Planning for Economic & Fiscal Health in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century

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Atmore, Alabama
February 19, 2019
Who is Smart Growth America?

Smart Growth America envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.
What is smart growth about?

Shaping the quality of the place and the lives of the people who live there.

...and it’s not new!
The ways we plan our cities

Patterns of development

Image source: https://travelbob.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/pompeii-20.jpg
Traditional town plan

- Mixed-use
- Compact
- Buildings of several stories
- Blocks with multiple building types
- Street grid
Atmore – 1941

Source: Alabama Department of Archives and History
Downtown Atmore
Downtown Atmore

Main Street in the 1960s

c. 1920

“Euclidean” zoning

- Fragmented land use
- Drive-only

Then came zoning...
...and the automobile...

(and the interstate highway program, and new federal programs for homebuilding, and new rules for capital depreciation...)
We built highways, expanded them . . .

Lovell Road and I-40 40 years ago

Image: Bridgett Massengill, Greater Chattanooga Regional Growth Initiative (Thrive 2055) - 2015
... and economic development followed.
Prime retail location
(late 20th century)

“Walmart Supercenter, an archetypal big box store, in Madison Heights, Virginia.”
(from Wikipedia entry for “Big-box store”)

(from Wikipedia entry for “Big-box store”)

Poor, rural areas will be most affected by Walmart closing 154 stores

Related story: What happens to a tiny town when Walmart disappears?
Prime Residential location
(late 20th century)
Suddenly, things are different

THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS HAVE SHIFTED
Demographic Change
Boomers are a different kind of Senior Citizen
“Adulthood II”

Boomers not ready for the rocking chair

– Today’s retiree can live past 90

– “These additional 31 years of expected life have not been just tacked on at the end . . . Today’s 65-year-olds are starting new careers or continuing old ones, traveling around the world, and eloping with new loves, in a stage of life we are calling ‘Adulthood II.’”

- cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson, quoted in ULI report
Boomers and housing

Boomers are downsizing
Millennials are different:

Your children and grandchildren

Millennials

They follow lifestyle, not jobs.

Millennials choose where to live before finding a job.

Of all college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds 64% looked for a job after they chose the city where they wanted to live.

(U.S. Census)
Preferences: Transportation
Preferences: Housing

47%

12%

40%
Preferences: Housing

Atmore, Alabama

Jonesborough, Tennessee

Bardstown, Kentucky

Rifle, Colorado

40%
We’ve got the wrong housing stock for the 21st century
Occupied Housing Demand-Supply Mismatch 2015

Source: Arthur C. Nelson, University of Arizona.
Economic Development Industrial Site:
The grand prize of the 20th century

Image source: Escambia County Historical Society
Economic growth

20\textsuperscript{th} century vs. 21\textsuperscript{st} century

“From tools and spools to eds and meds”*

Manufacturing economy vs. Knowledge economy

Chasing smokestacks vs. Chasing talent
The 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Economy

Manufacturing is changing

- Smaller part of our economy
- Its nature has changed
The 21st Century Economy

- Creativity, knowledge, innovation
- Importance of networking, interaction
- Demand for skilled workers

“Talent is replacing the tax incentive as the No. 1 economic-development tool in America.”

Mark Wilson, president and CEO
Florida Chamber of Commerce
Quoted in Palm Beach Post, June 9, 2016
Core Values
Why American Companies are Moving Downtown

Download the report at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/core-values
WALK SCORE

Before: 52
After: 88

TRANSIT SCORE

Before: 52
After: 79

BIKE SCORE

Before: 66
After: 78
There is a price/value premium for walkable places

2016 study ranks the top 30 US metropolitan areas in walkability

Key finding: Average is 74% over their drivable suburban competition.
There is a price/value premium for walkable places (residential)

Applies to residential real estate -

Above-average walkability:

→ $4,000 to $34,000 more in home sales price

Sources: “Walking the Walk” by Joseph Cortwright, CEOs for Cities and “The Walkability Premium in Commercial Real Estate Investments” by Gary Pivo and Jeffrey Fisher
There is a price/value premium for walkable places (commercial)

Applies to commercial real estate -

Greater walkability:

→ 1% to 9% increase in commercial property value depending on type; also higher incomes and lower capitalization rates

• Sources: “Walking the Walk” by Joseph Cortwright, CEOs for Cities and “The Walkability Premium in Commercial Real Estate Investments” by Gary Pivo and Jeffrey Fisher
Traditional Main Streets are back
Communities are now in a ferocious competition over place (whether they know it or not)
Sense of place?
Not so competitive in the 21st century
Sense of place?
Sense of place!
Sense of place?
Sense of place!
Taking the Long View

Source: Steve Price, Urban Advantage
Taking the Long View

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Taking the Long View
Meridian, MS
It’s all about location
It’s all about location
It’s all about location
Your Identity is Key

In any public project you need to know:

• Who you were in the past
• Who you are now
• And who you aspire to be
Who You Were in the Past

“Meridian, with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.”

General Sherman
February, 1864
Who You Were in the Past
Meridian’s Union Station
Who You Are Now
Who You Aspire to Be
Union Station at Completion

• Annually, Union Station hosts 250 events and 300,000 people
Union Station Development Results

- Private development of $165 million in surrounding area
- New life for historic structures
Restored City Hall

(photo credits: City of Meridian)
Restored City Hall

(photo credits: The Meridian Star)
Restored City Hall
Restored City Hall
World Class Performances

- Meridian Symphony Orchestra
- 50th Anniversary with Itzhak Perlman
- Wynton Marsalis
Yes, we can read.
A few of us can even write.

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Improving lives by improving communities
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Children’s Museum - Meridian
It Is Critical to Engage Future Generations
Thank you.

For more information: www.smartgrowthamerica.org

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