people to address issues. The Foundation has a particular program to encourage local study groups on sprawl.

20. For more on civic entrepreneurs, see Douglas Henton, et. al., Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy (JosseyBass, 1997).

21. This program maintains a database of community-based organizations that are addressing the environmental, economic, and social impacts of sprawl; reviews smart growth policies from a neighborhood perspective and analyzes the policy's possible impact on low-income residents; and brings justice and equity values to the forefront of existing smart growth principals. For more information regarding the National Neighborhood Coalition and its programs, see (www.neighborhoodcoalition.org).


26. The Silicon Valley Network has a website located at (www.jointventure.org).
28. Examples of newspapers playing a role in their communities include those papers that have hired Neal Peirce and his colleagues to produce “Peirce Reports,” which review the state of particular regions. An even stronger, proactive media commitment has been termed “civic journalism.”
29. The manual can be found at (www.libertynet.org/edcivic/buildhom.html).
31. According to Redefining Progress, a group that facilitates the development of community indicators, these steps should be taken when creating an initial indicator report: 1) form a working group; 2) clarify your purpose; 3) identify your community’s shared values and vision; 4) review existing models, indicators, and data; 5) draft a set of proposed indicators; 6) perform a technical review; 7) research the data; 8) publish and promote the report; 9) update the report regularly. This group further suggests that when developing indicators always begin with the end in mind, and identify a small number of short and long-term community objectives based upon the community. For more information see (www.rprogress.org).
33. More information about this program is available at (edcdgs9.cr.usgs.gov/urban).
34. Several excellent websites provide updated information on these new technologies, including the U.S. Department of Energy Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development site at www.sustainable.doe.gov and the Sustainable Communities Network site at (www.sustainable.org/information/resources_column).
35. See reference in footnote 16.

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