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**301 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue – Delray Beach  
Support for Proposed Text Amendment**

**Introduction**

The following is a memorandum in support of increased allowable density maximums and amended parking requirements in the Railroad Corridor Sub-District of the Central Business District (“CBD-RC”). The CBD-RC is a sub-corridor of the Central Business District (“CBD”), which is the commercial core of Delray Beach. Specifically, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Capital 301 LLC (“Petitioner”) is the owner of the +/- 1.46 acre property located at 301 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue which is generally located at the southeast corner of SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (“Property”), in the City of Delray Beach (the “City”). Petitioner is proposing to develop the Property with a multi-family residential development with restaurant and retail components, creating a vibrant and sustainable Project within the community (“Project”). In order to develop the Project, Petitioner is proposing an amendment to the City’s Land Development Regulations (“LDRs”) in order to allow, among other things, an increase in density to one hundred (100) dwelling units per acre, consistent with the density previously permitted within the zoning district. Petitioner is also proposing modifications to the City’s parking calculations.

**Increase Maximum Allowed Density in the CBD-RC**

As population rates continue to grow, American cities must find ways to keep up with the increasing demand for space. Over the last few decades, development trends favored low-density, subdivision development, which contributed to the widening area of urban sprawl across the country.<sup>1</sup> This widespread development has contributed to the dwindling of natural areas and is a key contributing factor to environmental concerns such as greenhouse gases, smog, and air and water pollution.<sup>2</sup> Widespread low-density development has also created a heavy reliance on personal vehicles. More personal vehicles on the road have contributed to transportation concerns such as increasingly long commutes and traffic congestion.<sup>3</sup> A potential solution is to integrate well-designed, higher-density developments into existing communities. These higher density developments help address the growing need for housing, while also stimulating the local economy with new restaurant and commercial uses.<sup>4</sup> Factors to consider include infrastructure demands, economic growth, community impacts, public transit and environmental impacts. The following will demonstrate support for amending the existing density maximums in the CBD-RC to encourage higher density development.

**Infrastructure**

A massive network of public infrastructure is needed to support sprawling development. Low-density building requirements drive cities to grow wider in size, instead of more efficiently using the space that is already dedicated to urban development.<sup>5</sup> Larger infrastructure networks are required to service all the areas located in the municipality, which are sometimes far reaching from the center of a city’s activity.<sup>6</sup> Widespread demand on an infrastructure network may require the construction of additional roadways, longer water and electrical lines, larger sewer systems, and funding for public services including police and fire services.<sup>7</sup> Often, local governments absorb much of the costs related to the construction and

maintenance of infrastructure. According to one study, reducing the distance between homes, shops, and offices directly reduces the cost of public infrastructure.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, introducing higher density maximums in areas such as the CBD-RC can help curtail widening urban sprawl and infrastructure costs.

### Economic Growth

Higher density development also provides substantial opportunities for economic growth without significantly burdening existing infrastructure. One case study states, “[c]ommunities that focus on providing a high quality of life with the energy and vitality created by urban centers will be much more likely to attract highly prized, talented, and productive workers than communities of faceless sprawl.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, “[d]iversifying housing options and adding amenities like shops and offices close by will improve the quality of life and attract businesses and people that will strengthen the communities economic stability.”<sup>10</sup> Other studies suggest that those attracted to a suburban downtown living would likely spend a substantial portion of their discretionary income on shopping, eating and entertainment.<sup>11</sup>

In Delray Beach, East Atlantic Avenue is already a bustling center of economic activity. Increasing the maximum allowed density in the CBD-RC, will expand the central area of economic activity to include sub-corridors of the CBD. Expanding the central area of economic activity will generate additional income for the City and attract new high-quality businesses to the area. The Project will provide additional housing to support existing businesses and provide space for additional dining and shopping options to consumers with available discretionary income, many of whom are tourist who may be more likely to dine out and purchase goods.

### Proximity to Brightline Track

Initially, the Project wanted to capitalize on its close proximity to the existing Florida East Coast Railway Corridor and incorporate a station to facilitate a new Brightline transit stop. The Brightline transit stop would provide even greater connectivity to other major south Florida metropolitan areas including Fort Lauderdale, Miami and West Palm Beach. This connectivity could draw workforce residents as well as leisurely visitors to Delray Beach, without the need for a personal vehicle. This type of Brightline expansion would further stimulate the economy in Delray Beach and could potentially attract larger businesses who are seeking locations for corporate headquarters. However, Brightline had significant concerns about incorporating Delray Beach as a transit stop precisely because there is not enough density. By increasing the maximum density allowances, specifically in the CBD-RC, new higher density developments can stimulate the type of density that public transit companies, like Brightline, require when evaluating potential new transit stops.

### Environmental Impacts

The increasing frequency of major weather events and fire incidents across the world have initiated discussions regarding environmental concerns. Low-density sprawl into natural areas and habitats destroys ecosystems and increases air and water pollution. It also forces people to use private vehicles to travel further distances in order to complete daily tasks. Vehicle emissions contribute to smog and greenhouse gases which further pollute the air we breathe. One study states that “[p]lacing new development into already urbanized areas that are equipped with all the basic infrastructure like utility lines, police and fire protection, schools and shops eliminates the financial and environmental costs of stretching those services farther and farther out from the core community. Compact urban design reduces

driving and smog and preserves the natural areas that are assets of the community.”<sup>12</sup> By increasing the allowed density maximums in the CBD-RC, Delray Beach has the opportunity to advocate more environmentally conscious developments standards in South Florida and encourage other municipalities to do the same.

### Safety

Increasing density maximums can also improve the safety of the areas surrounding higher density development. Higher density developments increase the number of people living in a particular area. This increased presence can reduce crime because a greater number of people will have the ability to monitor activity in and around the community.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, new high-density developments can offer updated site features that can enhance community safety and provide benefits such as upgraded lighting and landscape designs.<sup>14</sup>

### Visual Preferences

Higher density developments are sometimes associated with negative implications. However, higher density development does not always result in intrusive, unattractive building structures and undesirable effects on the existing community. Instead, well planned, higher density development can be seamlessly integrated into a community and introduce features such as lush landscape boulevards, fountains and showcase a unique architectural style.<sup>15</sup> When visually compared, these high-density developments are preferred to faceless low-density developments that often evoke no sense of community attachment.<sup>16</sup> Below are some visual examples of higher density developments that have been integrated into existing low-density areas.



### Community

On a world stage, studies show that countries with a strong sense of community and urban connectivity are home to the happiest citizens.<sup>17</sup> The low density, urban sprawl trend of the past has created a disconnect between individual homeowners and their communities, isolating residents from convenient access to local restaurants and shops. New higher density developments can revitalize the sense of community in a neighborhood and combine residential design with modern commercial conveniences to create spaces for the community to gather and draw residents back to the center of the community.<sup>18</sup>

Delray Beach has a thriving CBD district that attracts residents and visitors from around the country. The intention of the proposed higher density maximums in the CBD-RC is to expand the vibrancy of the Atlantic

Avenue area into the surrounding sub-corridors. The Project will improve the CBD-RC neighborhood and serve as the central neighborhood hub that will compliment Atlantic Avenue.

### **Amend Parking Requirements**

American commuter habits all over the country are evolving. Ridesharing, carsharing, public transit, biking, walking and even scootering have become popular alternatives to the traditional use of a private vehicle.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, a shift in consumer shopping preferences from visiting brick and mortar retail stores to utilizing online shopping platforms has left developers and cities searching for ways to attract consumers and stimulate local economies.<sup>20</sup> As a result of these changing preferences, parking needs for existing and future development are also evolving. In both suburban and rural markets, empty parking fields are becoming more prevalent.<sup>21</sup> These underutilized parking fields hinder connectivity to surrounding uses and occupy valuable land that could be better utilized to serve the community. Accordingly, petitioner is proposing to amend the current parking requirements in the CBD-RC to reflect the changing American commuter habits and encourage sustainable development for the future.

### **Traffic**

Along with higher allowable density maximums, the parking requirements of these developments are an important factor. Higher density does not always equal more traffic. Conversely, higher density development often has the opposite effect on traffic.<sup>22</sup> Residents of high-density developments and those in close proximity to these developments often make fewer automobile trips than those living in low-density developments because of the immediate availability of commercial uses.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, those visiting mix-use neighborhoods with high-density development are more easily able to park their car in one location and accomplish several tasks, which decrease the overall parking needs of the community.<sup>24</sup> As supported below, the decreasing need for parking in areas with high-density development along with transportation alternatives and changing transportation preferences support the proposed change to reduce parking requirements in the CBD-RC.

### **Transportation preferences**

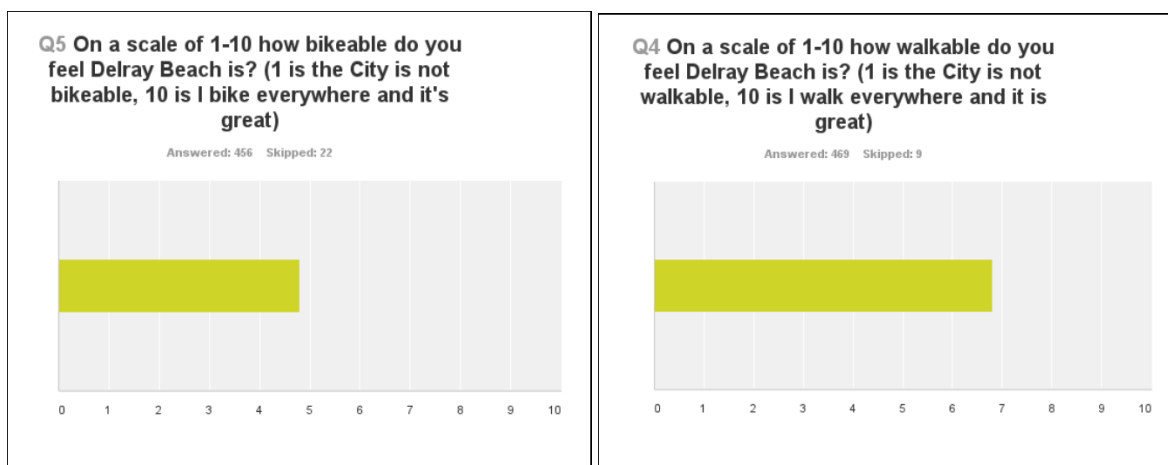
Recent studies show that preferences for personal vehicles are shifting to more economic and environmentally friendly transportation options.<sup>25</sup> Ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft have revolutionized the way individuals commute to work, for leisure and even when traveling. Ridesharing services give passengers the ability to be picked up at their front door and dropped off directly at their destination.<sup>26</sup> This door-to-door service eliminates the time necessary to locate parking and, in some cases, the need to walk several blocks to their final destination, which creates a safer and more efficient method of transportation.<sup>27</sup>

According to the Delray Beach's Healthy Community Element, mobility demands are shifting from the automobile to incorporate a wider range of options, including walking, biking, ridesharing, hailing services and expanded transit options. Because of the growing presence of ridesharing services, Delray Beach announced a partnership with



ridesharing services to create designated rideshare pickup and drop-off zones within the CBD.<sup>28</sup> The goal of the rideshare zones is to promote safety and to facilitate the flow of traffic. Furthermore, the existence of these rideshare zones in Delray Beach indicates that changes in commuter habits are not isolated to major metropolitan areas.

The walkability and bikeability of a city are two additional factors that shape local transportation preferences. As part of an update to Delray Beach's Comprehensive Plan, a community survey revealed that on a scale from 1 to 10, residents rate Delray Beach as a 4.8 for bikeability and a 6.8 for walkability. The survey further revealed that 61% of residents said that it is "very Important" to provide areas exclusively for walking and bicycling. East Atlantic Avenue is the center of the highly connected and walkable CBD. The Project is a 10-minute walk and a 3-minute bike ride to the south of Atlantic Ave. New and exciting uses will attract pedestrian and bicycle traffic from Atlantic Ave. to the Project. The connectivity from the CBD to the CBD-RC will further eliminate a need for parking within the CBD-RC. At the same time, the City will be able to promote better public health by encouraging walking and biking withing the entire CBD district.



### Alternative Transportation Options

Emphasis on multi-modal transportation options can reduce parking requirements and create opportunities to develop more dynamic urban uses.<sup>29</sup> Bike sharing programs are becoming increasingly popular to provide more convenient and efficient transportation options in many cities. These programs provide access to bicycles that can be quickly rented by the hour or through bike share memberships. Bike sharing programs allow individuals who do not own bicycles or those who may be visiting the area to commute and sightsee without the need for a private vehicle. These programs have been highly successful in major metropolitan areas, but can also benefit smaller cities by maintaining an interconnected, small town feel.

Delray Beach is already home to the Delray Downtowner which is a free, eco-friendly electric golf cart service that operates within the downtown area. Options like these allow people to utilize already existing parking fields and structures that may be slightly further from the CBD to conveniently navigate the downtown area. Expanding these services to utilize larger vehicles such as trolleys, could increase the carrying capacity, while also creating an interactive community feature. Alternative transportation

options can drastically impact the parking requirements of Delray Beach, and at the same time, promote other important interest such as public health and the environment.

### Cost

In addition to high property values, constructing parking structures is expensive. These high construction costs create a obstacles for developers to meet the demand for housing.<sup>30</sup> In response to this challenge, developers are shrinking individual unit sizes, allowing for greater density.<sup>31</sup> However, with traditional parking ratios, the number of parking spaces increases with higher density.<sup>32</sup> Costs saved on reducing parking requirements can increase a developers available space to develop other uses that are beneficial to the community.

Furthermore, structured parking facilities are generally single use, standalone structures that are only occupied sporadically and sit largely empty during certain hours of the day.<sup>33</sup> One way to more efficiently utilize parking facilities is through shared parking. Often, different uses have different peak periods of operation. For example, occupational uses may peak during the day when people travel to work, while residential uses peak at night when people return home. Single use parking structures otherwise remain empty outside of those peak hours. Shared parking facilities allow mix uses with complimentary peak hours to utilize the same shared parking structure.<sup>34</sup> The Petitioner is developing a mixed use project with residential, commercial and restaurant components, making the Project an ideal candidate for a shared parking facility, thereby limiting the number of spaces required per individual use.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, development strategies are evolving as the population grows. Increasing the allowed density maximums in the CBD-RC in Delray Beach will contribute to the additional housing needs while also stimulating the local economy. The Project will revitalize the Railroad Corridor Sub-district and supplement the already bustling activity on East Atlantic Avenue. Increased density maximums will generate other benefits such as increased safety, public health, reduced environmental impacts and promote a stronger sense of community in the CBD. Additionally, changing transportation preference and alternative options can alleviate parking requirements for new development in the CBD-RC and increase the available space for the development of uses that will contribute to the community. Therefore, for the above reasons stated, Delray Beach should approve the proposed text amendment, which includes an increase to the maximum permitted density within the CBD-RC and amended parking requirements for residential parcels within the CBD.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard M. Haughey et al., *Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact*, The Urban Land Institute, 10 (2005).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 12.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 12

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

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- <sup>11</sup> Will Macht, *Flexible Parking Structures as Civic Catalysts*, Urban Land Magazine, (2019).
- <sup>12</sup> Haughey, at *supra* note 1 at 22.
- <sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 21
- <sup>14</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>15</sup> Haughey, at *supra* note 1 at 26.
- <sup>16</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>17</sup> Leslie Braunstein, *Parking Yields to the Sharing Economy*, Urban Land Magazine, (2013).
- <sup>18</sup> Edward W. Gosselin, *A Technical Assistance Panel Report: How to Spur Redevelopment Within and Beyond the Long Branch Community's Commercial Center*, The Urban Land Institute Washington, 7 (2005).
- <sup>19</sup> Angelo Carusi, *A New Vision for Empty Parking Fields*, Urban Land Magazine, (2019).
- <sup>20</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>22</sup> Haughey, at *supra* note 1 at 16.
- <sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 17.
- <sup>24</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>25</sup> David Baker et al., *Towards Zero Parking: Challenging Conventional Wisdom for Multifamily*, Urban Land Magazine, (2018).
- <sup>26</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>28</sup> *New Ridesharing Zones Coming to Downtown Delray Beach*, Downtown Development Authority, (2019) <https://www.downtowndelraybeach.com/blog/new-ridesharing-zones-coming-downtown-delray-beach>.
- <sup>29</sup> Braunstein, at *supra* note 15.
- <sup>30</sup> Baker, at *supra* note 24.
- <sup>31</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>33</sup> Macht, at *supra* note 11.
- <sup>34</sup> *Id.*



# Higher-Density Development

## MYTH AND FACT



Urban Land  
Institute



# Higher-Density Development

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**MYTH AND FACT**



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Institute

## About NMHC—the National Multi Housing Council

NMHC is a national association representing the interests of the nation's larger and most prominent apartment firms. NMHC advocates on behalf of rental housing, conducts apartment-related research, encourages the exchange of strategic business information, and promotes the desirability of apartment living. One-third of Americans rent their housing, and 15 percent of all U.S. households live in an apartment home.

Doug Bibby, *President*

## About Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's members are 700,000 of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest, and most influential grass-roots environmental organization.

Larry Fahn, *President*

## About AIA—the American Institute of Architects

Since 1857, the AIA has represented the professional interests of America's architects. As AIA members, more than 75,000 licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners express their commitment to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings and communities. Members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public, and colleagues of an AIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice.

Douglas L. Steidl, *President*

## About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit educational and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. ULI sponsors educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences; initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development. Established in 1936, the Institute has more than 24,000 members and associates from more than 80 countries representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines.

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**A**s this country continues to grow and change, communities are left to figure out where all these new people will live, work, and shop. New markets are emerging for real estate that offers a more convenient lifestyle than is offered by many low-density sprawling communities. New compact developments with a mix of uses and housing types throughout the country are being embraced as a popular alternative to sprawl. At the core of the success of these developments is density, which is the key to making these communities walkable and vibrant.

Unfortunately, in too many communities higher-density mixed-use development is difficult to construct because of zoning and building codes that favor low-density development with segregated uses and because of opposition from the community. This publication looks at several myths surrounding higher-density development and attempts to dispel them with facts to help dismantle the many barriers such developments face.

ULI is proud to have partnered with NMHC—the National Multi Housing Council, Sierra Club, and AIA—the American Institute of Architects on this publication. This convergence of interests highlights the importance each organization has placed on finding a new development pattern that better fits the needs of a growing and changing country.

ULI will continue to provide forums in which all stakeholders can explore and debate issues about growth and development patterns and how properly designed and incorporated density can be used to accommodate new growth. ULI will conduct research, produce well-balanced information, and identify best practices on issues relevant to growth and density. Through these efforts, ULI and its partners hope to play a role in planning a better development pattern for the future.

Harry H. Frampton III  
*Chair*

# Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact

America's changing population is creating demand for new types of homes, offices, and retail outlets. Better solutions are needed to the challenges created by changing demographics, dwindling natural areas, smog and public health issues, shrinking municipal budgets, and traffic congestion. Communities that answer these challenges will develop into great places to live.

America will add roughly 43 million new residents—that's 2.7 million new residents per year—between now and 2020.<sup>1</sup> America is not only growing but also undergoing dramatic demographic changes. The traditional two-parent household with children is now less than a quarter of the population and getting proportionally smaller. Single-parent households, single-person households, empty nesters, and couples without children make up the new majority of American households, and they have quite different real estate needs.<sup>2</sup> These groups are more likely to choose higher-density housing in mixed-density communities that offer vibrant neighborhoods over single-family houses far from the community core.

The fact is that continuing the sprawling, low-density haphazard development pattern of the past 40 years is unsustainable, financially and otherwise. It will exacerbate many of the problems sprawl has already created—dwindling natural areas and working farms, increasingly longer commutes, debilitating traffic congestion, and harmful smog and water pollution. Local officials now realize that paying for basic infrastructure—roadways and schools, libraries, fire, police, and sewer services—spread over large and sprawling distances is inefficient and expensive.

Most public leaders want to create vibrant, economically strong communities where citizens can enjoy a high quality of life in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner, but many are not sure how to achieve it. Planning for growth is a comprehensive and complicated process that requires leaders to employ a variety of tools to balance diverse community interests. Arguably, no tool is more important than increasing the density of existing and new communities, which includes support for infill development, the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures, and denser new development. Indeed, well-designed and well-integrated higher-density development makes successful planning for growth possible.

Density refers not only to high-rise buildings. The definition of density depends on the context in which it is used. In this publication, *higher density* simply means new residential and commercial development at a density that is higher than what is typically found in the existing community. Thus, in a sprawling area with single-family detached houses on one-acre lots, single-family houses on one-fourth or one-eighth acre are considered higher density. In more densely populated areas with single-family houses on small lots, townhouses and apartments are considered higher-density development. For many suburban communities, the popular mixed-use town centers being developed around the country are considered higher-density development.

Most land use professionals and community leaders now agree that creating communities with a mix of densities, housing types, and uses could be the antidote to sprawl when implemented regionally. And across the country, the general public is becoming more informed and engaged in making the tough land use choices that need to be made while understanding the consequences of continuing to grow as we have in the past. Many have also come to appreciate the “place-making” benefits of density and the relationship between higher-density development and land preservation. Media coverage of the topic of growth and development has also evolved. Past media coverage of growth and development issues was often limited to the heated conflicts between developers and community residents. Many in the media are now presenting more thoughtful and balanced coverage, and several editorial boards support higher-density developments in their communities as an antidote to regional sprawl.

Yet despite the growing awareness of the complexity of the issue and growing support for higher-density development as an answer to sprawl, many still have questions and fears related to higher-density development. How will it change the neighborhood? Will it make traffic worse? What will happen to property values? And what about crime? Ample evidence—documented throughout this publication—suggests that well-designed higher-density development, properly integrated into an existing community, can become a significant community asset that adds to the quality of life and property values for existing residents while addressing the needs of a growing and changing population.

Many people’s perception of higher-density development does not mesh with the reality. Studies show that when surveyed about higher-density development, those interviewed hold a negative view. But when shown images of higher-density versus lower-density development, people often change their perceptions and prefer higher density.<sup>3</sup> In a recent study by the National Association of Realtors® and Smart Growth America, six in ten prospective homebuyers, when asked to choose between two communities, chose the neighborhood that offered a shorter commute, sidewalks, and amenities like shops, restaurants, libraries, schools, and public transportation within walking distance. They preferred this option over the one with longer commutes and larger lots but limited options for walking.<sup>4</sup> The 2001 American Housing Survey further reveals that respondents cited proximity to work more often than unit type as the leading factor in housing choice.<sup>5</sup> Such contradictions point to widespread misconceptions about the nature of higher-density development and sprawl. Several of these misconceptions are so prevalent as to be considered myths.

To some degree, these myths are the result of memories people have of the very-high-density urban public housing projects of the 1960s and 1970s that have been subsequently deemed a failure. Somehow, the concept of density became associated with the negative imagery and social problems of depressed urban areas. The reality



is that complex interrelated factors such as the high concentration of poverty and poor educational and employment opportunities combined to doom the public housing projects. Even very-high-density housing can be practical, safe, and desirable. For example, the mixed-income apartments and condominiums or luxury high rises in New York and Chicago—some of the safest and most expensive housing in the country—prove that density does not equal an unsafe environment.

The purpose of this publication is to dispel the many myths surrounding higher-density development and to create a new understanding of density that goes beyond simplistic negative connotations that overestimate its impact and underestimate its value. Elected officials, concerned citizens, and community leaders can use this publication to support well-designed and well-planned density that creates great places and great communities that people love. With the anticipated population growth and continuing demographic and lifestyle changes, consensus is building that creating communities with a mix of densities, housing types, and uses will be both necessary and desirable.

*Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact* is the sixth in a series of Urban Land Institute myth and fact booklets. The series is intended to clarify misconceptions surrounding growth and development. Other topics covered have included transportation, smart growth, urban infill housing, environment and development, and mixed-income housing.

*Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact* examines widespread misconceptions related to higher-density development and seeks to dispel them with relevant facts and information. Although the benefits of higher-density development are often understated, so are the detrimental effects of low-density development. The advantages and drawbacks of higher-density development are compared throughout this publication with the alternative of low-density development. In the process, misconceptions regarding low-density development are also addressed.

# MYTH

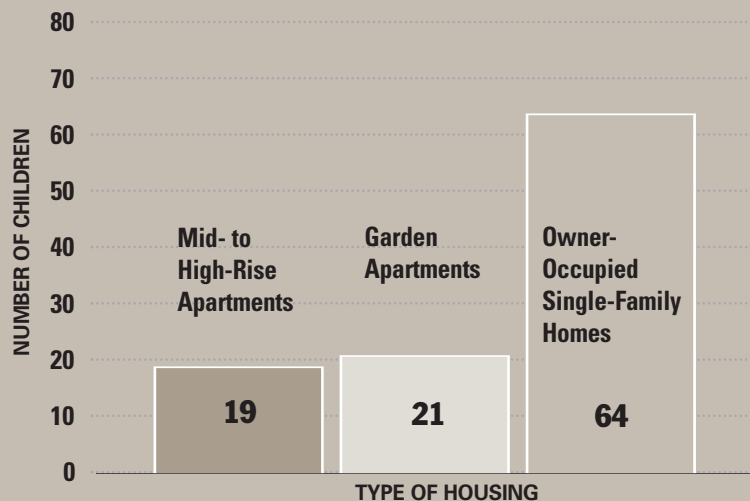
Higher-density development overburdens public schools and other public services and requires more infrastructure support systems.

# FACT

The nature of who lives in higher-density housing—fewer families with children—puts less demand on schools and other public services than low-density housing. Moreover, the compact nature of higher-density development requires less extensive infrastructure to support it.

**P**ublic officials across the country struggle to afford the infrastructure needed to support sprawling development. A recent study analyzing the costs of sprawl estimated that more than \$100 billion in infrastructure costs could be saved over 25 years by pursuing better planned and more compact forms of development.<sup>6</sup> The issue has transcended political parties and ideologies and has become an issue of basic fiscal responsibility. California's Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has criticized "fiscally unsustainable sprawl,"<sup>7</sup> while Michigan's Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm has noted that sprawl "is hampering the ability of this state and its local governments to finance public facilities and service improvements."<sup>8</sup>

**NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN  
PER 100 UNITS OF NEW HOUSING**



Source: 1999 American Housing Survey (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Progressive and conservative groups have identified sprawl as a real problem. Charter of the New Urbanism states that “placeless sprawl” is an “interrelated community building challenge.”<sup>9</sup> Conservative groups have concluded that “sprawl is in fact a conservative issue” with “conservative solutions” and that “sprawl was in large part created through government intervention in the economy.”<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, numerous government policies over the last half century have led to and supported sprawl. Historically, federal spending for transportation has subsidized large-scale highway construction over other modes of transportation. Financing policies from the Federal Housing Administration have promoted suburban subdivisions across the nation. Large lot exclusionary zoning has forced the artificial separation of land uses, leading to large distances between employment centers, housing, and retail. But many government agencies now realize they cannot afford to continue providing the infrastructure and public services that sprawl demands.

Not only do local governments absorb much of the cost of more and more roadways, profoundly longer water and electrical lines, and much larger sewer systems to support sprawling development, they must also fund public services to the new residents who live farther and farther from the core community. These new residents need police and fire protection, schools, libraries, trash removal, and other services. Stretching all these basic services over ever-growing geographic areas places a great burden on local governments. For example, the Minneapolis/St. Paul region built 78 new schools in the suburbs between 1970 and 1990 while simultaneously closing 162 schools in good condition located within city limits.<sup>11</sup> Albuquerque, New Mexico, faces a school budget crisis as a result of the need to build expensive new schools in outlying areas while enrollment in existing close-in schools declines.

## PROFILE



### The Market Common Clarendon

Located on the site of a former parking lot and occupying roughly ten acres of land, the Market Common in Clarendon, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C., provides 300 Class A apartments, 87 townhouses, 100,000 square feet of office space, and 240,000 square feet of prime retail space. Located within walking distance of the Orange Line of Washington’s extensive subway system, residents can leave their cars parked while they take public transit to work. They can also walk to a Whole Foods grocery store adjacent to the highly successful development. Prominent national retailers occupy the ground level of the building, and structured parking is provided. The compact development form of the Market Common promotes walking, biking, and using public transit over autos. The apartments are attractive to young professionals without children, lessening the impact on the county’s

**Located within walking distance of a Washington, D.C., Metro stop, the Market Common provides housing, offices, retail, and restaurants on a ten-acre site that was formerly a parking lot.**

school system. The project is the result of a successful collaboration of McCaffery Interests, Arlington County officials, and citizens of the Clarendon neighborhood; it has spurred new retail, office, and residential construction on neighboring sites.

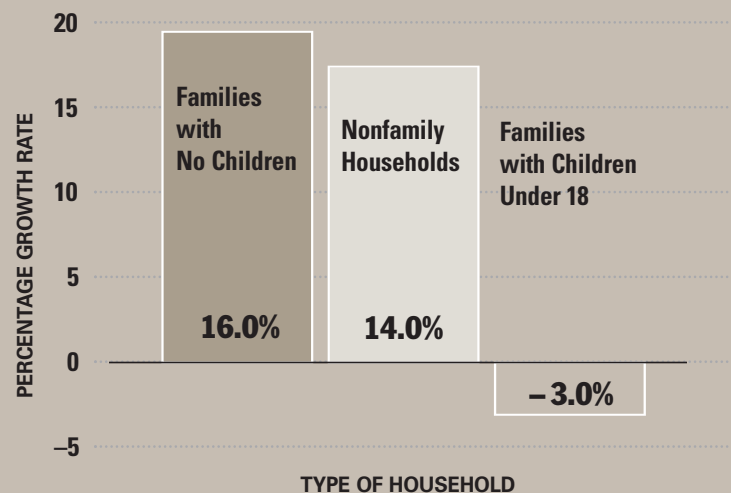
Unfortunately for local governments, a growing body of evidence shows that sprawling development often does not pay enough property tax to cover the services it requires. A study conducted for a suburban community outside Milwaukee found that public services for an average-price single-family house in that community cost more than twice as much as the property taxes paid by the homeowner.<sup>12</sup>

One reason for the disparity between property tax revenue and the cost of public services is expenditures for public schools. Low-density suburbs and exurban areas generally attract families with more school-age children. In fact, single-family developments average 64 children for every 100 units, compared with only 21 children for every 100 units of garden apartments and 19 children for every 100 units of mid- to high-rise apartments.<sup>13</sup> The reason is that multifamily housing attracts predominantly childless couples, singles, and empty nesters.

And although apartment renters do not pay property tax directly, apartment owners do. Apartments are also usually taxed at a higher commercial real estate tax rate,<sup>14</sup> so a typical mixed-use development with retail, office, and apartments may subsidize the schools and other public services required by residents of low-density housing in the same community. This phenomenon is further exacerbated because many multifamily developments and retail and office establishments pay for their own trash disposal, shuttle buses, and security.

Reducing the distance between homes, shops, and offices also reduces the cost of public infrastructure. According to one of many studies, “The public capital and operating costs for close-in, compact development [are] much lower than they [are] for fringe, scattered, linear, and satellite development.”<sup>15</sup> And many of these studies do not take into account the advantages created by making public transit

### PROJECTED HOUSEHOLD GROWTH: 2000–2010



Source: *Projections of Number of Households and Families in the United States: 1995–2010* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996).

more feasible as well as making delivery of basic services like mail delivery, trash collection, and police and fire protection more efficient.

Another emerging body of research suggests that higher-density development is an important component of economic development initiatives and helps attract new employers. “Information economy” is a term used to define the growing industries based on the economics of the Internet, information goods, and intellectual property. Workers in this field are known as “knowledge workers,” and many believe they are the future of the American economy. These workers are comfortable with the latest technology and, because their skills are transferable, choose their jobs based on the attributes of the town or city where they are located. They seek out vibrant, diverse urban centers that offer access to technology, other knowledge workers, and lifestyle.<sup>16</sup>

The economic development game has changed. Employers now follow the workers rather than the other way around. Therefore, communities that focus on providing a high quality of life with the energy and vitality created by urban centers will be much more likely to attract these highly prized, talented, and productive workers than communities of faceless sprawl. Companies that understand the appeal of these communities are making relocation decisions with these workers in mind. Studies have shown that increasing employment density increases labor productivity, generally by reducing commuting times.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, introducing higher-density projects into a community will actually increase that community’s revenue without significantly increasing the infrastructure and public service burdens. Blending apartments into low-density communities can help pay for schools without drastic increases in the number of students. Diversifying housing options and adding amenities like shops and offices close by will improve the quality of life and attract businesses and people that will strengthen the community’s economic stability. Increasing density provides a real economic boost to the community and helps pay for the infrastructure and public services that everybody needs.

## PROFILE

### Highlands’ Garden Village

Built on the site of the Elitch Gardens amusement park in Denver, Highlands’ Garden Village is a walkable, transit-linked community and a financially viable model for environmentally responsible infill development. New York-based developer Jonathan Rose & Companies developed single-family homes, townhouses, seniors’ and multifamily apartments, cohousing, offices, and retail space on the site. At the center, a historic theater and carousel from the original amusement park are being transformed



**Highlands’ Garden Village reuses some structures from the amusement park previously located on the site. The compact development, combined with a variety of uses and housing types, uses public infrastructure more efficiently than low-density sprawling development.**

into a community performing arts center and a walking labyrinth. Berkeley, California-based Calthorpe Associates designed a plan that put new homes on three sides of a square-shaped village and a commercial “main street” on the fourth. Restaurants, studios, and shops line the street with live/work townhouses and offices above, giving residents the opportunity to live, work, and shop in the same community. The proximity of amenities, location near downtown, and convenience of public bus lines encourage people to walk and reduce travel costs.



# MYTH

Higher-density developments lower property values in surrounding areas.

# FACT

No discernible difference exists in the appreciation rate of properties located near higher-density development and those that are not. Some research even shows that higher-density development can increase property values.

**T**he precise value of real estate is determined by many factors, and isolating the impact of one factor can be difficult. Although location and school district are the two most obvious determining factors of value, location within a community and size and condition of the house also affect value. Several studies have examined whether multifamily housing has any impact on the value of nearby single-family detached houses. These studies have shown either no impact or even a slightly positive impact on appreciation rates.

## PROFILE



HAILE PLANTATION CORPORATION

### Haile Plantation

Haile Plantation is a Gainesville, Florida, icon. Although it is denser than surrounding communities, the values of homes in Haile Plantation are often higher than the values of houses in neighboring lower-density communities, because the traditional neighborhood design employed there makes Haile Plantation more desirable and valuable. Beginning with the master plan in 1979, Haile Plantation has been called one of the first new urbanist communities in the country. Developers Bob Rowe and Bob Kramer in conjunction with the Haile Plantation Corporation developed the 1,700-acre site to include more than 2,700 units, ranging from single-family homes to townhouses and garden apartments. The sense of community has only grown with the expansion of the development to include a town center, a village green, trails, civic uses, and offices. Indeed, it is density and diversity that together add value to this popular Florida community.

**Homes in Haile Plantation sell for more than neighboring homes because prospective buyers view the traditional neighborhood design as a valuable and desirable amenity.**

For instance, one study by the National Association of Home Builders looked at data from the American Housing Survey, which is conducted every two years by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It found that between 1997 and 1999, the value of single-family houses within 300 feet of an apartment or condominium building went up 2.9 percent a year, slightly higher than the 2.7 percent rate for single-family homes without multifamily properties nearby.<sup>18</sup>

Another study, commissioned by the Family Housing Fund in Minnesota, studied affordable apartments in 12 Twin Cities neighborhoods and found “little or no evidence to support the claim that tax-credit family rental developments in [the] study eroded surrounding home values.”<sup>19</sup> And a long-term study by Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies published in 2003 also confirms that apartments pose no threat to nearby single-family house values, based on U.S. Census data from 1970 to 2000.<sup>20</sup>

Not only is there compelling evidence that increased density does not hurt property values of nearby neighbors: researchers at Virginia Tech University have concluded that over the long run, well-placed market-rate apartments with attractive design and landscaping actually increases the overall value of detached houses nearby.<sup>21</sup> They cite three possible reasons. First, the new apartments could themselves be an indicator that an area’s economy is vibrant and growing. Second, multifamily housing may increase the pool of potential future homebuyers, creating more possible buyers for existing owners when they decide to sell their houses. Third, new multifamily housing, particularly as part of mixed-use development, often makes an area more attractive than nearby communities that have fewer housing and retail choices.<sup>22</sup>

## P R O F I L E

### Echelon at Lakeside

Echelon at Lakeside is the only multifamily development in an upscale, master-planned single-family suburban neighborhood of Lakeside on Preston in Plano, Texas a suburb of Dallas. Florida-based developers Echelon Communities, LLC, overcame initial community opposition from area residents through high-quality innovative design. The award-winning architecture blends seamlessly with the surrounding neighborhood’s traditional style. Larger-than-normal floor plans, individual entries, and attached garages combine to mirror the grand

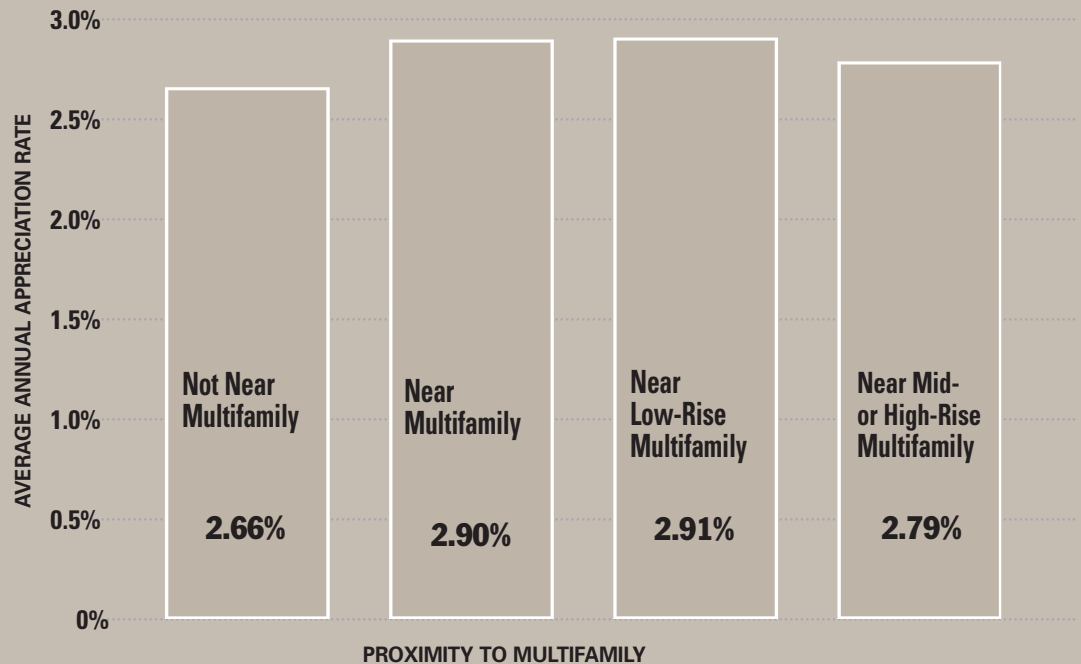


**The award-winning apartments at Echelon at Lakeside were designed to blend with the neighboring luxury homes.**

estates in the surrounding communities. Although street elevations make the buildings appear to be one single-family home, they actually house several multifamily units. Memphis-based architects Looney Ricks Kiss used five building types and three building styles. All units include high-quality interior finishes; community amenities include a resort-style pool, fitness facility, clubroom, business and conference center, and full-time concierge.



# AVERAGE ANNUAL APPRECIATION FOR SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES BY NEARNESS TO MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS



Source: NAHB computations based on data in the *American Housing Survey: 1997 and 1999* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997 and 1999).

Concerned citizens should use the entitlement process to demand high-quality development in their communities while understanding that density and adjacent property values are not inversely related. Higher-density real estate developers and investors in higher-density real estate need to appreciate the fact that most Americans' wealth is held in their home equity. Therefore, changes in property values can have very real consequences to existing property owners. Likewise, homeowners would benefit from knowing that developers make a substantial financial commitment when investing in new higher-density projects. This investment is an incentive to make the project successful, which can give the community leverage in working with the developer. Such interrelated and overlapping economic interests among these stakeholders make it all the more likely that a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached. Such an agreement can result in a project that enhances the existing community, ensures the appreciation of residents', developers', and the local government's financial interests, and addresses the needs of current and future residents of the community and region.

# 3 MYTH FACT

Higher-density development creates more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.

Higher-density development generates less traffic than low-density development per unit; it makes walking and public transit more feasible and creates opportunities for shared parking.

**M**ost people assume that higher-density development generates more traffic than low-density development and that regional traffic will get worse with more compact development. In fact, the opposite is true. Although residents of low-density single-family communities tend to have two or more cars per household, residents of high-density apartments and condominiums tend to have only one car per household.<sup>23</sup> And according to one study using data from the National Personal Transportation Survey, doubling density decreases the vehicle miles traveled by 38 percent.<sup>24</sup>

## PROFILE

### Mockingbird Station

The residents of Mockingbird Station in Dallas, Texas, are far less dependent on their cars, because they have a whole host of amenities at their doorstep. Dallas developer Ken Hughes partnered with Denver-based Simpson Housing Group to create the ten-acre pedestrian-oriented urban village, which includes 216 loft apartments, an eight-screen film center and café, more than 90 shops and restaurants, offices, an enclosed public plaza, and parking, all directly linked to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light-rail system. Mockingbird Station provides direct platform access to DART trains, which offer residents an eight-minute commute to Dallas's central business district and a single train connection to the Dallas Convention Center, Reunion Arena, and other downtown entertainment. The new village is also immediately adjacent to the campus of Southern Methodist University and within walking distance of the university's new stadium and sports center. RTKL created architecture reminiscent of historic train stations but with a modern twist to the materials and detailing. Although only limited driving is necessary, a parking garage is provided but placed out of sight and underground. The myriad materials, architectural styles, and amenities create a vibrant transit-oriented community.



**Residents of Mockingbird Station can leave their cars in the garage and take an eight-minute train ride to downtown Dallas; they can also walk to shops, offices, and a movie theater.**

The reason is that higher-density developments make for more walkable neighborhoods and bring together the concentration of population required to support public transportation. The result is that residents in higher-density housing make fewer and shorter auto trips than those living in low-density housing.<sup>25</sup> Condominium and townhouse residents average 5.6 trips per day and apartment dwellers 6.3 car trips per day, compared with the ten trips a day averaged by residents of low-density communities. (A trip is defined as any time a car leaves or returns to a home.)

Increasing density can significantly reduce dependency on cars, but those benefits are even greater when jobs and retail are incorporated with the housing. Such mixed-use neighborhoods make it easier for people to park their car in one place and accomplish several tasks, which not only reduces the number of car trips required but also reduces overall parking needs for the community. But if retail uses are to survive, they must be near households with disposable income. Having those households within walking distance of the shops builds in a market for the stores. One study indicates that in some markets, 25 to 35 percent of retail sales must come from housing close to shops for the shops to be successful.<sup>26</sup>

## PROFILE

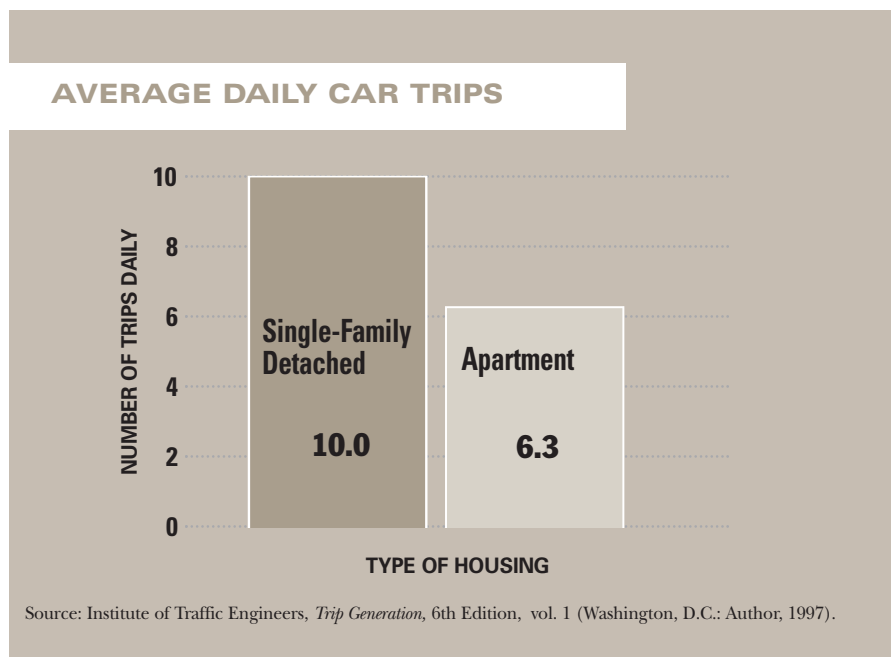
### Southwest Station

The Southwest Metro Transit Commission is a small suburban bus system near Minneapolis that serves downtown Minneapolis and numerous other employment and recreation centers, including Minnesota Twins baseball games. The American Public Transportation Association calls it the “best small system in the country.” In an effort to capitalize and expand on the success of the system, the commission has encouraged transit-oriented development at its bus stops. In Eden Prairie, Minnesota, the commission completed a bus depot and five-story parking garage on 22 acres of excess right-of-way. In 2001, it started selling land around the transit complex for retail and residential development. Restaurants, shops, and more than 250 apartments, condominiums, and townhouses soon followed. The new development generated revenue for the commission, new public transit riders, affordable convenient housing, and a suburban lifestyle with the amenities usually afforded only to city dwellers.



**The Southwest Metro Transit Commission in suburban Minneapolis runs an award-winning bus system and has encouraged higher-density development around transit stops, like this one at Southwest Station in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.**

With a typical family now making more car trips for family, personal, social, and recreational reasons than for commuting to work,<sup>27</sup> reducing the number of noncommuting trips takes on greater importance in the battle to reduce traffic congestion and parking problems. A case study in Washington, D.C., found that workers in dense downtown Washington made 80 percent of their mid-day trips by foot while suburban workers made 67 percent of their mid-day trips by car.<sup>28</sup> Although a suburban office park would never reach the density levels of a downtown area, planners can still reduce the auto dependency of suburban office workers by using some of the same design techniques. Concentrating density around



suburban offices, allowing and encouraging retail and restaurants in and near the offices, and planning for pedestrian and bike access can all reduce the number of lunchtime car trips required by office workers.

Higher-density mixed-used developments also create efficiencies through shared parking. For example, office and residential uses require parking at almost exact opposite times. As residents leave for work, office workers return, and vice versa. In addition, structured parking becomes feasible only with higher-density developments.

Higher-density development also makes public transit more feasible. When a community that includes residences, shops, and offices reaches a certain threshold of density, public transit-shuttles, bus service, trams, or light rail becomes an option for residents. It is estimated that a minimum density of seven dwelling units per acre is needed to make local bus service feasible with an intermediate level of service.<sup>29</sup> Light rail needs a minimum density of nine dwelling units per acre to be feasible.<sup>30</sup> When a community can take advantage of these options and increase the transportation choices for residents, relief is greater as total car dependency is further broken. Such choices are impossible for low-density developments.

# MYTH

Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.

# FACT

The crime rates at higher-density developments are not significantly different from those at lower-density developments.

**P**eople sometimes associate density with crime, even though numerous studies show that no relationship exists between the two. A study in Irving, Texas, using geographic information systems and crime statistics, found no link between crime and density. In fact, it found that single-family neighborhoods are “not all associated with lower crime rates.”<sup>31</sup> Another study conducted by the University of Alaska found no relationship between housing density and crime in Anchorage.<sup>32</sup>

## PROFILE

### Westminster Place

Although today Westminster Place is a thriving, safe community in midtown St. Louis, it was not always the case. The area, approximately 90 acres, was well known by the St. Louis police department for its high rate of violent crime, which led to the area’s becoming blighted. McCormack Baron Salazar, a St. Louis-based developer, brought the community back through the addition of higher-density mixed-income housing comprising affordable and market-rate units. The master plan included for-sale and rental housing, garden apartments, townhouses, single-family homes, and even an assisted living facility for seniors. A new community pool, a bustling retail center, and a magnet school are included as well. The new plan slowed traffic through the community, added landscaping and street and parking lot lighting, and new “eyes on the street,” making it more difficult for criminals to go unnoticed. The area blossomed into a place where people once again feel safe walking. The success of the community spurred the revitalization of surrounding areas.



**Increasing the housing density, adding some market-rate housing, and developing a design that slowed traffic and added additional lighting changed Westminster Place from a crime-ridden neighborhood to a thriving, safe community.**



## PROFILE

### East Village

East Village is a small urban revitalization project on the edge of downtown Minneapolis. Before the project was built, the neglected 2.9-acre site contained several deteriorating rental homes, old commercial buildings, and abandoned surface parking lots. The neighborhood wanted to improve the area and the image of one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, Elliot Park. The developers of the project, Central Community Housing Trust and East Village Housing Corporation, developed the new mixed-income housing and commercial community to encourage a sense of community and ownership. East Village now features community green space, pedestrian paths, and neighborhood businesses. Buildings surround the greenway that leads to Elliot Park, a city park with year-round activities and a community center. Brick, bay windows, and French balconies complement historic buildings in the area. In addition, all buildings have multiple entrances to encourage interaction among neighbors. An underground 350-space parking garage frees up space for landscaped areas. This once neglected area has won two awards for innovation and design and become an exceedingly successful vibrant and safe community.



The additional “eyes on the street” created by the development of East Village in Minneapolis has led to a safer vibrant community.

Arizona researchers found that when police data are analyzed per unit, apartments actually create less demand for police services than a comparable number of single-family houses. In Tempe, Arizona, a random sample of 1,000 calls for service showed that 35 percent originated from single-family houses and just 21 percent came from apartments. Similarly, a random sample of 600 calls for service in Phoenix, Arizona, found that an apartment unit's demand for police services was less than half of the demand created by a single-family house.<sup>33</sup>

One reason for the misperception that crime and density are related could be that crime reports tend to characterize multifamily properties as a single "house" and may record every visit to an apartment community as happening at a single house. But a multifamily property with 250 units is more accurately defined as 250 houses. To truly compare crime rates between multifamily properties and single-family houses, the officer would have to count each household in the multifamily community as the equivalent of a separate single-family household. When they do so, many find what the previous studies prove: that crime rates between different housing types are comparable.

Higher-density developments can actually help reduce crime by increasing pedestrian activity and fostering a 24-hour community that puts more "eyes on the street"<sup>34</sup> at all times. Many residents say they chose higher-density housing specifically because they felt more secure there; they feel safer because there are more people coming and going, making it more difficult for criminals to act without being discovered. This factor could explain why a ULI study of different housing types in Greenwich, Connecticut, shows that higher-density housing is significantly less likely to be burglarized than single-family houses.<sup>35</sup> The relationships among design, management, and security became better understood in the past few decades with the publication of several seminal works, including *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design* by Oscar Newman<sup>36</sup> and *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in our Communities* by George Kelling and Catherine Coles.<sup>37</sup> Many new higher-density developments include better lighting plans and careful placement of buildings and landscaping to reduce opportunities for crime, contributing to a safer community.

With the emergence of better-quality designs, higher-density mixed-use development is an attractive and safe addition to a community, one that is increasingly attracting a professional constituency seeking safety features. In fact, the luxury segment is one of the fastest-growing components of the multifamily industry.<sup>38</sup>



# 5 MYTH FACT

Higher-density development is environmentally more destructive than lower-density development.

Low-density development increases air and water pollution and destroys natural areas by paving and urbanizing greater swaths of land.

**L**ow-density sprawl takes an enormous toll on our air, water, and land. The United States is now losing a staggering 2 million acres of land a year to haphazard, sprawling development.<sup>39</sup> More than 50 percent of Americans live in places where the air is unhealthy to breathe,<sup>40</sup> and childhood asthma and other respiratory diseases are on the rise.<sup>41</sup> Almost half the damage to our streams, lakes, and rivers is the result of polluted runoff from paved surfaces.<sup>42</sup>

It is inefficient land use, not economic growth, that accounts for the rapid loss of open space and farms. Since 1994, housing lots larger than ten acres have accounted for 55 percent of the land developed.<sup>43</sup> This loss of land often causes unexpected economic challenges for rural communities, where farmland, forests, ranchland, and open space tend to be the economic drivers that attract businesses, residents, and tourists. Low-density sprawl compromises the resources that are the core of the community's economy and character. The majority of American homeowners think it is important to stop these trends. In fact, 76 percent of local ballot initiatives related to land conservation passed in November 2004, making \$2.4 billion in funding available for protection of parks and open space.<sup>44</sup> But purchasing land is only part of the solution and not always an option for financially strapped governments.

Higher-density development offers the best solution to managing growth and protecting clean air and clean water. Placing new development into already urbanized areas that are equipped with all the basic infrastructure like utility lines, police and fire protection, schools, and shops eliminates the financial and environmental costs of stretching those services farther and farther out from the core community. Compact urban design reduces driving and smog and preserves the natural areas that are assets of the community: watersheds, wetlands, working farms, open space, and wildlife corridors. It further minimizes impervious surface area, which causes erosion and polluted stormwater runoff. Two studies completed for the state of New Jersey confirm that compact development can achieve a 30 percent reduction in runoff and an 83 percent reduction in water consumption compared with conventional suburban development.<sup>45</sup>

## P R O F I L E

## Prairie Crossing

The developers of Prairie Crossing, George and Vicky Ranney, saved \$1 million in infrastructure costs through environmentally sensitive design. The 677-acre conservation community is located in Grayslake, Illinois, 40 miles northwest of Chicago and one hour south of Milwaukee. The community features 350 acres of open space, including 160 acres of restored prairie, 158 acres of active farmland, 13 acres of wetlands, a 22-acre lake, a village green, and several neighborhood parks. Houses are sited to protect natural features such as hedge-rows, native habitat, and wetlands. Designed with colors and architecture inspired by the landscape, every home has a view of open space and direct access to ten miles of on-site walking and biking trails. Wide sidewalks, deep front porches, and rear garages encourage neighbors to meet. The homes were built with U.S. Department of Energy–approved green building techniques. As a result, they are 50 percent more energy efficient than other homes in the Chicago area, and they sell for a 33 percent sales premium. Station Village is the last phase of Prairie Crossing. When complete, it will include residential, retail, and office space, all within walking distance of two commuter train stations. Residents can ride Metra’s North Line to Chicago’s Union Station or the Central Line to downtown Chicago and O’Hare Airport.

**More than half the land at Prairie Crossing was preserved as open space, and homes were built with approved green building techniques.**



PRAIRIE CROSSING

## PROFILE

### The Preserve

USS Real Estate originally held a 550-acre tract of land in Hoover, Alabama, but sold 250 acres to the city, intending to create the Moss Rock Nature Preserve. The 680 single-family homes, 50,000 square feet of retail, and 50,000 square feet of office space are concentrated on the remaining 311-acre site. Before development of the Preserve, Hoover was characterized by sprawling conventional development and lacked a town center. The Preserve's future town center is planned to include 34 live/work units, 14 retail units, and two restaurants: at the heart of the community is the village green, an impressive eight-acre park with a town hall, a fitness center, a junior olympic swimming pool, and a kiddie pool. Residents have access to 15 acres of parks and seven miles of trails that connect to award-winning Hoover schools and the newly created Moss Rock preserve.

**Clustering development at the Preserve in Hoover Alabama, enabled the creation of the 250-acre Moss Rock Nature Preserve.**



USS REAL ESTATE



Many communities employ techniques such as infill and brownfield development to transform unused, abandoned lots into vibrant, revenue-generating components of the community. Some create direct incentives for higher-density development. The city of Austin, Texas, for example, created a program that rewards developers for locating projects in the city's existing neighborhoods and downtown. Others award points for a variety of attributes, such as transit access, the redevelopment of empty lots, and an increase in pedestrian facilities. By employing standards for factors like open space, dense development, and impact on water quality, communities can facilitate good urban design that preserves natural resources.

Although a well-designed higher-density community offers residents a higher-quality environment, poorly planned sprawl does the opposite. Because low-density sprawl gobbles up so much land through large-lot zoning, it ends up destroying the very thing most people moved there for in the first place—the natural areas and farmland. It forces people to drive longer distances, increasing regional air quality problems. The average American man spends 81 minutes behind the wheel every day, while women average 63 minutes. And surveys show that the time spent driving has been consistently increasing every year.<sup>46</sup> The national road network, currently at 4 million miles according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, is still growing at an alarming rate, mainly for the purpose of connecting new low-density suburbs back to core communities. Along with the water and air pollution, construction of these highways perpetuates the cycle of sprawl, fragments wildlife habitats, and dries up a community's financial coffers.

Increasing density not only improves air and water quality and protects open space but also redirects investments to our existing towns and cities. It can revitalize existing communities and create more walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit and hiking and biking trails. Pedestrian-friendly higher-density developments offer general health benefits as well. Mixed land uses give people the option to walk and bike to work, shops, restaurants, and entertainment. The convenience of compact communities may help fight diseases related to obesity.<sup>47</sup> Higher-density communities are vital to preserving a healthy environment and fostering healthy lifestyles.

# 6 MYTH FACT

Higher-density development is unattractive and does not fit in a low-density community.

Attractive, well-designed, and well-maintained higher-density development attracts good residents and tenants and fits into existing communities.

**H**igher-density development comes in many forms. Some of the most attractive well-planned modern development is built at a high density. Across America, appealing higher-density mixed-use town centers have been wildly popular with the public. Lushly landscaped boulevards, fountains, and showcase architecture have created a sense of place in areas previously known only for faceless, uninteresting low-density development. The enduring appeal

## PROFILE

### Post Riverside

Atlanta is often called the poster child for suburban sprawl. However, it is also the home of Post Riverside, a revolutionary new mixed-use pedestrian-oriented community developed by Atlanta-based Post Properties, Inc., and located on the banks of the Chattahoochee River between Atlanta's bustling Buckhead and Vinings communities. As is the trend nationally, 65 percent of all vehicle trips in Atlanta are to run errands, not to commute to work. With offices, shops, and restaurants within walking distance of the apartments, Post Riverside residents depend on autos much less than their neighbors in lower-density areas. In addition, the community is connected to Atlanta's MARTA subway system and the Cobb County transit system. This award-winning 85-acre mixed-use development includes 25,000 square feet of retail space, 225,000 square feet of office space, and 535 apartments, all designed around a gracious town square. For many people, this amenity-rich, low-maintenance lifestyle better suits their needs than a traditional single-family home in a low-density neighborhood.



POST PROPERTIES, INC. PHOTOGRAPH ©STEVE HINDS

**Post Riverside in Atlanta demonstrates that higher-density development can be attractive and successful in a community known for lower-density development.**

and desirability of older and more gracious higher-density neighborhoods—Georgetown in Washington, D.C., Beacon Hill and Back Bay in Boston, and Lincoln Park in Chicago—attest to the fact that some of the more desirable neighborhoods in America historically have been of higher density than that found in typical outer suburbs.

This return to the design principles of the past is at the core of the new urbanist movement that took hold in the 1990s. The movement grew as many people came to miss the sense of community that was created by the mixed-density and mixed-use communities of the past. They realized that low-density subdivisions isolated their owners not only from pedestrian access to shops and offices but also from their neighbors. The growing sense of social alienation, highlighted in books like Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*,<sup>48</sup> has led many back to the comfort of communities that are a reminder of the places where many of us grew up. These new communities combine the best design ideas of the past with the modern conveniences of today to provide residents with what has been missing from many sprawling areas—a sense of community.

Today’s developers, architects, and planners know that to attract customers and to secure zoning approvals and community acceptance, they must produce attractive and innovative properties that complement their surroundings. Design professionals are driven to produce projects that meet users’ demands, understand and respond to the context of a site, enhance its neighborhood, and are built to last.<sup>49</sup> In fact, attendance at a recent American Institute of Architects–sponsored conference on density far surpassed expectations, speaking to the interest among land use professionals in addressing the design issues associated with density.<sup>50</sup>

It is plausible that the high level of citizens’ opposition to density may be based on an outdated notion of what higher-density development looks like. A University of North Carolina study revealed that when given a choice between two attractively designed communities, one higher density and the other low density; the majority preferred the higher-density option.<sup>51</sup> Other visual preference surveys confirm that there is an almost universal negative reaction to the visual appearance of commercial strip sprawl and an almost universal positive reaction to traditional town-like communities of the past, communities that almost invariably included a mix of densities and uses.<sup>52</sup>

## PROFILE

### The Plaza at the Arboretum

This award-winning mixed-use project in Santa Monica, California, developed by California-based Legacy Partners, achieves a density of 97.5 dwelling units per acre. The attractive seven-story building includes 10,000 square feet of retail space and 350 apartment units ranging from 612 to 1,555 square feet. The architecture firm Meeks and Partners used strong geometric forms to create a playful architectural character that fits nicely in the avant-garde Hollywood studio section of Santa Monica. The development includes a swimming pool, spa, fitness center, and clubhouse.



**Higher-density developments like the Plaza at the Arboretum present opportunities to create outstanding award-winning architecture.**

# 7 MYTH FACT

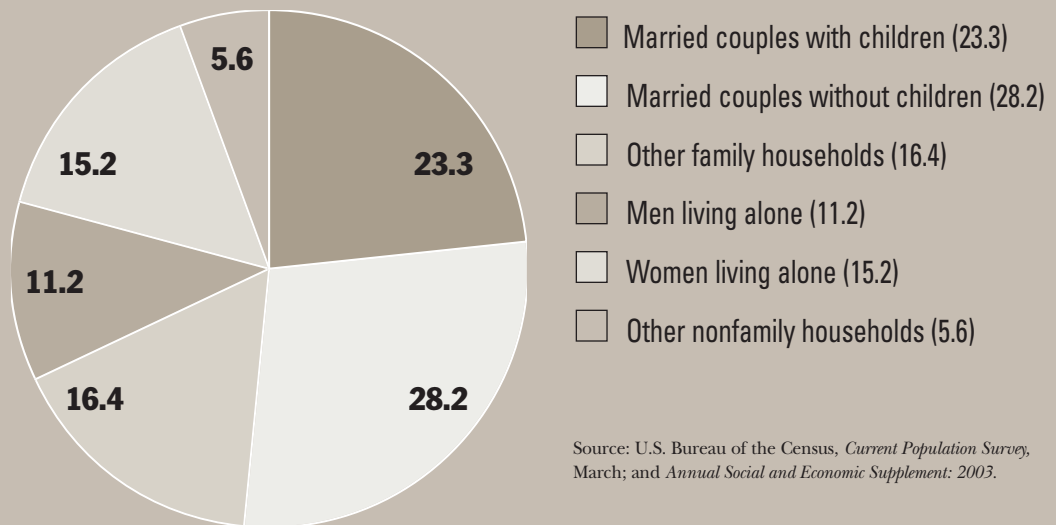
No one in suburban areas wants higher-density development.

Our population is changing and becoming increasingly diverse. Many of these households now prefer higher-density housing, even in suburban locations.

**W**hen many of us think of the American Dream, we envision married couples with children living in single-family detached houses in the suburbs. The notion is that the only people who want to live in higher-density areas are those who cannot afford a traditional house with a back yard or who want to live in the middle of the city. Both perceptions are flawed.

This country's population is changing, and so are its real estate preferences. These lifestyle changes have significant implications for suburban development. For the first time, there are more single-person households (26.4 percent) than married-

**HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE: 2003 (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL)**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey*, March; and *Annual Social and Economic Supplement: 2003*.



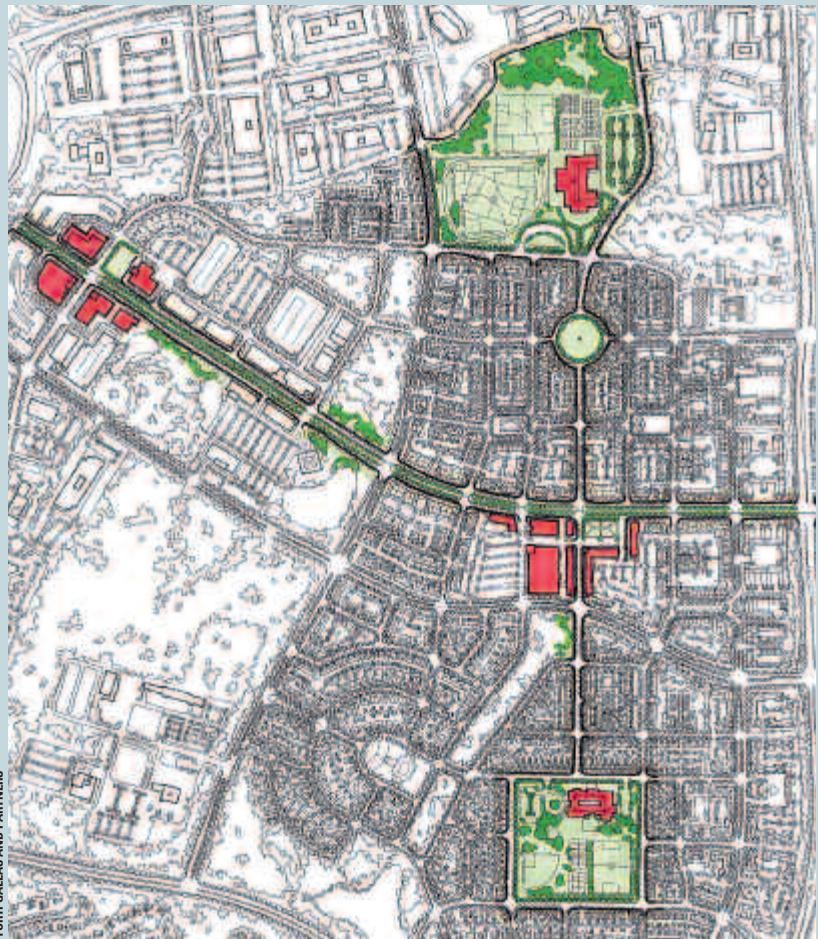
couple-with-children households (23.3 percent).<sup>53</sup> The groups growing the fastest, people in their mid-20s and empty nesters in their 50s, are the groups most likely to look for an alternative to low-density, single-family housing.<sup>54</sup>

A growing number of Americans are redefining their American Dream. They are seeking a more convenient and vibrant lifestyle. And while some seek this lifestyle in cities, many others seek the same lifestyle in the suburbs. According to a 2002 study by the National Association of Home Builders, more than half the renters questioned said they wanted to live in the suburbs.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, a national survey of homebuyers' community preferences found that nearly three-quarters of all

## PROFILE

### King Farm

This 430-acre community is characterized by the historic architecture of the region but offers an assortment of modern conveniences as well. Developed by King Farm Associates, LLC, King Farm is located in Rockville, Maryland, five miles from the Washington, D.C., beltway, 15 miles from downtown D.C., and walking distance from the Shady Grove Metro station. The neighborhood was designed for pedestrians, but the King Farm shuttle makes getting around even easier. The shuttle runs a complimentary route between the King Farm Village Center, the Metro station, and the Irvington Center, a 90-acre commercial complex next to the Metro. In addition, two types of public bus service are available at King Farm. At the Village Center, 120,000 square feet of retail space is within walking distance from both residential and commercial development. The center also includes 47 loft apartments and a one-acre village green. Watkins Pond and Baileys Common are King Farm's two residential villages. They offer single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums, and luxury apartments intertwined with natural areas. The center of Watkins Pond is a 12-acre city park with tennis and basketball courts, a soccer and softball field, two playgrounds, several picnic areas, benches, and paths.



TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS

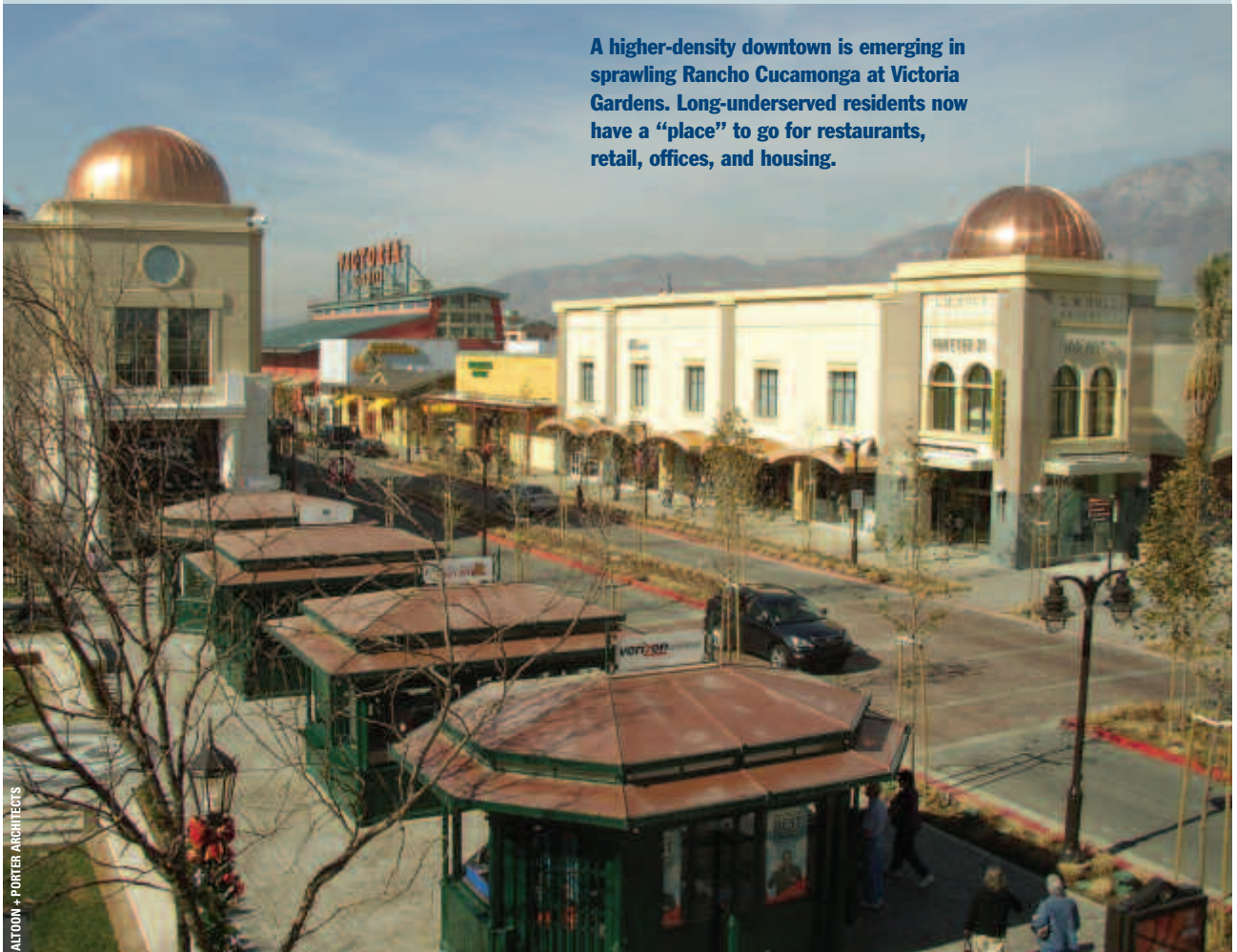
**King Farm is a successful higher-density suburban community that integrates housing, retail shops, offices, and public transit.**

## PROFILE

## Victoria Gardens

The city of Rancho Cucamonga, located roughly 60 miles east of Los Angeles in California's Inland Empire, has a rich agricultural history and, more recently, a history of low-density sprawl with no real city center. This situation is changing, however, with the opening of the first phases of a huge new mixed-use development known as Victoria Gardens. The development, designed by L.A.-based architects, Altoon + Porter, and being developed jointly by California-based developers Forest City California and the Lewis Investment Company, will create a vibrant higher-density downtown where none previously existed. Rapidly growing Rancho Cucamonga has been traditionally underserved by restaurants and entertainment options. The long-awaited addition of a "place" in the city has been well received by residents. The 147-acre development will eventually contain 1.3 million square feet of commercial and community space, including retail, entertainment, office, and civic uses with a cultural center and a library. Twenty acres of housing on site will allow people to live within walking distance of all the amenities of Rancho Cucamonga's new downtown.

**A higher-density downtown is emerging in sprawling Rancho Cucamonga at Victoria Gardens. Long-underserved residents now have a "place" to go for restaurants, retail, offices, and housing.**



ALTOON + PORTER ARCHITECTS

buyers prefer to live in a community where they can walk or bike to some destinations.<sup>56</sup> The 2001 American Housing Survey further reveals that respondents cited proximity to work more often than unit type as the leading factor in housing choice.<sup>57</sup> These surveys confirm that many people prefer the suburbs but want the amenities traditionally associated with cities, including living close to work.

With the continuing decentralization of cities and the rise of suburban communities with urban-like amenities, many people find that they can live and work in the suburbs with all the attributes of suburbia they desire without giving up walkability and convenience. A recent study confirms that in many regions, more office space is located in suburban locations than downtowns,<sup>58</sup> providing an opportunity for people to live near their jobs. Communities and developers that have recognized and responded to the dual trends of decentralized offices and a growing desire for a more convenient lifestyle have been rewarded. Well-placed mixed-use, higher-density developments in the suburbs are increasingly popular, creating a new sense of place.

Communities are being developed using the best concepts of traditional communities—smaller lots, a variety of housing types, front porches and sidewalks, shops and offices within walking distance, and public transit nearby. Communities like Celebration in Florida and King Farm in Maryland have been so popular with the homebuying public that past worries over whether the demand exists for them have been replaced by concerns about their rapid price appreciation, putting them out of the reach of all but the highest-income households. Today's real demographic and lifestyle changes are inspiring a return to traditional development styles that offer walkable, bikeable, and more dynamic communities that put residents closer to shops, offices, and parks.



# 8 MYTH FACT

Higher-density housing is only for lower-income households.

People of all income groups choose higher-density housing.

**M**ultifamily housing is not the housing of last resort for households unable to afford a single-family house. Condominiums, for instance, are often the most sought after and highly appreciating real estate in many urban markets. The luxury segment of the apartment market is also rapidly expanding. Most people are surprised to learn that 41 percent of renters say they rent by choice and not out of necessity, and households making more than \$50,000 a year have been the fastest-growing segment of the rental market for the past three years.<sup>59</sup> Multifamily housing throughout the world has historically been the housing of choice by the wealthiest individuals because of the access and convenience it provides. From Manhattan to Miami to San Francisco, higher-density housing has been prized for the amenity-rich lifestyle it can provide.

Higher-density development can be a viable housing choice for all income groups and people in all phases of their lives. Many financially secure baby boomers, who have seen their children leave the nest, have chosen to leave behind the yard maintenance and repairs required of a single-family house for the more carefree and convenient lifestyle multifamily housing provides. Interestingly, their children, the echo boomers, are entering the age where many will likely live in multifamily housing. Just starting careers, many are looking for the flexibility of apartment living to follow job opportunities. Their grandparents, likely on a fixed income, may also prefer or need to live in multifamily housing as physical limitations may have made living in a single-family house too challenging.

Providing balanced housing options to people of all income groups is important to a region's economic vitality. The availability of affordable multifamily housing helps attract and retain the workers needed to keep any economy thriving. In many American towns and cities, rapidly rising house prices are forcing working families to live farther away from their jobs. In fact, the lack of affordable housing is mentioned as the number one problem facing working families today.<sup>60</sup>

## P R O F I L E

## Rollins Square

Rollins Square, a mixed-use development in Boston's South End, is a truly mixed-income community that provides housing for a wide spectrum of people in all income brackets. Twenty percent of the overall units are reserved for people whose income is 30 to 60 percent of the Boston area median income (AMI), 40 percent are for-sale condominiums reserved for working households with incomes 80 to 120 percent of the AMI, and the remaining 40 percent are market-rate units sell-

ing for up to \$750,000. The residences occupy two city blocks and integrate seamlessly into the existing neighborhood. The varying heights and diverse exterior materials give the appearance that the development was constructed over time. Rollins Square was developed by the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Inc., a nonprofit developer associated with the Archdiocese of Boston.

**Rollins Square effectively provides housing for low-, moderate-, and high-income households in one attractive development that is well integrated into the existing community.**



CBT/CHILD BERTMAN TSECKARES ARCHITECTS

## PROFILE

### I'On

I'On is a 244-acre master-planned community along the deep-water marshes of Hobcraw Creek in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Just six miles east of Charleston, the community features 700 single-family homes, community facilities, and a small-scale commercial area. Vince Graham, principal with the I'On Company, is developing six residential neighborhoods connected by narrow streets, pedestrian corridors, and community spaces. An I'On Guild member, one of 18 builders selected for experience, talent, and financial strength, builds each individual home. The architecture is inspired by classic Lowcountry style with large balconies, deep front porches, and tall windows on even taller homes. Homes now sell for \$685,000 to \$1.7 million. Community facilities include I'On Square, I'On Club, the Creek Club, and the Mount Pleasant Amphitheater. Residents also enjoy easy access to the Cooper and Wando rivers, the Charleston harbor, and the Atlantic Ocean. One neighborhood boat ramp and four community docks are available for crabbing and fishing. Two miles of walking trails are available for residents; a five-acre pond, the Rookery, is a protected nesting site for wading birds. In addition, the public and private schools in Mount Pleasant are some of the best in the area.



**Some home prices in the well-planned higher-density community of I'On are approaching \$2 million. The traditional neighborhood design combined with the community amenities made possible by higher densities have made the community one of the most desirable in the Charleston area.**

As the problem of affordability worsens, workers on the lower end of the salary scale may move to more affordable cities, leaving a labor shortage in their wake. Such shortages make a region less desirable as an employment center. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, access to a large and diverse labor pool is the most important factor in making corporate decisions on locations.<sup>61</sup> Communities that do not provide housing for all income groups become less desirable corporate locations.

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## Higher-Density Development Myth and Fact

Richard Haughey

No one likes sprawl and the traffic congestion it creates, yet proposals for increasing density in new and existing neighborhoods often are squashed by community fears of public housing, crime, and ugly high rises. *Higher-Density Development: Myth and Fact* dispels these negative connotations, by comparing the advantages and drawbacks of higher- and low-density development. The definition of higher-density development is relative to the community the development is in—it could be single-family homes on smaller lots, or townhouses and apartments in more populated areas. Eight widespread misconceptions about higher-density development are examined and dispelled with well-researched facts and examples of high-quality, compact developments.

### Debunk these common myths about density:

- Higher-density development overburdens public schools and other public services and requires more infrastructure support systems.
- Higher-density developments lower property values in surrounding areas.
- Higher-density development creates more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.
- Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.

- Higher-density development is environmentally more destructive than lower-density development.
- Higher-density development is unattractive and does not fit in a low-density community.
- No one in suburban areas wants higher-density development.
- Higher-density housing is only for lower-income households.

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# URBANLAND

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## Flexible Parking Structures as Civic Catalysts

By [Will Macht](#)

November 24, 2014

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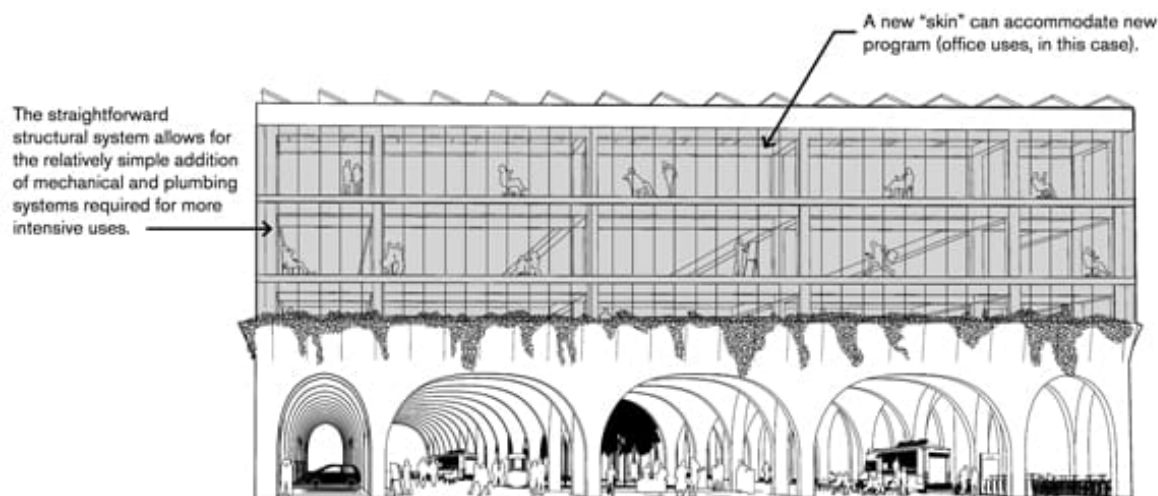
*The flexible parking structure is located next to a colonnade under the adjacent Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) commuter rail line, which would be turned into a pedestrian spine through the heart of Rockville Centre's downtown. The structure has 20-foot-tall (6 m) ceilings at grade to act as a covered plaza during off-peak parking hours in the evening and on weekends, when public markets and festivals can also spill out onto a contiguous open plaza. (Utile Inc.)*

For urban planners who consider the automobile the major cause of the deterioration of cities, loss of community spaces, elimination of mixed uses, and decimation of urban street life, it may seem a contradiction to propose construction of parking structures as the cure. Yet that is precisely the intent and result of a proposal submitted in a design challenge sponsored by a nonprofit entity, supported by a regional foundation, and entered by leading architects and urban planners.

In suburban downtowns, where sufficient parking is still critical to operational viability, land prices and parking rates typically have not risen to levels that support the cost of structured parking. As a result, vast quantities of land are committed to surface parking in patterns that work against adequate numbers and concentration of the shops, restaurants, theaters, and cafés that draw enough patrons to activate those downtowns. Redevelopment potential could be substantial. For example, more than 4,000 acres (1,600 ha) in and around Long Island's downtowns are dedicated to parking.

In addition to being expensive, structured parking facilities are generally single-purpose, stand-alone structures that sit empty during evenings and weekends and are filled only sporadically. In suburban downtowns near commuter rail lines or

new light-rail extensions, weekday demand for park-and-ride facilities can overwhelm the parking supply, displacing the shorter-term parking needed to revitalize those downtowns. Yet most such expensive parking facilities lie fallow during evenings and weekends.



*The narrower two-bay prototype is also well-dimensioned for a future 120-foot-wide (37 m) office building. A new glass skin, accessible cores, and mechanical, plumbing, and electrical chases can be added to a flexible structure. (Utile Inc.)*

Facing this chicken-and-egg conundrum, the Long Island Index, a nonprofit organization funded by the Rauch Foundation—a Garden City, Long Island, family foundation intended to spark and sustain regional systemic change—organized a design challenge. The goal was to demonstrate how a suburban downtown setting can be transformed by such structures—when they are exceptionally well designed and feature innovative architectural, technical, operational, and financing strategies as part of a broader approach to managing downtown parking and mobility.

In response, architects and urban planners Tim Love, founding principal, and designer Elizabeth Christoforetti at Utile, a Boston-based architecture and urban design firm, developed a solution, dubbed “Civic Arches,” based on two principles.

First, parking structures need to be used for longer periods of the day and for different purposes, both public and private. With single-purpose parking—designated for support of office, retail, hotel, housing, or entertainment facilities alone—patterns of use are highly variable depending on the time of day, the day of the week, or the season. Such inefficiencies drive up the cost of building and maintaining parking structures.

Second, parking structures need to be designed as flexible structures that can accommodate transitions from parking alone to a variety of other uses as parking ratios decline with further mixed-use development and increased use of shared parking facilities and transit. Future functions for these properties should include civic, office, retail, hotel, housing, and entertainment uses. Cities evolve over time, and the functions of structures can change if they are designed for flexibility.



*Utile Design proposed 20-foot-high (6 m) ceilings on the floor at grade so that when the structure is mostly vacant, it could be used for a variety of civic uses, such as public markets, food carts, and festivals. In future years, at-grade parking might be limited and the perimeter bays used for more permanent shops and restaurants, with adequate parking provided on upper floors.*



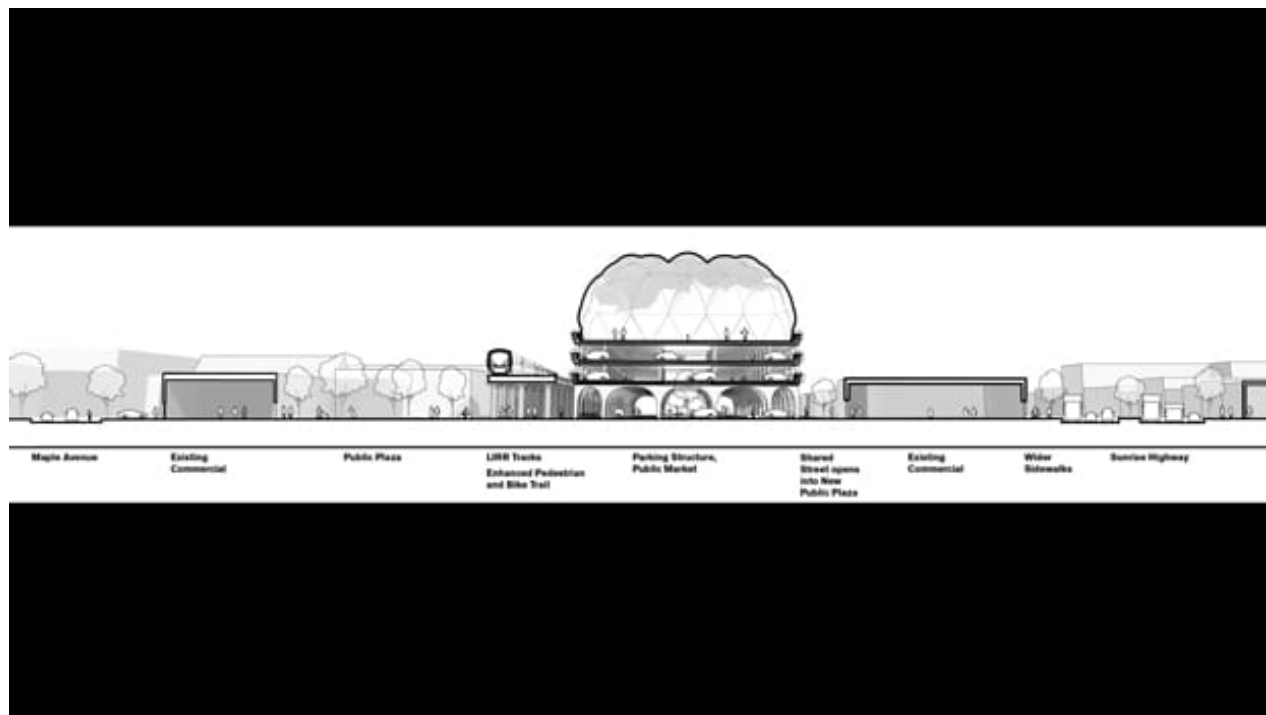
"The early 20th-century loft building was our model for how to design a flexible building that could be repurposed over time," Love said of earlier prototypes that influenced Utile's thinking. "Examples include the cast-iron loft buildings in Soho and the brick warehouses that the Boston Wharf Company built in the Fort Point District in Boston in the early 20th century. In most American cities, this type of building has been especially adaptable to residential and office conversion because of the simple column grid, workable floorplate dimensions, the structural capacity, and large windows. We think that architects should focus more on future-use buildings rather than one-off structures that are customized for a very specific program. Unfortunately, architects are not typically trained to think this way."

*Parking structures need to be designed to accommodate transitions, from parking alone to other uses as parking ratios decline with further mixed-use development, shared parking, and increased transit.*

Love and Christoforetti searched for the optimal module that could be adapted to all potential future uses for the universal utilitarian structures. That module proved to be a 30-by-30-foot (9 by 9 m) bay. Standard parking bays for perpendicular parking are 60 feet (18 m) wide, allowing for 18-foot-deep (5.5 m) parking spaces flanking a 24-foot (7 m), two-way drive aisle. In their prototype design, to shift the columns of the 30-foot (9 m) bays out of the center of the drive aisle, 15-foot-wide (5 m) bays ring the perimeter of the structure.

Says Love, "A 30-foot bay is the ideal dimension for a structure that begins as a parking garage and can then be repurposed for office/flex space or housing in the future. An efficient parking configuration that uses a 30-foot bay requires the system to start with a 15-foot bay so that the first 30-foot bay is centered over the drive aisle. This is how, more generally, the two-dimensional systems sync up. Therefore, lateral parking bay dimensions for a 120-foot-wide [37 m] double-bay garage are 18-24-18 and 18-24-18 feet [6-7-6 m] while the corresponding grid is 15-30-30-30-15 feet [5-9-9-9-5 m]."

The proportions and dimensions of these flexible structures can also accommodate a variety of future uses. The three-bay-wide prototype structure Love and Christoforetti designed, for example, can accommodate a future double-loaded-corridor (units flanking a center hallway) residential building around a center courtyard, which would be formed by removing the center 60-foot-wide (18.3 m) inclined driving ramps. And comfortable hotel rooms could easily fit within a 15-by-30-foot (5 by 9 m) bay dimension. The narrower two-bay prototype also has suitable dimensions for a future 120-foot-wide (37 m) office building.



*This sectional diagram shows the flexible parking structures flanking a new pedestrian spine under the LIRR colonnade. Civic uses for both*

*an open plaza and an arch-covered plaza give a new urban heart to Rockville Centre.*

Different-sized retail shops and restaurants could fit within the 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-foot (4.6, 9.1, 13.7, and 18.3 m) depths. Recreational uses would fit on the rooftops of the two- and three-bay structures. Tennis courts at 36 by 78 feet (11 by 24 m) can fit side-to-side with adequate access space on top of the two-bay structure. In fact, for the parking structure proposed for the Lot 3 surface parking lot in the village of Rockville Centre on Long Island, Utile—at the request of local officials and as part of the design challenge—proposed five tennis courts, covered by a pneumatic bubble that would allow use of the area for indoor events and glow at night as a visual attraction to passersby on the adjacent Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) commuter rail line. The team even sited a 180-by-300-foot (55 by 91 m) soccer field on the rooftop of a three-bay structure to demonstrate its recreational flexibility.

Traditional parking structures have minimal ceiling heights of seven to eight feet (2.1 to 2.4 m) that preclude conversion to other commercial or civic uses. Utile proposed 20-foot (6 m) ceilings on the floor at grade so that when the structure is mostly vacant on evenings and weekends, it could be used for civic purposes such as a public market, a staging area for food carts, or festivals. In future years, the at-grade parking could be limited and the perimeter bays used for more permanent shops and restaurants, with adequate parking on upper floors, which Utile designed with 11-foot (3.4 m) ceiling heights to permit conversion to other uses.

The fact that Rockville Centre's sites mostly flank the LIRR also influenced Utile's design of the structures. Stout octagonal columns with prominent octagonal capitals form a colonnade that elevates the LIRR tracks. Utile would recapture that space as a covered pedestrian spine through Rockville Centre's downtown. The new flexible parking structures, with their high-bay, open first floors, would flank the colonnade and extend the public realm into covered and open plazas.



*Architects looked to earlier arched forms for bridges and viaducts, such as the conversion of a defunct suburban railway into the Viaduc des Artes in Paris.*

For centuries, the arch and vault have been used to create civic spaces. Utile looked to earlier arched forms for bridges and viaducts, such as those under the nearby Gowanus Expressway and Queensboro Bridge, and to the conversion of a defunct suburban railway into the Viaduc des Artes in Paris. The more gracious heights of the structures do not preclude utilitarian methods to construct them, Utile contends: it proposes use of efficient tilt-up concrete construction for the arches. Running perpendicularly, such arches would buttress each other—much like in a Toyo Ito-designed library at Tama Art University in Tokyo—and create a rhythm of arched vaults that could give a monumental civic character to a suburban town lacking a civic venue. Hence the name Civic Arches for the concept.

The strong arched concept permits concrete floors above that are poured in place. They would be more

flexible for future conversions than the more common, thinner, post-tensioned concrete floors. The tensioned cables embedded in such floors cannot be severed without compromising structural integrity, limiting the placement of plumbing, electrical and mechanical lines, and chases.

How is it possible that building new parking structures—adding parking spaces to suburban downtowns divided by a plethora of surface parking lots—can be economical despite the considerable expense? There are several reasons:

- **Shared parking.** Scattered surface parking lots, just like structured parking under a single office, residential, or hotel building, serve mostly a single use and are often vacant. They cannot support mixed uses. But centrally located parking structures of adequate size can offer a sufficient density of parking spaces to support an equivalent density of mixed uses. Until most goods and services are conveniently supplied within walking distance or served by high-frequency transit, residents will own and use cars that need to be parked. In fact, the less that car-owning residents of the mixed-use development use their cars, the more they will need spaces in which to park them.



So a higher density of uses requires a higher density of parking spaces—precisely the reverse of conventional wisdom. The way to economize on their construction, proponents reason, is to maximize their occupancy. And the only way to do that is to mix the uses that such spaces support, because then the peak periods for one use complement those of another use with different peak periods. Furthermore, because structured parking can cost more than \$40,000 per space, and developers generally do not make money on building or selling the parking spaces but rather on the uses they support, careful developers want to build the fewest spaces possible and maximize their use through shared parking.

The Rockville Centre plan benefits because many of the uses in and near the project—such as recreation, theaters, and restaurants and cafés—have peak parking demands at times when LIRR commuter spaces are empty. Consultants anticipate such new mixed uses could create hundreds of new permanent jobs.

**Redevelopment.** The more than 4,000 acres (1,600 ha) of surface parking in and around Long Island's downtowns represent large land banks more than one quarter the size of Manhattan, 35 minutes away from Rockville Centre on the LIRR. In fact, consultants note, when Morristown, New Jersey, which is twice the distance from Manhattan by train, constructed a \$10 million, 700-space downtown parking garage in 2000, it catalyzed more than \$60 million in new residential and commercial development in the immediate vicinity over the following five years. A second, 800-car downtown garage completed in 2008 at a cost of about \$16 million supported a new round of residential and commercial redevelopment totaling \$125 million.

**Tax revenue.** Gerard Giosa, a parking consultant and president of Old Bethpage, New York–based Level G Associates, estimates that based on projected development supported by flexible parking solutions, Rockville Centre will generate \$2 million of additional revenue annually from property and sales tax. In addition to forecasting property tax revenue from new housing, hotels, offices, and entertainment, Giosa says those attracted to suburban downtown living would spend about 30 percent of their discretionary income on shopping, eating, and entertainment.

Despite the long-term macroeconomic factors favoring development of such parking structures, financing of their construction can be a challenge. Giosa cites the Morristown Parking Authority as an example of a solution. The quasi-public agency, created to finance, develop, maintain, and operate the municipal parking system, developed the Morristown garages with 30-year tax-exempt parking revenue bonds it issued. Giosa says other public and/or private resources would likely be required to finance a project like Civic Arches in a town with lower parking rates. Utle suggests that the city or LIRR might be needed to facilitate such a project.

Utle contends that the answer to the putative contradiction of building parking structures to catalyze denser mixed-use development with revitalized urban street life lies not in the fact that they house more cars. Rather, the important point is that those cars support a greater density of a mixture of complementary uses in a central location where the structure is purposely designed to integrate civic uses in a covered public square adjoining an open one. Moreover, as the urban center evolves, Love and Christoforetti argue, architects and planners should design and proportion the structures so they can be converted to accommodate a wide variety of other uses that intensify the urbanity to which a city aspires and for which it plans.

**William P. Macht** is a professor of urban planning and development at the Center for Real Estate at Portland State University in Oregon and a development consultant.

*The Investor's Guide to Commercial Real Estate* (ISBN 9780874203493) is [available through ULI's online bookstore](#) for \$124.95 (The Canadian price is \$149.95 and ULI members receive a 25-percent discount; for details, e-mail [customerservice@uli.org](mailto:customerservice@uli.org) or call 800-321-5011).

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# URBANLAND

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## Parking Yields to the Sharing Economy

By [Leslie Braunstein](#)

November 13, 2013

Text Size: **A A A**

- The “sharing economy” includes new transportation modes such as car sharing, bike sharing, and even scooter sharing.
- These shared transportation modes and services can help reduce the need for parking.
- U.S. cities are following the example of Copenhagen by reclaiming street parking for use by pedestrians and cyclists, as well as for parklets.

Just as rapidly urbanizing U.S. neighborhoods grapple with the challenges of auto-oriented land use patterns from the past, millennials and entrepreneurs have come up with a solution: the sharing economy. Flexible new transportation services like Uber, Zipcar, and bikeshare programs can reduce parking requirements and free up street-level space for more dynamic urban uses.

At a ULI's Fall Meeting, Jeff Risom, partner at Gehl Architects, explained how Copenhagen has incrementally transformed a downtown, once dominated by cars and surface parking lots, to one that prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists. Copenhagen's multi-modal transportation system comprises 36 percent bikes, 33 percent transit, 23 percent cars, and 7 percent pedestrians. “More than half of the city's residents cycle to work or school every day; 63 percent say they do so because it's fast, easy and convenient, even in the Scandinavian winter,” he pointed out.

Much of the city's former parking space has been reclaimed for pedestrians, cyclists, sidewalk cafes, and parklets. Some bike parking spaces become available to cars after 5:00 pm; in other instances, rows of parallel-parked cars shield cyclists from auto traffic. Perhaps as a result of their people-friendly urban spaces, Risom noted, Danes are the happiest people in the world.

While the Danish mode may not be fully adaptable, some U.S. cities are moving forward rapidly. Timothy Papandreou, director of strategic planning and policy for the San Francisco Municipal Travel Agency, said “San Francisco is at ground zero for the sharing economy. The city's jobs and population are expected to grow by over 35 percent, but we can't allow any more cars in the city. So how do we accommodate growth?”

The solution includes shared transportation modes: ridesharing, car sharing, scooter sharing, bike sharing, shuttles, driverless vehicles, transportation network companies like Uber and Sidecar, and public transit, Papandreou stated. “These modes are evolving and distinctions are blurring. People are choosing to live in the city without owning cars, and we have to provide choices.” Furthermore, he concluded, the city is working to link the various modes of routing, booking, and payment, because “too many smart cards makes for a dumb wallet.”

Shared transportation modes have evolved because they provide ease and flexibility of use, said Alan Owings of Forest City. The millennials who drive the sharing economy are drawn to quality, he added, and like the idea of using a higher quality service even if they can't afford to own it. And even as they share services, they feel ownership; some customers request, for example, a particular car.

With more city dwellers eschewing private car ownership, Owings said, parking can be reclaimed for other uses as it has in Copenhagen. In the DUMBO section of Brooklyn, for example, a parking lot has been temporarily repurposed as outdoor café seating and a bike sharing facility.

Similarly, Gehl Architects is helping New York City put the square back in Times Square, transforming 350,000 square feet of former traffic and parking lanes — the equivalent of 18 Rockefeller Centers — into pedestrian-only areas and parklets. As a result, noted Risom, retail sales have increased 14 percent around the new seating areas; pedestrian traffic has increased 11 percent while pedestrian injuries have dropped 35 percent; and auto travel time has improved by 17 percent because intersections are now less confusing.

Forest City's Owings commented that with lower or even zero parking requirements, "it will become more economical to build community into mixed-use environments on the ground-floor plane, with a diverse mix of uses, some curated and some subsidized." Twenty-first century cities, he concluded, can survive without parking.

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**ULI Washington**

# **A Technical Assistance Panel Report**

**The Long Branch Community**

**Sponsored by:  
The Montgomery County Department of Housing and  
Community Affairs**

**February 8-9, 2005**

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# **The Long Branch Community Montgomery County, Maryland**

## **How to Spur Redevelopment Within and Beyond the Long Branch Community's Commercial Center**

February 8-9, 2005  
A Technical Assistance Panel Report

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## **About ULI Washington—a District Council of the Urban Land Institute**

ULI Washington is a district council of ULI - the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its 23,000 members worldwide. The preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities. ULI members who live in the Washington Region (1,500 total) are automatically members of the Washington District Council. They include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students and librarians.

## **About The Technical Assistance Panel Program (TAPs)**

The objective of ULI Washington's TAP program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and non-profit organizations in the Washington metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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## Acknowledgements

Both personally and on behalf of the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council, the panel members and project staff would like to express their sincere appreciation to Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs for their work in sponsoring and preparing for the panel. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Elizabeth Davison, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs for inviting the panel to explore revitalization opportunities for Long Branch's Commercial Center.

The panel also appreciates the time and energy of the members of the Long Branch Task Force who helped procure the panel, provided insight onto the panel's scope, led the panel site tour, participated in the roundtable discussions and attended the final presentation. The panel was impressed with the level of commitment these members have to the betterment of their community.

Special thanks are extended to Roylene Roberts, Denise Stilla, Frances Snetter-Carey and Tim Miner of Montgomery County as well as Joel Gallihue of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for the time they took to plan for the panel, prepare briefing materials and ensure that the panel went smoothly.

The panel would also like to extend its thanks to Douglas M. Duncan, Montgomery County's County Executive; Montgomery County Council members Thomas E. Perez, President; George Leventhal, Vice President; and Nancy Floreen; as well as other area stakeholders and community leaders for their participation in the panel process.

ULI Washington hopes that the comments and recommendations provided in this report result in a valuable contribution to the redevelopment of this area as a whole. We encourage Montgomery County to inform us of new developments associated with Long Branch's revitalization and allow us to participate in future panels should the need arise.

This report has been dedicated to the memory of W. Retta Gilliam. Ms. Gilliam contributed significantly to this panel, but more important was her contribution to the Anacostia area of Washington, DC, where she had worked tirelessly to create a better community. Ms. Gilliam was enthusiastic about the opportunities that the Long Branch community has to offer and was pleased to have been able to contribute to the plans for its future.

## **The Panel**

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## Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Long Branch community of Silver Spring, Maryland is an economically and ethnically diverse community with over 27,000 residents located inside the Capital Beltway in Maryland's most populous jurisdiction of Montgomery County.

Long Branch's commercial center, which was the focus of the Technical Assistance Panel, has 292,000 square feet of retail space in six small retail centers at scattered locations along Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road. The 95 retail shops and restaurants that make up the retail



One of four grocery stores within the community

centers are primarily small "Mom and Pop" stores, and an abundance of them are discount retail shops. There are also a large number of grocery stores in the area. Giant Food grocery store, located within the panel's study area has higher than the national average sales for a large grocery store and reportedly succeeds in drawing from beyond the immediate trade area. In addition to Giant Food, three other grocery stores (Bestway, Americana Grocery and Oriental Supermarket) have a special niche, offering both Latin and Asian groceries.

While investment in the commercial area has been primarily limited to the County's façade treatment program, there have been recent discussions with Washington Adventist Hospital to locate a medical office building on the site, which the County hopes will spur additional redevelopment in the commercial area.

The diversity of Long Branch is also reflected in its housing stock, which is among the oldest in the County. Multi-family complexes, garden apartments, townhouses and single family houses are located within the community with approximately 42 percent of those being used as rental apartments. While rents in the community are among the most affordable in the County, they are still high with only 10% of the units being rented at below-market rates. For sale homes on the other hand have appreciated significantly, with sales exceeding \$500,000 for some single family homes.

### Creation of the Long Branch Task Force

After the East Silver Spring Master Plan was approved in December 2000, the County recognized that the Long Branch community, whose ethnically and economically diverse population differed significantly from any other part of Montgomery County, required further study due to its unique needs.

Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and the Montgomery County Council therefore appointed The Long Branch Task Force to undertake a two-year in-depth examination of their community and make recommendations to the County Executive. The



objective of the Long Branch Task Force, as defined in the enabling resolution, is “to address the full range of issues affecting the quality of life in the Long Branch community, including the needed revitalization of the residential and commercial areas in Long Branch. It should work to achieve a healthy, stable and sustainable community.”<sup>1</sup> The Task Force which was convened in 2002 concludes on May 31, 2005.

## Issues

Over the past two and one-half years, the Long Branch Task Force identified several key issues that it has worked to resolve. Task Force members have learned that residents of Long Branch often leave the community for shopping and other services -- needs that the Task Force members believe could be satisfied within the community itself. One of the main reasons that people shop outside of Long Branch is because the current commercial district lacks cohesiveness, linkages, safety, and connectivity, making it an unfriendly place to drive and walk. The district also lacks the type and variety of stores that residents desire, as well as gathering places where residents feel that they can safely congregate and provide a sense of community.



The community currently lacks the variety of stores that would draw residents to the commercial center.

Task Force members concluded that in order to promote the rejuvenation of Long Branch, the community needs a catalyst that will invigorate the commercial district and help to revitalize surrounding areas. Long Branch needs to create an atmosphere that will draw its residents back to the core of the community.

## The Assignment

Having recently released its Second Annual Report, the Long Branch Task Force made one of its priority recommendations to enlist the assistance of the Urban Land Institute’s Washington District Council in conducting a Technical Assistance Panel to respond to the issues the Task Force had enumerated.

The ten member ULI Washington TAP panel spent an intensive one and one-half days touring the Long Branch community; participating in a briefing led by Elizabeth Davison, Director of Montgomery County’s Department of Housing and Community Affairs; sitting down with Task Force members and area stakeholders to discuss their hopes and concerns; and spending hours behind closed doors deliberating on the issues and formulating recommendations.

In the context of the challenges outlined above, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs put forth the following questions for consideration by the ULI Washington TAP panel:

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 14-975

1. The Catalyst. What types of uses would successfully create a catalyst for the redevelopment of the commercial district and lead to the revitalization of the surrounding area, such as the ERA Market study suggested “restaurant row”?
2. Medical Office Building. What is the demand for professional/medical office space in the Long Branch area? How can the Long Branch Town Center best accommodate this need?
3. Demands on Infrastructure. What would be the impact of a medical / office building or other retail development have on the infrastructure?
4. Bi-County Transit Way. Is the Arliss Street location a suitable location for a metro (Purple Line) station?
5. Connections. How can the redevelopment of the commercial core create cohesiveness within the commercial area and provide better connections to the surrounding residential and civic areas?
6. Parking District. What effect would the creation of a Parking District have on the development potential of the study area?
7. Parking Needs. What is the best means to address the parking needs in Long Branch?
8. Joint Effort Among Landowners. Given the many owners of Long Branch, what can the sponsor do to get the property owners to agree to develop their properties as part of a larger revitalization effort?
9. Phasing Redevelopment. Can the development of Long Branch be done incrementally or do the properties require consolidation?
10. County Involvement. What role should the County play in the development of Long Branch?
11. Zoning Incentives. Are the Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) incentives effective?

After finalizing its recommendations, the panel presented its findings to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Task Force members, and invited guests.

## Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

When redeveloping a community it is important that it have a positive impact twenty to thirty years into the future. In order to determine what was best for the future, panel members took the opportunity to look at what has made Long Branch successful in the past.

Silver Spring and specifically the Long Branch Community have always provided the gateway to the American dream. Beginning with Roosevelt's New Deal administration in the late 1930s, there was a commitment to the ideals of social justice. Housing with ample open space, sunlight, privacy and good design was built in the community for lower income people who could not otherwise afford good housing.

Long Branch remains a gateway today, providing some of the most affordable housing in the County as well as single family homes for first time home buyers. The panel found it important to respect the New Deal goals when considering how best to redevelop Long Branch's commercial center.

The panel also took into consideration the priorities of the community. Panelists had the opportunity to sit down with members of the Long Branch Task Force, public officials, and area stakeholders which gave them additional insight into the community's main concerns. Coupled with the information in the panelists' briefing materials, panel members left the roundtable discussions understanding the key priorities for the redevelopment of the community as: safety, affordability, an identity for community, connectivity, new business development, home ownership, and parking.



Douglas M. Duncan, Elizabeth Davison, ULI panelists and members of the community discuss Long Branch's issues

Keeping in mind the history of Long Branch and the community's hopes for its future, the panel developed recommendations on how to revitalize the commercial center. The environment of the commercial center is in the panel's opinion what has led to the center's downfall, and what will be the catalyst for its redevelopment. Through good design and a mix of uses that satisfy a broad range of consumers, the center will bring itself back to life. Currently residents do not come to the center because they do not feel safe, it is difficult to drive and walk through due its design and large surface parking lots, it is not a place to socialize, and it does not offer a broad retail mix. These deficiencies have also discouraged new stores that serve moderate- and middle-income residents from locating there. Incrementally redeveloping the study area to provide for a pedestrian friendly environment with new stores will bring the critical mass of people, who are already there, into the core of Long Branch.

To create a catalytic environment through good design, the panel recommends taking the commercial center, which is a super block in an otherwise urban grid setting, and breaking it into

four quadrants. By implementing a “Main Street” concept, these four quadrants will be able to support an array of uses including a medical office building, a larger, redeveloped Giant Food grocery store, restaurants, retail shops, housing, parking structures and a transit station.

In order to support redevelopment, facilitate land assemblage and attract private sector investment to the area, the panel found it necessary to increase the density of the commercial core. Providing for greater height limitations as well as residential units above retail shops, will attract new business development, provide for home ownership within the core of Long Branch, and allow for the development of parking structures. Home owners and tenants within the commercial core will also provide additional eyes and foot traffic within the center, inherently increasing safety in the area.

Concurrent with the incorporation of incentives to redevelop the commercial core, the panel felt it necessary to encourage redevelopment of the adjacent residential apartment properties utilizing similar density incentives. This will enhance the success of the commercial core redevelopment.

To implement the recommendations for the study area the panel recommends that a separate entity be formed to foster the relationships of property owners in order to revitalize the commercial center and surrounding areas. The panel recommends that the County help facilitate the establishment of a separate entity such as a Community Development Corporation (CDC).



At the onset of the panel, panel members took both a bus and walking tour of the greater Long Branch Community.

## Market Potential

The panel recognizes that there is substantial demand for revitalization of the commercial center from a base of households within Long Branch with strong aggregate spending power. The key in revitalizing the area is therefore to create a place that attracts residents to both shop and socialize. Currently, a majority of the residents come to Long Branch for groceries and dry cleaning, turning to downtown Silver Spring and other areas for all other forms of shopping and entertainment.

While the panel realizes that Long Branch is not destined nor desired to become the next downtown Silver Spring, panelists felt that there was ample demand to create a quality place with a pedestrian environment where neighborhood serving retail and services could thrive in a walkable center. The key will be to create convenience shops and services that serve the entire community of different income levels.

### Grocery Store

The Giant Food grocery store located in the Long Branch study area is reported to have higher than average sales levels and the panel found it to be the one thing that continues to bring Long Branch residents to the commercial center on a weekly basis. The Giant Food's lease does not expire until August 31, 2021, and its sales have proven that there is demand for a large grocery store within the commercial center. The current Giant Food however is housed in a 40,000 square foot footprint while newer Giant Food grocery stores require a 60,000 square foot or larger footprint. The panel believes that the grocery store is necessary to the vitality of the center and every effort should be made to keep it in operation throughout the entire redevelopment process.

### Restaurant Row

The Economics Research Associates (ERA) market study that was prepared in November 2002 and provided to the panel in their briefing materials presents the opportunity of a "restaurant row." The panel echoes ERA's recommendation believing that restaurants will be an important use in the commercial core and recommends that this idea be pursued. The panel does recognize however, that restaurants in this location will operate primarily during the evening and on weekends, which makes it more difficult to attract restaurants that need activity during the weekday hours as well.



The panel recommends keeping the Flower Theater for when the demand arises.

### Medical Office Building

The panel learned that there have been discussions with Washington Adventist Hospital to locate a medical office building within the study area. The panel found this to be a unique opportunity



of which the community should take advantage. While not guaranteed to bring additional medical office development to the community, it could be the lever to kick-off redevelopment.

A medical office building would generate daytime activity within Long Branch and would generate approximately 80 jobs. The panel felt that the office building would be best accommodated with shared parking<sup>2</sup> that supported other retail uses. While the panel recognized community concerns that a 50,000 square foot building would be a stark contrast to the single family homes that line Flower Avenue, the panel pointed out that a medical office building would buffer the residential neighborhood from more active uses and if accompanied by a coordinated parking strategy, would alleviate some of the causes of congestion on both Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue.

### **Bi-County Transit Way**

The Bi-county Transit Way also known as the Purple line will provide a high-capacity public transportation link between Bethesda in Montgomery County, and New Carrollton in Prince George's County. The Maryland Transit Administration is currently in the process of identifying key locations for transit stations and the panel understands that the corner of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street is under consideration.

The panel believes that the corner of Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street is a suitable location for a transit stop. There are a large number of residents living within walking distance of the location, and redevelopment of the commercial center will also add residents and jobs.

The panel points out however, that being chosen for a transit stop is a competitive process. By increasing the residential population and density, thereby creating a larger critical mass, the site will become more feasible and desirable from the perspective of the Maryland Transit Administration.

### **Residential Uses**

In order to successfully redevelop the commercial core the panel believes that it is necessary to include residential units in and around the commercial center of Long Branch.

Commercial Center. Residential apartments and condominiums above retail space within the commercial center will activate the district. There will be more foot traffic, as well as additional eyes and ears around the clock, increasing safety, and adding homeowners, who care about their neighborhood, to the community.

Residential units above retail will help to offset the risk to private sector developers. While the demand for retail and restaurants has not proven itself in the area, residential units in this particular location will likely sell and rent quickly compensating for any delay in finding tenants

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<sup>2</sup> ULI's shared parking standards determine how many spots each of the uses for the parking need and then analyze when those parking spots would be filled by each use to determine whether uses can share parking spots. Here, the medical office building would require parking spots for office hours, leaving their spots unused on evenings and weekends. The grocery store's parking needs however increase during evenings and weekends and therefore could use the medical office building's spaces instead of building additional spots of its own. Reducing the overall number of parking spots therefore reduces the overall cost of building the parking garage.

for the retail or restaurants locations. The residential units will in turn activate the market for the higher quality retail that current residents are seeking. These additional residents also generate tax revenues to the County that will allow for the County to provide reasonable subsidies to the overall project.

Flower Branch Apartments. While not officially included within the panel's study area, panelists found it difficult to focus on the commercial center without considering the future of the Flower Branch Apartments.

While the panel believes that the redevelopment focus should begin with the commercial center, the panel clearly sees redeveloping the Flower Branch Apartments into a mixed-income residential community, as necessary for the long-term viability of the commercial core.

Looking through the eyes of a future investor, the panel was concerned with the negative impact that the Flower Branch Apartments could have on redevelopment. The 316-units situated on the 10-acre property appeared deteriorated and bursting at the seams with residents. If developers were to make a large investment in the redevelopment of the commercial center, the panel believes that they would look for plans to redevelop the adjacent property as well.



**The panel recommends that the County consider the future of the Flower Branch Apartments.**

# Redevelopment Strategies

## Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zoning

The purpose of the Takoma Park/East Silver Spring Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ) is to foster economic vitality and attractive community character in areas needing revitalization; promote an enhanced pedestrian environment and an improved circulation system to pedestrians and bicycles as well as motor vehicles; ensure consistency with the master plan vision for specific existing commercial areas; and provide for the combination of residential with commercial uses by providing for flexibility of certain development standards which may allow for more commercial development and better design than would otherwise be achieved; providing for design review either through site plan review, or administrative review for minor changes; allowing or limiting uses consistent with the master plan vision for specific commercial areas; and enabling the master plan to modify the development standards of the base zones.<sup>3</sup>



The panel looked at how it could better link the Community Center and Library with the community



The panel found however that current incentives provided by the CROZ are not effective as evidenced by the private sector not utilizing the incentives. More importantly though in the panel's opinion, the CROZ does not provide for the level of density and building heights necessary to encourage redevelopment in the Long Branch commercial center.

Height and Density Limitations. Currently the CROZ limits building heights to 30 feet within the overlay zone. It is only with the Planning Board's approval that additional height may be added to buildings; up to 42 feet for commercial development, and up to 50 feet for residential development. The CROZ does not however, define the floor area ratio (F.A.R.)<sup>1</sup> for the area. It is the panel's opinion that the CROZ needs to be more specifically defined from Flower Avenue to the Long Branch Community Center to provide for additional density and allow for greater height.

The Long Branch commercial center currently has a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.35:1. It is the panel's opinion that in order to create the critical mass to bring to Long Branch the services and business that the community is seeking, the density within the commercial core needs to be increased to 3 FAR. Areas like Silver Spring, which have been successfully redeveloped have allowed for a FAR of 4 to 5, a density that while appropriate for that area, would in the panel's opinion, overwhelm the Long Branch community.

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Code, Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59, Sec 59-C-18.21

Taking into consideration the grade change on the study area and how much of the current site is surface parking, the panel believes that an increase in density to a 3 FAR will not be nearly as dramatic as the number sounds. Currently the CROZ allows up to 50' in height for residential uses. By starting at a 50' height along the west side of Flower Avenue, and increasing in height at appropriate increments eastward and away from the residential homes on Flower Avenue, the impact of a 3 FAR in regards to height is not any different to the existing homes than what is currently in place with the CROZ.<sup>4</sup>

Affordable Housing. Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program requires new residential developments to set aside 12.5% of their units for the MPDU program. By increasing the density of the development to an FAR of 3, approximately 150 new affordable units would be developed within the commercial core,<sup>5</sup> improving the economic diversity of the community. With the added redevelopment of Flower Branch Apartments at a 3 FAR, over 190 additional affordable units could be added to the community.<sup>6</sup> This total of 340 MPDUs is achievable at a set aside of 15%. A higher set aside for MPDUs or a separate set aside for workforce housing could bring even more affordable units to the community. An increase in density within the study area will maintain the affordability of the project, increase the number of affordable residential units that will be built, and require less county investment.

Parking Strategy. When redeveloping the commercial site, the current surface parking lots will have to be removed in order to develop the land to its highest and best use; creating the need for structured parking. As outlined in the Market Potential section, the panel believes that a parking analysis be undertaken to determine the extent in which the redevelopment could support a shared parking strategy. Every effort should be made to overlap uses for the parking spaces in order to decrease the overall number of spaces needed and therefore the cost of the structures.

While the creation of parking districts and meters were suggested to support the building of the parking structures, the panel would rather see that cost born by the developers in return for a



One of many parking lots that would be replaced with a more efficient use of the land.

greater FAR. The more in line the redevelopment is with an FAR of 2 or 3, the more likely the private developer will be able to pay for the structured parking. Conversely, if the redevelopment plan remains at its low FAR, then the County will need to subsidize the parking structures. The panel felt however that a parking fee to use the grocery store or other retail establishments within the center would only deter people from coming to the commercial district.

<sup>4</sup> Please see Appendix 1 for examples of an F.A.R between 2 and 3.

<sup>5</sup> Calculated with 15% MPDUs.

<sup>6</sup> Calculated with 15% MPDUs.

## Planning and Design

Looking beyond the immediate study area, the panel noted that the Long Branch, Takoma Park and Silver Spring neighborhoods all adhere to an urban grid system. The commercial center on the other hand appears as a suburban super block, out of place in the midst of an urban framework. In order to redevelop the center into its natural urban framework, the panel determined that it was necessary to fracture the super block and create a grid system that would provide for a hierarchy of streets and reconnect the community to its parks and civic assets.

### Urban Grid System

As depicted in Figure 1 the panel took the study area and divided it into four quadrants (A, B, C, & D) creating two new secondary roads. The new road running on a horizontal axis extends east beyond the quadrants, following an existing foot path past the Long Branch library and the Long Branch Community Center eventually connecting to Piney Branch Road. By allowing both vehicular and pedestrian access via the new street, both civic uses are integrated into the center of the community. The new road framework also provides better access to Piney Branch Creek and its surrounding park area.



Figure 1: Urban grid system connects civic uses to the Long Branch Community. See Appendix 2

Create an Identity. While panel members found Long Branch to be a vibrant, diverse community, it was apparent that the community and its commercial center lacked identity. The panel recommends establishing both a beginning and end to the precinct through the use of gateway monumentation, continuous streetscaping treatments, pedestrian amenities and signage. The panel strongly believes that integrated within the redevelopment of the commercial center, there should be a memorable gathering spot such as a public plaza where residents can socialize, wait for a friend, or sit with a cup of coffee. The area does not have to be large; Bethesda accomplished this with a simple fountain and seating in front of Barnes and Noble on Woodmont Avenue.



## Development Framework

By breaking the commercial center into more manageable blocks the panel was able to clearly see how this large study area could become a very walkable, inviting area. The newly created road on the vertical axis provides a new main street for the center. A visually and functionally strong public environment must be created along all streets in the core area. Pedestrian in scale, these walkways provide a vibrant opportunity to enjoy shopping, socializing, and safe havens to sit at neighborhood cafes and restaurants to ‘people-watch.’

Quadrant A. The panel envisions Quadrant A to contain primarily retail uses with a 600-space structured parking garage located in the middle of the block. This would serve as a parking reservoir for the retail space and combined with parking in other quadrants, would be the central part of parking management plan for the district. The panel recommended keeping the Flower Theater, noting that while it may not have a current reuse, over time it will.

It was evident to the panel through its briefing materials, roundtable discussions and the Task Force’s reaction to County Executive Douglas M. Duncan’s suggestion to move the liquor store, that there is little desire for a liquor store at the gateway to Long Branch. Panel members shared this sentiment recommending that a more vibrant use occupy this prime space.



A liquor store currently occupies the space at the corner of Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue.

Quadrant B. Quadrant B makes room for the Bi-county Transit Way by leaving the corner of Piney Branch Avenue and Arliss Street untouched. The panel felt that the Chevron gas station was an appropriate use for the corner until or even without the proposed transit station stop.



The Chevron gas station is an appropriate use for its location.

Adjacent to the gas station, the panel proposes retail / restaurant and green space to pull people into the core of the redevelopment, and create an identifiable front door to the commercial district. The remainder of the block is designated to a mix of retail and residential. The panel proposes residential apartments and for sale condominiums above retail with parking in the middle of the block. The panel believes that the parking could be shared by both the residents and retailers. The retail space could then carry the cost of its own parking.

Quadrant C. The two most prominent uses within Quadrant C are the proposed medical office building and the grocery store. The panel agrees with the County that the proposed location at the northwest edge of the study area at the corner of Flower Avenue and Arliss Street is an appropriate location for the medical office building.



Keeping in mind the importance of the Giant Food grocery store to attracting residents to the commercial center, the panel proposed rebuilding the outdated grocery store next door, on a 60,000 square foot footprint of what is currently surface parking. This will enable the Giant Food to turn out the lights in its current location one night and turn them on in the new location the next morning. Given its proximity to the medical office building, the panel recommends that the Giant Food be built with below grade parking that can be shared with the medical office building. The panel recommends that retail and restaurant and perhaps residential uses be accommodated on the remainder of the quadrant.

Quadrant D. Similar to Quadrant B, the panel recommends that Quadrant D accommodate a mix of uses with an interior parking structure accessible from Arliss Street. Following the same model as Quadrant B, this quadrant would allow for retail on the first floor with residential units above.

Phasing. The redevelopment of Long Branch's commercial center should begin with Quadrant C. The panel believes that relocating the grocery store and bringing the medical office building to the community is an essential first step in the redevelopment of the commercial district. This would allow for the remaining parcels to be combined and reconfigured facilitating orderly redevelopment as illustrated in the concept plan (Figure 3). For the next phase of development, the panel proposes Quadrant A, with the 600-car parking structure be developed, followed by Quadrant C and Quadrant D as the market demands.



Figure 2: Open space framework; see Appendix 3 for larger version



Figure 3: Concept Plan; see Appendix 3 for larger version

## Traffic and Circulation

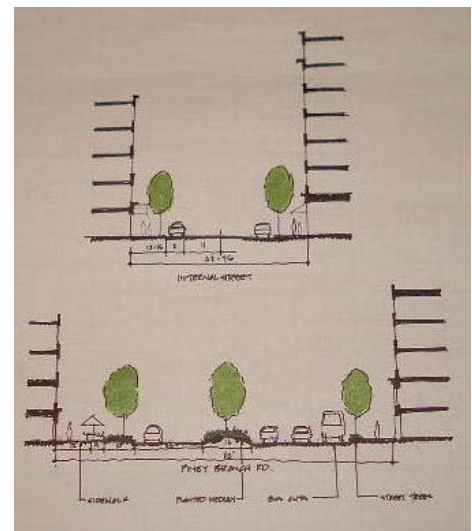
After reading the Long Branch Resident Shopping Study completed by Hollander Cohen & McBride in May of 2004, it was evident to the panel that residents found the study area to be congested, confusing, and unfriendly to pedestrians.

The panel noted that the traffic experienced in the community is a regional traffic problem, not a local traffic problem. The volume is due to people passing through the area to and from their way to work.

To address this issue the panel suggested improvements to Piney Branch Road such as widening the right-of-way to allow for the creation of a landscaped boulevard, which would slow traffic and make an enjoyable and safe pedestrian environment. This feature could also help identify the greater Long Branch area to those traveling along Piney Branch Road.

The panel also recommended a speed table at the intersection of Piney Branch Avenue and Flower Avenue. A speed table is nothing more than an extended speed bump, bringing the grade of the road up to sidewalk level. Placing a speed table at this intersection will not only slow traffic, but increase awareness that pedestrians are in the area.

The panel addressed the circulation issues with a revised grid for the study area. By extending the new horizontal road past the library and community center to Piney Branch Road, vehicles will have an alternative to Arliss Street if their destination is the shopping center, library or areas north of the library.



**Figure 4: Landscaped medians will increase pedestrian safety; See Appendix 4 for larger version.**

## Implementation

The panel commends the role that Montgomery County has taken in forming the Task Force and providing staff liaisons to determine how to best revitalize the Long Branch Community. Given that the Task Force dissolves in May 2005, the panel believes going forward there needs to be some organization other than the County working full time to foster the relationships of property owners in order to revitalize the commercial center and surrounding areas. The panel believes that a separate entity is the most effective means in doing this and therefore the county's primary role should be to help facilitate its establishment. While further research should be undertaken by the County to determine the most appropriate entity formation for this revitalization project, the panel recommends that the County consider following a model such as or similar to a Community Development Corporation (CDC).

A CDC is a locally based, independent, 501(c) (3), not-for-profit agency that focuses on leveraging the public and private sector in order to redevelop the targeted area. Led by an experienced Executive Director who in this case has expertise in real estate finance and community development, the CDC could have up to one or two additional staff members as well as any number of needed consultants. Directed by its mission and objectives as determined by a diverse policy making board, the CDC would work with the development community and land owners to create a shared vision and development plan. The CDC acts a liaison between residents, property owners, and the County to initiate strategic planning and redevelopment.



The panel discusses their recommendations behind closed doors

The three keys to a successful CDC are first, to have a clear mission and objectives; second, to structure the policy making board with a strong mix of citizens, government officials, deal makers, and financial experts; and third to have a targeted boundary of operation from which the CDC can work within.

While funding for a CDC is provided by both the public and private sector, the panel recommends that the county help seed the CDC or similar organization over the first few years. The CDC can also look to area foundations such as the Meyer Foundation, the Cafritz Foundation, the Fannie Mae Foundation, and area banks for financial support.

CDC's also have the ability to receive recoverable grants. A recoverable grant is funding that is provided under terms that provide for the return of capital under certain circumstances. It is a non-interest bearing loan that is unsecured and is unconditionally repayable if the project is completed or moves to the next phase. The primary advantage of this type of funding, compared to low-interest loans, is the simplicity of the transaction. The documentation may be quite similar to that of a traditional grant and require no more than a modified grant agreement.

National non-profit intermediaries such as Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) or the Enterprise Foundation are usually sources of this type of financing.

In addition to grants and recoverable grants, a CDC would also have access to below market rate funding from foundations and non-profit intermediaries interested in neighborhood/community revitalization. These funds can provide leverage, along with public sector financing, to produce the required rate of return for traditional funding sources. This tiered financing structure produces a win-win situation for residents, the county government, land owners and investors.

Whether the new entity is formed as a CDC or in another manner, the panel believes that efforts should be made to create an organization that can offer the same value that a CDC can bring to a community like Long Branch.

## **Conclusions**

The panel's recommendations build upon the strong foundation of the Long Branch Community and respond to the concerns heard throughout the panel. With continued community participation and an understanding that in order to finance and attract the type, size and scope of redevelopment that the community members are seeking, added heights and additional residents will be required, the panel believes that the Long Branch community will continue to thrive as the gateway to the American dream.



# Appendix 1

## Examples of development with a 2-3 Floor-to-Area Ratio



## Appendix 2

**Figure 1**  
**Urban Grid System connects civic uses to the Long Branch Community**





## Appendix 3

**Figure 2: Open Space Framework**

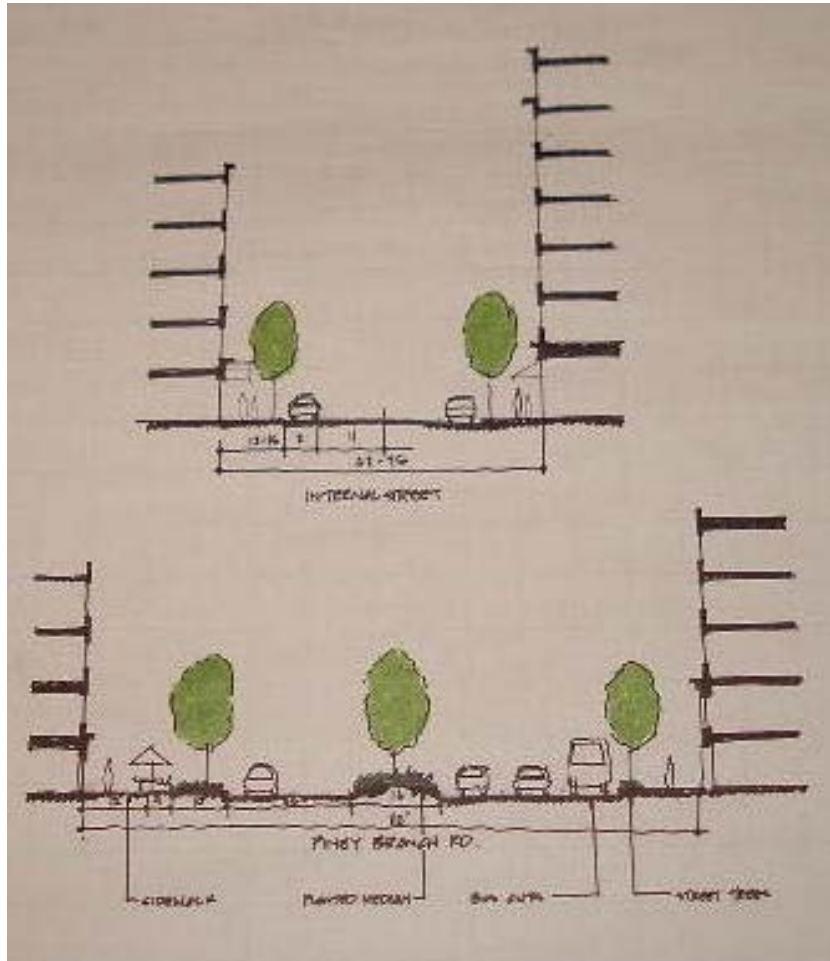


**Figure 3: Concept Plan**



## Appendix 4

Figure 4: Landscaped medians will increase pedestrian safety



## About the Panel

**Edward W. Gosselin**  
**Intrepid Real Estate**  
**Washington, DC**

Ed Gosselin has been in commercial real estate for the past 18 years, completing \$600,000,000 in leasing, development and acquisition transactions representing 3,500,000 square feet, in Chicago, Denver and Washington, D.C. He joined Intrepid Real Estate when it was founded in 1998. He is responsible for property acquisitions, financing and asset management. Intrepid concentrates on property redevelopment and has completed \$130,000,000 in transactions representing 600,000 square feet of office and residential properties in Washington.

Mr. Gosselin moved to Washington D.C. in 1996 to become a principal in the acquisitions group of a local development firm where he completed 260,000 square feet of joint venture suburban office development. Prior to his relocation to Washington, Mr. Gosselin was Vice President of Acquisitions for HMB Partners in Denver, Colorado. While in this position HMB created a 1,200,000 square foot office portfolio in Denver and Phoenix.

Mr. Gosselin has a BA in Economics from Colorado State University and a MBA from DePaul University. He is on the Executive Committee of Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council, Vice-Chairman of Board of Trustees for the Maryland Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Board of Trustees of the Anne Arundel Medical Center Foundation and Board of Directors of the Annapolis Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Gosselin lives in Annapolis, Maryland with his wife Debbie and their two children.

**D. Gregory Ault**  
**EDAW, Inc.**  
**Alexandria, VA**

Greg Ault is a senior planner and landscape architect with more than 23 years experience with international design firms and in private practice. As a Practice Principal of EDAW, Inc., his work with large-scale mixed-use projects assists in bringing a focus to the conceptual stages of retail, office and residential planning. He specializes in preparing rezoning and planning approvals for complex urban sites across the globe. Implemented projects range from Fortune 500 world headquarters to waterfront master plans to detailed urban streetscape designs. He has prepared numerous rezoning and planning approvals for complex urban sites in the U.S. and abroad.

Mr. Ault's recent project experience includes the planning and design of a mixed-use development adjacent to a rapid transit station in Prince George's County, Maryland; adaptive reuse of a former prison site in Fairfax County; park, plazas and streetscapes and recreation areas for a master planned community in Celebration, Florida; as well as the design and planning of a neighborhood center for a 1,000 acre residential community in Anne Arundel County, MD.

Mr. Ault received a Bachelor of Science degree in landscape architecture from Purdue University. He has provided expert services to several professional organizations as well as numerous academic speaking engagements. Mr. Ault is an elected official of Harper's Choice Village Board in Columbia, Maryland, representing 10,000 residents; and is a member of the Urban Land Institute.

**Nat Bottigheimer**  
**Maryland Department of Transportation**  
**Hanover, MD**

Nat Bottigheimer is a planner and policy analyst with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). He heads a group that aims to improve coordination between MDOT's highway and transit planning functions and the State's local planning and development agencies.

Before joining MDOT in 2000, Mr. Bottigheimer worked as a consultant on development and planning issues for clients including state and local governments, developers, EPA's "Smart Growth" office, USDOT, and private toll authorities. Mr. Bottigheimer has a Bachelor's degree from Harvard and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

**William C. Caldwell**  
**RTKL Associates, Inc.**  
**Alexandria, VA**

William C. Caldwell is a Principal in the Washington, DC office of RTKL Associates Inc., a fifty year old full service design firm with offices in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, London, Madrid, Tokyo and Shanghai. In this role, he has been responsible for several high profile mixed-use and transit oriented planning projects in major cities around the nation, including: Gateway Village, Charlotte, North Carolina; Coca-Cola Olympic City Master plan, Atlanta, Georgia; 2012 Washington Olympic Village, College Park, Maryland; and the Metro West Station Area Plan, Vienna, Virginia.

A native of Phoenix, Arizona, Mr. Caldwell received his architectural and planning education at Arizona State University and the University of Miami, and is a licensed Architect in Arizona and in Germany, where he practiced for several years. With more than 16 years of experience in master planning, urban design and architecture, his portfolio includes a diverse body of international and domestic work, including mixed-use communities, corporate and academic campuses, and urban and suburban physical master planning. His current work includes several large new mixed-use and urban redevelopment projects for local and national developers. Mr. Caldwell is a member of the American Institute of Architects, Urban Land Institute, Congress for New Urbanism and is a LEED Accredited Professional.

Mr. Caldwell joined the Planning and Urban Design practice group at RTKL in 1996, was named Principal in 2001 and is currently the acting practice group leader in the Washington office.

**W. Retta Gilliam**  
**East of the River, CDC**  
**Washington, DC**

W. Retta Gilliam was an accomplished executive in the area of community and economic development. She was the President and Executive Director of the East of the River Community Development Corporation (ERCDC). To this position she brought more than fifteen years of relevant experience including a tour of duty in the Peace Corps in Africa, and work with the Bank of Boston and Citicorp.

Ms. Gilliam was the founder and past Managing Director of the Gilliam Group - which provided consulting services in Entrepreneurial Training and Development, Financial Management, and Housing and Real Estate Development. She served in the United States Peace Corps as a Small Business Advisor in Kenya, East Africa. In that capacity, she developed and implemented a financial management system for the government, developed a loan fund, a training program for small business owners, and conducted feasibility studies for housing and infrastructure projects. As an Investment Associate for the Equitable Capital Management Corporation in New York, Ms. Gilliam was responsible for analyzing fixed income investments and leveraged buyout transactions, cash flow and sensitivity studies, modification of loan covenants, and due diligence and investment recommendations. In Chicago, she worked as a Financial Analyst for Citicorp, specializing in financial re-capitalization, tax analysis, stock price and volume history analysis, and discounted cash flow analysis.

Ms. Gilliam's affiliations have included: The Enterprise Foundation Neighborhood Advisory Council, First Union Bank Advisory Council, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative (Vice-Chair, Finance Committee), DC Building and Industry Association, Coalition for Housing and Economic Development (Board Member), East of the River Committee (Co-Chair), Trenton Park Neighborhood Corporation (Treasurer), and Ward 8 representative for the DC Public Schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative. Ms. Gilliam also served on several neighborhood and city Task Forces devoted to housing and economic development initiatives, and was a mayoral appointee to the DC Historic Preservation Board. In addition, Ms. Gilliam was a member of the Urban Land Institute; a member of ULI's Washington District Council Executive Committee and was the Inner City Advisor for ULI Washington.

Ms. Gilliam is a graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University with a BS in finance. She was fluent in both Kishwahli and French and had traveled extensively in Asia and eastern and southern Africa.

**Christopher Lee Gordon**  
**Kishimoto, Gordon & Daylala PC**  
**McLean, VA**

Christopher Gordon is a founding principal of Kishimoto, Gordon & Daylala PC and brings experience in all facets of architecture in a variety of project types. His responsibilities include directing the firm's day to day production, management and administrative systems. His extensive knowledge in interior design, facilities design, corporate office development, hotel/hospitality design and major mixed-use projects extend from master plan feasibility to construction administration. Recent projects include the master planning architecture for Tower Oaks Master Plan in Rockville, Maryland; Design development of a 4-story medical office building in Landsdowne, Virginia; master planning and full-service architectural services for a theater/retail/parking structure and office/retail building in Reston, Virginia; as well as

base-building to full-service architecture of a three-story office regional bank headquarters in Germantown, Maryland.

While at Virginia's largest A/E firm, Mr. Gordon was the lead architectural designer on various award-winning and nationally recognized projects including the Nuclear Regulatory Agency Headquarters, Dulles Corner Master Plan '95, The National Reconnaissance Organization Complex master plan, building design, interior design and construction, and Grosvenor Metro Master Plan Competition winning design.

Mr. Gordon obtained a five-year professional architectural degree from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1984, and is a registered architect in the District of Columbia. Mr. Gordon contributes some of his time to the promotion of architectural excellence through education as a teacher/juror at Marymount University School of Interior Design, Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Arlington County Schools Enrichment Programs.

**Daniel B. Kohlhepp, Ph.D.**  
**Crescent Resources, LLC**  
**Arlington, VA**

As regional vice president for the Mid-Atlantic Region, Dan Kohlhepp is responsible for the acquisition, development and leasing of commercial real estate in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia for Crescent Resources, LLC. He is currently focused on developing Potomac Yard, a 300-acre, mixed-use, urban in-fill project in Northern Virginia.

After serving on the faculties of the University of Oklahoma and Pennsylvania State University where he specialized in real estate investment analysis, Kohlhepp left academia in 1979 to become a developer, broker and appraiser/consultant with R.W. Finley in Oklahoma City. In 1984, Dan moved to Washington, D.C., to enter the real estate investment advisory business, and in 1989 he sold his company, Potomac Realty Advisors, to Baltimore-based USF&G Corporation, where the company was renamed USF&G Realty Advisors. He was responsible for all development activities for a \$1.5 billion portfolio containing office, retail, multifamily, industrial and golf course communities. Kohlhepp left USF&G and started Kohlhepp Realty Advisors in 1992.

Prior to joining Crescent in 2000, Kohlhepp specialized in real estate portfolio valuation and management for institutional and government regulatory clients.

Born and raised in DuBois, Pennsylvania, Dan earned his B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from Pennsylvania State University and earned his Ph.D. with a major in Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the Ohio State University. He has published numerous academic and professional articles in real estate, and continues to teach adult education classes and seminars.

He is a past president of the DuBois Educational Foundation, the advisory board for Pennsylvania State DuBois, and currently serves on the advisory board of the Johns Hopkins University Real Estate Program. He also serves on the board of directors of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership.



A licensed real estate broker, Dan is a member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) and the Urban Land Institute. In the DuBois area, Dan operates the Kohlhepp Corporation, a real estate management company, and is on the board of directors of J.A. Kohlhepp Sons, Inc.

**Michael Korn  
Keener-Squire Properties  
Washington, DC**

Michael Korn works for Keener-Squire Properties, a privately held real estate development company based in Washington, DC. Since 1984, Keener-Squire Properties has been engaged in the acquisition, renovation, construction and management of residential property in northwest Washington, DC. The company's portfolio contains over 1,400 condominiums and apartments, and the buildings it has developed or substantially renovated range in size from 8 units to 304 units. Mr. Korn works on all aspects of development, including acquisition, financing, design and project management. In addition, Mr. Korn is involved in managing the existing portfolio. Currently, the company is developing residential condominiums in Arlington, Georgetown and Kalorama.

Mr. Korn is a native of Alexandria, Virginia, where he attended T.C. Williams High School. After receiving a B.A. in Political Science from Stanford University, he returned to Washington to work in the U.S. Senate. Prior to joining Keener-Squire Properties, Mr. Korn worked for CapitalSource Finance in the structured finance group, and for KBS Realty Advisors (Boston), a private equity real estate company focused on the acquisition of commercial real estate on the East Coast. Mr. Korn is active in the Urban Land Institute

**Jonathan Meyers  
Atlantic Realty Companies  
Vienna, VA**

Mr. Meyers is responsible for development and acquisitions at Atlantic Realty Companies. He has been with Atlantic Realty Companies for five years where he began as an Owner's representative and then moved into the position of Development and Acquisitions. Mr. Meyers assumed the primary oversight of the development and construction of Prosperity Medical Center, a 255,000 SF medical office complex that currently sees over one and half million visitors a year and has won several design, development and conservation awards.

Mr. Meyers works closely with the brokerage community in seeking out new commercial and mixed-use development opportunities for Atlantic Realty Companies and also provides development oversight to several projects in Virginia and Maryland. He has recently guided a mixed-use project of 430,000 SF through approvals in the City of Falls Church. The project consists of some 230 residential condominiums and 100,000+ SF of commercial space. He is currently working on several mixed-use projects throughout the DC metropolitan area.

Mr. Meyers has over 12 years' experience in commercial construction and real estate and has had responsibility for construction and development of over three million square feet, with two million five hundred thousand square feet of commercial space in the Washington metropolitan area alone.

Mr. Meyers attended Brigham Young University under the B.S. program and studied zoology pre-med. He is presently active with the City of Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and works closely in Montgomery County with Mr. Nulsen, a partner of Atlantic Realty Companies who is also Chairman of the downtown Silver Spring Alliance. He is currently working on a substantial mixed-use project in Maryland and is also working with the City of Falls Church on future development programs in the City. He is a member of the Northern Virginia chapter of NAIOP and the International Convention of Shopping Centers. Mr. Meyers and his family reside in Arlington, Virginia.

**Anita Morrison**  
**Bay Area Economics**  
**Silver Spring, MD**

Anita Morrison manages Bay Area Economics' Silver Spring office, directing BAE assignments for the eastern U.S. She brings 28 years of extensive economic and development consulting experience, specializing in market and financial feasibility analysis, strategic economic development and urban revitalization.

Ms. Morrison has extensive experience directing revitalization strategies, including work for neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Hampton (VA), the Butchertown neighborhood (Louisville, KY) and the Park Place neighborhood (Norfolk, VA). In Hopewell (VA), she led a multi-disciplinary team in preparing a neighborhood and housing strategy for several key neighborhoods.

She directed a market analysis for the U.S. 40 corridor in Howard County (MD) as the basis for a commercial revitalization strategy. In Dayton, Ohio, she evaluated revitalization and redevelopment options for nine obsolete shopping centers. For Arlington (VA) commercial revitalization efforts, Ms. Morrison analyzed the market support for retail development at 10 sites, including five Metro station areas.

Her work in transit-oriented development includes working with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the District of Columbia in evaluating the economic development potentials associated with alternative new light-rail transit lines. The District's goal was to ensure that new transit investments reinforced the City's economic development initiatives in revitalizing neighborhoods and attracting new investment. She evaluated opportunities for new development and then estimated the potential fiscal impacts of alternative transit lines. For the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro station, she led a market study and participated in a corridor planning effort that culminated in a developer solicitation for District-owned property above the station. At the West Hyattsville Metro station just outside the District in Prince George's County, she evaluated the market and financial feasibility of new mixed-use development as input to the station area plan.

Ms. Morrison earned a Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan. She served on a ULI Panel to develop guidelines for strip commercial development and redevelopment. In Paterson (NJ) and Little Rock (AS), she was a member of ULI Advisory Panels assisting in revitalization planning.

# URBANLAND

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## A New Vision for Empty Parking Fields

By [Angelo Carusi](#)

May 22, 2019

Text Size: **A A A**

Two major shifts in consumer behavior involving commuting habits and online shopping have left many retail owners and operators with an excess of surface-level and deck parking. At the same time, tenants need to find new ways of attracting people to their brick-and-mortar stores.

American commuting habits, and therefore their parking needs, are changing. People are increasingly leaving their cars behind in favor of riding transit, ridesharing, walking, biking, and even scootering. According to data scientist Eric Scharnhorst of the parking analytics and consulting startup Parkingmill, most towns have more parking spaces than they have cars.

In suburban and rural markets, buildings often are surrounded by a sea of empty parking spaces. For instance, Jackson, Wyoming, has 27 parking spaces for each of its households, according to Parkingmill. In urban markets, underused parking decks are wasting valuable real estate. Plus, this too-much-parking trend is expected to accelerate with the adoption of autonomous vehicles, which, especially if they are shared, will spend more time in motion instead of being parked.

As online shopping grows more popular, it is becoming commonplace to see fields of empty parking lots at shopping malls and grocery-anchored centers. What, then, is the highest and best use for these unoccupied parking lots and decks?

Walmart is embracing the trend with the rollout of its new Town Center model in several locations around the United States. The retail giant is reorganizing outparcels into comprehensive, themed, master-planned communities along the edges of its parking lots. Each reimagined Town Center plan includes enhanced walkability, street life, and a central community gathering place. Walmart predominantly is showing developers how these properties can be developed. It is a smart move by Walmart; the right mix of uses and programming generates more feet on the street, extends dwell time, and therefore increases spending.

After designing more than 5 million square feet (465,000 sq m) of retail and mixed-use developments all over the world, our experience at Cooper Carry tells us that densifying parking lots is a good idea in the right market. In many neighborhoods, the local mall or grocery-anchored center is the de-facto community gathering place where people bump into their neighbors, celebrate birthdays, and visit Santa. An opportunity exists to enhance the experience in these communities with programmed public spaces, dining, and other complementary uses.

The empty parking lots at these de-facto community centers are ripe for development. And the density and mix of uses should be informed by market conditions and the existing tenant mix.

Here are a few examples of successful approaches:

### Reinventing Mall Parking

The Streets at Southpoint in Durham, North Carolina, is a traditional enclosed mall with an outdoor pedestrian district. The retail destination receives more than 1 million visitors per month and is home to North Carolina's first Nordstrom and Apple

stores.

In 2017, Brookfield Retail Properties saw the potential to envision underused parking areas to increase development at this highly successful regional mall. In combination with the reduced influence of traditional department stores and changing parking needs, land was available to strengthen the property by adding uses including residential and specialty retail. The team developed a multiphase master plan that removed some retail space and added new construction in the parking lots. The plan we developed connects the already strong vehicular and pedestrian routes with new routes, linking the entire property and its new uses together into a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

### **Redefining the Experience at Grocery-Anchored Shopping Centers**

Florida's Longboat Key is a 10-mile (16 km) barrier island home to affluent residents, beautiful beaches, and year-round recreation. However, density and real estate codes adopted by the town in 1984 restricted growth. The community sought recommendations from a ULI Advisory Services panel in 2013 on ways to achieve smart, sustainable growth. That panel, on which I served, found that the Publix supermarket was the community gathering place for Longboat Key residents, and there was an opportunity to create a true Town Center there. We created a master plan that incorporated new public and private development around Publix not only to support the local economy, but also to foster healthy lifestyles, walkability, open space, and community events like a farmers market.

This reimagined Town Center plan is still being implemented, though it is well on its way to giving Longboat Key the unique sense of place it deserves. For instance, construction is expected to begin soon on the Longboat Key Arts, Culture, and Education Center, which will leverage existing adjacent surplus parking to reduce its development footprint, preserve vegetation, and improve stormwater management capacity for the broader Town Center.

### **Repurposing Parking Decks**

Because of the way that parking decks are built, whether cast-in-place or pre-cast concrete, they are not easy to adapt for other uses. We are seeing a lot of discussion around turning unused decks into residential space, but that will be problematic, costly, and not the best choice for conversion. Usually, existing foundations are not able to sustain residential or office loads, and the deck-to-deck clearance heights are too low for those uses.

However, these decks would be great staging areas for autonomous vehicles. According to a report by Business Insider Intelligence, 10 million self-driving cars could be on the road by 2020. To prepare for them, building owners should consider providing the electrical infrastructure for vehicle recharging, which could take autonomous vehicles off the street when not in use and free up surface parking spaces.

Also, parking decks are incredibly expensive to provide. On average, it costs \$15,000 to \$20,000 or more per parking-deck space and \$7,000 per parking-lot space. And these amounts represent only the construction costs; the land value would vary greatly. Costs saved on reducing parking expenditures can increase a developer's ability to include affordable housing and other uses critical to the neighborhood.

Much of our parking is ready for a new life—a rebirth into a more urban, connected community experience. The master plans for these parking lots need to be carefully executed in order to ensure long-term sustainability and added value for the community. The needs of existing land uses need to be taken into consideration. For example, visibility from the road is still of paramount importance for many mall and shopping center anchors, so the new uses should not impede a consumer's visual connections with the center.

At present, parking spaces do not inspire a strong sense of place. But they can be reimagined into their highest and best use, as the needs of tenants, consumers, and communities change.

**ANGELO CARUSI** is principal of Cooper Carry's retail studio.

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## Toward Zero Parking: Challenging Conventional Wisdom for Multifamily

By [David Baker](#) and [Brad Lebin](#)

July 2, 2018

Text Size: **A A A**

The 69 condos in 388 Fulton (left center) in San Francisco's Hayes Valley sold easily in 2017 without any structured parking being provided. (Bruce Damonte)

*This article appeared in the spring issue of Urban Land on page 146.*

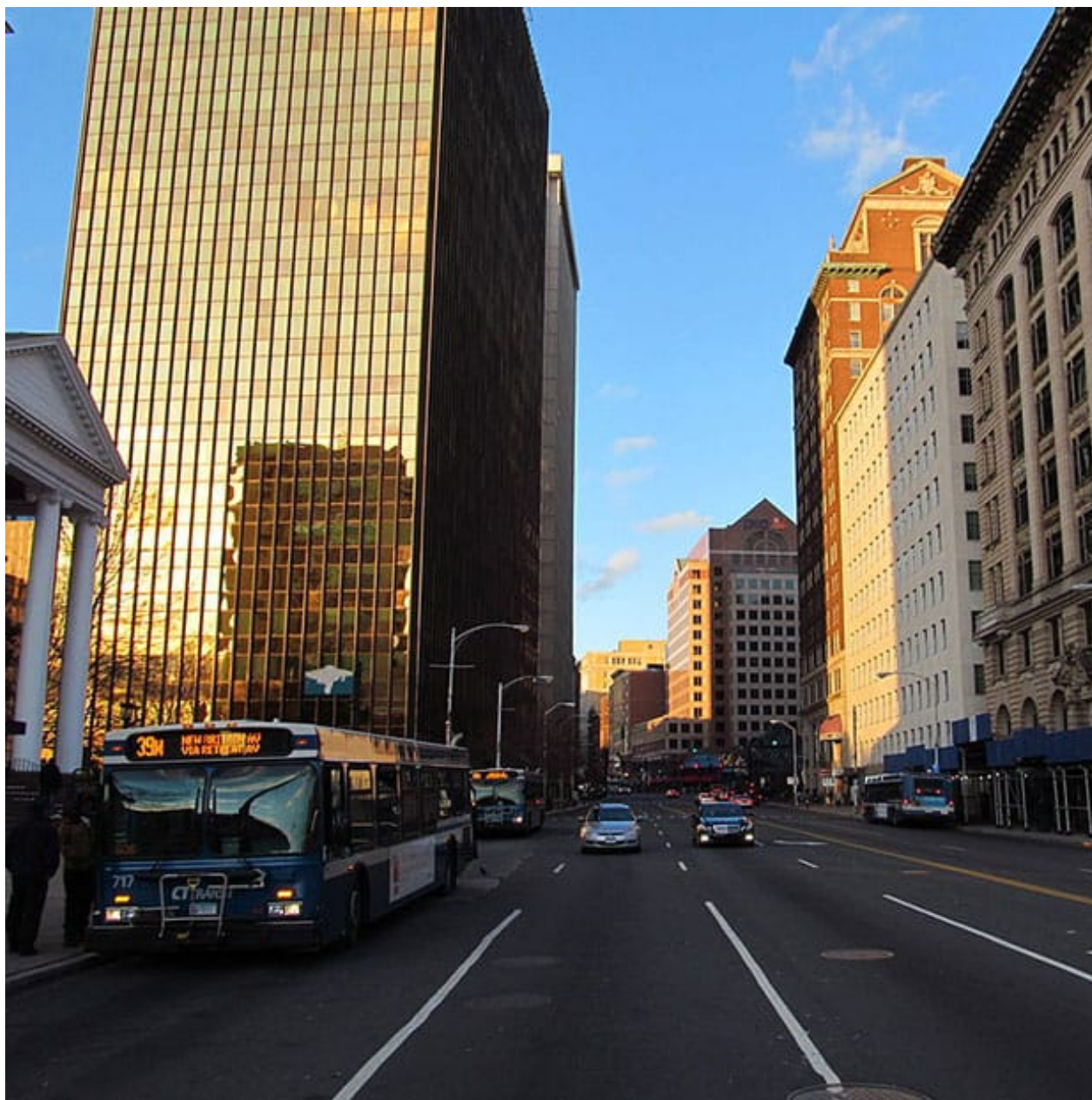
The rising popularity of human-powered transportation, walking and bicycling, and widespread availability of ride-hailing services like Lyft and Uber plus car-sharing services like Zipcar and Getaround, and the introduction of same-day delivery services have all reduced the need for individuals to own—and park—cars.

At the same time, costs of construction are at historic highs in dense urban areas, creating a challenge for developers to meet housing demand. Individual unit sizes are shrinking in response, allowing greater density. However, with smaller units, the number of parking spaces goes up, too, if traditional parking ratios hold. High construction expenses result in a very high per-space cost for parking spaces, especially for structured parking, which can run \$50,000 or more for a single space.



In response to these factors, municipalities are changing the way they handle parking. Cities around the United States are eliminating minimum parking requirements for new developments.

Last year, officials in Buffalo, New York, removed parking minimums citywide for commercial and residential projects of less than 5,000 square feet (465 sq m). Also last year, Hartford, Connecticut, scrapped parking minimums across the city for commercial and residential developments, regardless of size. Many other municipalities have removed parking minimums for at least one part of the city or have lowered or removed minimums for certain uses. San Francisco has gone a step further, establishing parking maximums for downtown and nearby areas well served by public transit, capping the amount of parking that developers are allowed to build for multifamily housing.



*In 2017, Hartford, Connecticut, scrapped parking minimums across the city for commercial and residential developments, regardless of size. (John Phelan/Wikimedia Commons)*

Nevertheless, even multifamily housing developers who support creating walkable neighborhoods and prioritizing alternative forms of transit still think they need to follow traditional parking ratios or the units will not rent or sell. What follows are common concerns we have heard in our architecture practice, as well as the experiences and counterarguments we have come across that make us optimistic about reaching a future in which parking plays a much-diminished role in the urban environment.

### **1. Will planning commissions embrace attempts to reduce or eliminate parking?**

About 20 years ago, a development proposal came before the San Francisco Planning Commission: a new restaurant with two residential units above and no parking spaces for the residents. Even though the project was small, dozens of neighbors showed up at the commission hearing to share their fears about the loss of street parking. The commission chairman responded by saying, “I moved from Manhattan to San Francisco so I could park.” The commission voted down the no-parking proposal. Back then, the primary concerns of neighbors of proposed projects were increased traffic and competition for street parking.

In the intervening years, as voter attitudes toward automobiles have changed, the San Francisco Planning Commission has reversed its approach.

In 2005, the commission established caps specifically addressing the amount of parking developers can build for multifamily housing downtown and nearby areas well served by public transit. The commission encourages projects with active uses on ground floors, and not requiring parking makes this easier by freeing space for commercial or residential use and obviating the need for a wide parking garage door on the street. Limiting driving also reduces infrastructural maintenance costs. Last year, San Francisco’s Transportation Demand Management Ordinance acknowledged that parking generates auto traffic (rather than the converse—that traffic is mainly caused by cars circling in the hunt for scarce parking, which is often the pro-parking argument).

## 2. What about irate neighbors?

Although some community groups still push developers to add parking, many neighborhood associations are now recognizing that car ownership is dropping. We recently designed a project in central San Francisco, the Brady Block, which will have about 600 new units of housing, a new office building, and new public realm and streetscape improvements on Market Street. The parking ratio is about 0.5 spaces per apartment. The local neighborhood group, the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association, would have preferred that the ratio be 0:1, and, in fact, we were concerned members would come to the Planning Commission hearing to demand less than the 0.5 ratio. In the past, we would face local resident groups who would oppose projects for the opposite reason.

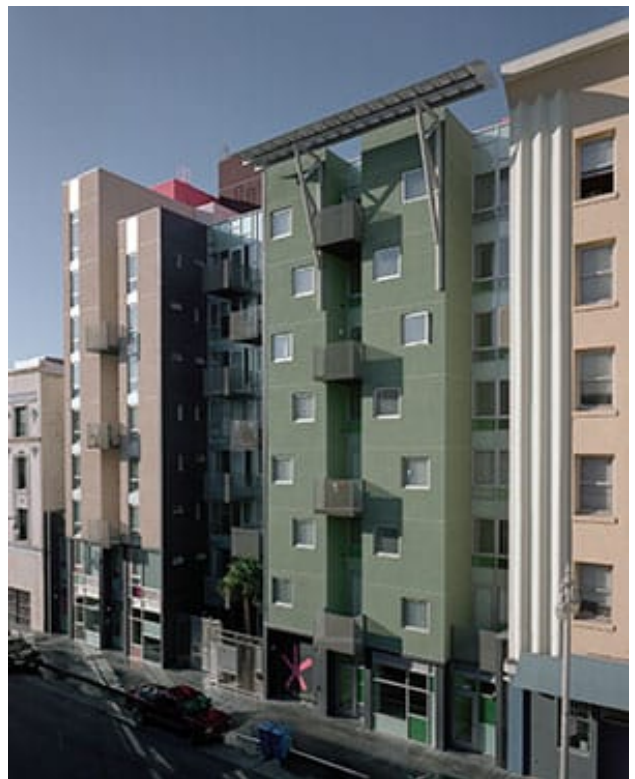
Urban advocacy groups have played a key role in changing public opinion. Locally, these include SPUR (San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association), Livable City, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, TransForm, and the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition, among others. They have been highly active in encouraging reliance on—and infrastructure support for—walking, bicycling, and transit, and they endorse developments that deemphasize reliance on the automobile.

## 3. Even if residents say they drive less, don’t they really want to own a car?

We have not found this to be the case.

An example is one of our recently completed projects, Potrero 1010, a 453-unit mixed-use, mixed-income development in San Francisco’s Potrero neighborhood. Developed by Chicago-based Equity Residential, Potrero 1010 has 0.65 parking spaces per unit, which was the city’s allowed parking maximum, and the parking spaces are not bundled with the units but available for rent separately.

About half of the parking spaces are rented, while the others remain empty, indicating that the development could have succeeded with half the parking. The building promotes walkability and alternative forms of transit: it has extensive bike storage with bike repair stands, and it is organized around a new city-owned one-acre (0.4 ha) park accessible to the public via a midblock passage lined with active uses.



*In place of parking in San Francisco, Curran House’s ground floor includes community spaces, a peaceful courtyard, office space for the building developer, and additional affordable family-sized units. (Brian Rose)*



#### 4. Renters may be willing to forgo cars, but what about condominium buyers?

We designed a no-parking condo building, 388 Fulton, in Hayes Valley, San Francisco, for local developer 7×7 Development, with 69 studio and two-bedroom market-rate units. Even with zero parking, the units sold out easily in 2016 and early 2017.

#### 5. Don't residents prefer the security of driving in their own cars?

At 388 Fulton, most of the 35 325-square-foot (30 sq m) micro-unit studios were purchased by single women in their 20s and 30s. This challenges the idea that car ownership is perceived as safer even though parking garages are high-crime areas. With the ubiquity of ride-hailing services, residents can walk out their front door, hop in a vehicle, and get dropped off at their destination rather than risk having to drive themselves, park several blocks from their destination, and walk the remaining distance, or walk through a parking garage getting to and from a car.



*The Brady Block, in design in San Francisco, will have 600 new units of housing, a new office building, a new public realm, and streetscape improvements on Market Street—plus a 0.5:1 parking ratio. (David Baker Architects)*

#### 6. How can affordable-housing developers and operators help residents travel to jobs and schools without providing parking?

"While our priority is to provide housing, we do not want simply to pass the cost of parking on to our residents," says Jerry Jai, senior project manager at East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), an Oakland-based nonprofit provider of affordable housing. "If we don't offer parking, does that limit job opportunities? What about costs due to towing, break-ins, and parking tickets?"

Jai notes that car ownership is not just about quality of life; it can also help parents transport their kids to school. "We don't want to be in a patronizing position where we say to residents, 'You should be able to get by without parking.'" However, Jai points to new sources of funding like California's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) as a promising opportunity. "Sources like AHSC are exciting because they encourage affordable-housing developers to build in transit-rich areas and to increase transportation connections—bus, light rail, etc."

Not paying to build parking can also free up money to provide other supportive resources to residents in need. In San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, Curran House, completed in 2005, has 67 affordable family apartments and no parking spaces. Most of the low-income residents cannot afford a car, and the central site has excellent public transit connections. Providing parking would have added several million dollars to the construction cost.

By not spending money—or dedicating space—for structured parking, the nonprofit housing developer, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), was able to provide additional units, a courtyard, space for supportive services, neighborhood-serving retail space, and office space for itself.

Our firm is working on another project with TNDC, 222 Taylor Street, just a block from Curran House on the site of a former parking lot. The design includes 113 affordable family apartments and no parking, reserving the ground level for a much-needed community grocery.

Now that Congress's overhaul of the federal tax code has lowered the tax rate for corporations and federal affordable housing tax credit programs have less value to corporations, developers of affordable housing will be even more strapped for funds, and eliminating parking will become even more essential as a strategy for meeting housing demand.

## **7. Will lenders be willing to finance low- and no-parking developments?**

Developers who plan to build multifamily housing and then sell it have to convince equity investors and loan committees to accept lower parking ratios. The investment community is often reluctant to embrace lower amounts of parking, fearing that renters and especially buyers will be turned off, particularly in places outside highly dense urban areas like San Francisco.

However, this is changing, says Will Goodman, vice president of San Francisco-based Strada Investment Group. "There is an evolution happening with the investment community to accept no parking or low parking," he says. "We are seeing parking utilization rates go down in new buildings and technologies like ride share expanding. So, investors are increasingly buying into the story that most people don't need parking day to day, especially if they are in an area that is near to transit and where traffic is bad. In these locations, people are typically not driving to work. They may want a car for weekend excursions, but it does not need to be on site."

Particularly in super-hot markets like San Francisco, there are many precedents that investors can look at to understand that renters are willing to forgo on-site parking. But even in slightly cooler markets like downtown Oakland, Goodman says he is finding that investors are willing to take the risk.

Strada is about to break ground on a new luxury high-rise rental development in downtown Oakland, where there has not been a luxury high-rise completed since 2009. "All the comps are based on 2009 or pre-2009 parking-to-dwelling-unit ratios, which are 1:1," Goodman says. "There were some members of the investment community who were not comfortable with not providing parking. We were ultimately able to find the right investors who saw the project as representing the future of Oakland development. They understood that this is a project in an extremely transit-rich part of the city. Additionally, there are a number of garages nearby so that our residents could have a secure parking space off site."

The simplest solution is for municipalities to put parking maximums in place for transit-rich areas, as San Francisco has done. These maximums change the culture, providing successful examples of developments with limited parking, which consequently makes it much easier for developers to persuade investors to get behind low- and no-parking developments.

Even in more car-oriented markets, some developers are seeing an opening for reducing parking. In Minneapolis, we are working with local developer Lander Group on a mixed-use residential project on a 1.5-acre (0.6 ha) site in the Lyn Lake neighborhood. It is in the conceptual design phase, and the developer aims to balance density and parking requirements with a desire to create a vibrant streetscape and public realm.

"The larger projects with institutional investors are going to be very cautious about reducing parking ratios," says Michael Lander, founder and president of Lander Group. "But lenders are starting to understand that in some of the denser, more transit-rich markets there is not as much need for parking. And they know the enormous cost of parking. So there is beginning to be a changing of the status quo."



*In San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, 222 Taylor (left) is replacing a little-used parking lot with 113 homes for low-income residents and a neighborhood-serving grocery store. (David Baker Architects)*

## **8. Millennials may be forgoing car ownership, but are baby boomers still attached to owning their own cars?**

Even many baby boomers are beginning to question the need for cars and parking, Lander says. "The baby boomer generation in the Midwest is often still saying the same thing when it comes to proposed new developments: 'not enough parking, too much traffic.' It is a relearning process for baby boomers," says Lander. "When empty-nesters move downtown, they often bring two cars. But once they try the alternatives, like ride share, many of them reconsider the practicality of owning more than one vehicle."

## **9. Does this idea have traction beyond San Francisco?**

Last year, San Francisco developer Panoramic Interests proposed building 1,031 market-rate apartments near the West Oakland station on the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system and providing no parking for residents. The project is going through the approval process. Also in Oakland, EBALDC is looking for creative ways for projects to make economic sense despite rapid construction-cost escalation. One of these ways is reducing or eliminating parking. "The elimination of parking in one of our recent projects resulted in major savings, which made the difference between a feasible project versus one that was not," says Jai.

Even outside coastal markets, possibilities exist to minimize parking. "Midwestern cities like Minneapolis are different from denser, more transit-rich cities," Lander says. "There is more need for a car. So, I think there will still be a lot of auto mobility in the future, but many more alternatives to private ownership like Uber and car-sharing services. This will significantly reduce the need for parking."

## **10. Is the preference for not owning a car just a short-term trend?**

A future not dominated by privately owned cars may be a long way off, but increasingly the use of a car is becoming detached from the need for parking. In urban areas, driverless taxis are likely to hit the streets much sooner than anticipated. Waymo, Google's self-driving car project, has teamed with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles to announce plans to



start offering driverless ride-hailing service in Phoenix by the end of this year. General Motors plans to launch a fleet of driverless taxis in multiple cities in 2019. At the same time, municipalities that once focused on providing ample street parking are now prioritizing bus stops, loading zones, bicycle lanes, and ride-hailing stops.

The days when multifamily housing developers must provide individual parking spaces are numbered. "Who knows? Perhaps in 20 years, no one will be having this debate because of autonomous vehicles, ride sharing, and improvements in public transportation," says Jai. "We need to remember that we are building housing that is supposed to last 50 years."

**David Baker** is a principal and **Brad Leibin** is an associate at David Baker Architects in San Francisco.

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## NEW RIDESHARING ZONES COMING TO DOWNTOWN DELRAY BEACH

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 - 2:23pm

**RIDESHARE ZONES KEEP PEDESTRIANS SAFE,**

**TRAFFIC FLOWING IN DOWNTOWN DELRAY BEACH**

Going out for a night on the town in downtown Delray Beach? The Delray Beach Police Department and the city of Delray Beach are partnering with ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft to make it safer to catch a ride on bustling East Atlantic Avenue.

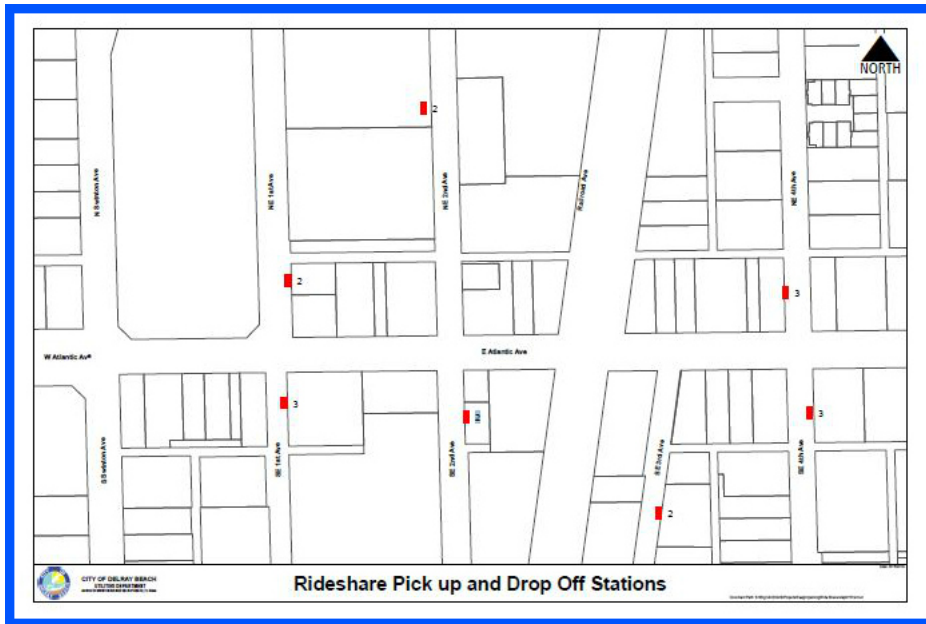
The idea is simple. Whenever a car drops off or picks up passengers in the downtown area, the driver will go to a designated rideshare zone, so passengers can safely get into and out of the vehicles. This avoids the dangers associated with cars stopping in traffic to load or unload passengers, and it also keeps traffic flowing.

The rideshare zones are identified by signs and are positioned in various locations off Atlantic Avenue between Swinton Avenue and Federal Highway. Anyone sharing a ride – whether in an Uber, Lyft, taxi or private vehicle – must use the zones between 5 p.m. and 3 a.m. Drivers cannot stay in the zones for more than five minutes.

Before 5 p.m., the zones will be used as loading zones for commercial vehicles making deliveries to nearby businesses as delivery trucks are not permitted on East Atlantic Avenue. Downtown visitors who are using ridesharing services during the day are encouraged to do so in safe places outside of the flow of downtown traffic.

There are seven rideshare zones in downtown Delray Beach marked by signs (see attached) located just north and south of Atlantic Avenue. They are on

- Northeast 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Southeast 1st Avenue
- Northeast 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- Southeast 2nd Avenue
- Northeast 3rd Avenue
- Southeast 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- Northeast 4th Avenue
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# HEALTHY COMMUNITY



DATA, INVENTORY, AND ANALYSIS





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### REFERENCED MAPS

Health Centers \_\_\_\_\_ DIA-1

Food Markets \_\_\_\_\_ DIA-2



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The City of Delray Beach desires to create a community where its residents live in a healthy environment. A healthy city is one that is continually improving those physical facilities, social environments, and community assets that enable people to perform all the functions of life and develop their maximum potential. Many conditions have a profound impact on a community's ability to lead a healthy life. Communities that have access to vital resources, such as recreational facilities, healthy foods, medical services, transportation options, quality and affordable housing, living-wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, and quality educational services experience better health outcomes. To accomplish this goal, a multi-disciplinary approach is required that includes evaluating the impacts of planning and design, transportation, economic development, open space and parks, housing, education, safety, the environment, access to resources, and social equity related to the health and well-being of the residents.

These impacts are evaluated and analyzed to guide the goals, objectives, and policies of the Healthy Community Element.

### PUBLIC INPUT

The Always Delray comprehensive plan reflects the needs and desires of the community that were collected through a variety of public input initiatives. The City posted an on-line survey, hosted booths during public events, and conducted a series of public workshops in 2017. One of those workshops, held on April 29, 2017, focused on the topics of transportation and healthy communities. The results of the public input gathered demonstrated the importance for including a Healthy Community Element in the Comprehensive Plan.

The healthy community portion of the workshop addressed a variety of subjects related to community health, including physical, social and mental wellbeing, chronic diseases, lifestyle issues, access to health care

and healthy food, and how the built environment could contribute to achieving optimal health. Participants provided recommendations for different areas of community health, including access to facilities and services, education and working in partnership with a variety of local, regional, public, and private organizations, and improving walkable routes to grocery stores, schools, parks, restaurants, and retail destinations

Responses to the questions, "What Makes a Community Healthy?" by participants in the public outreach efforts:

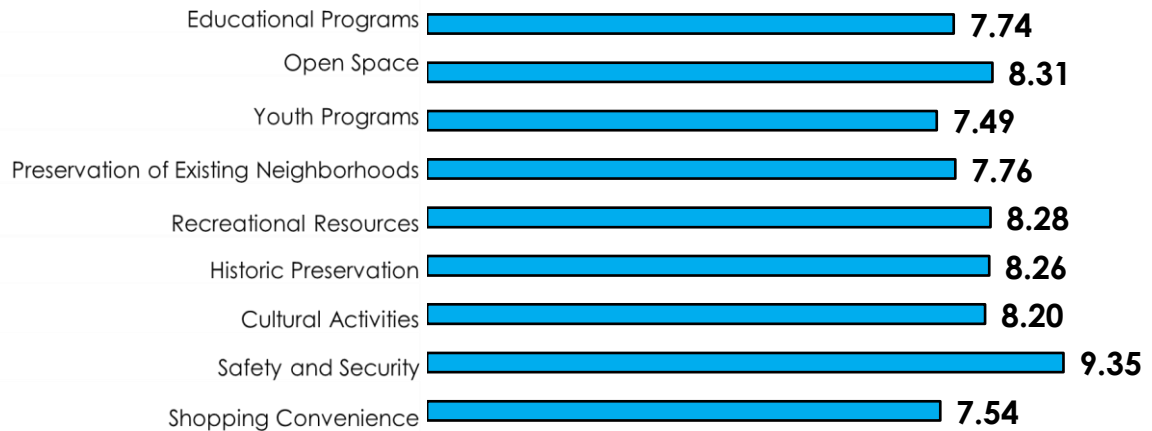
#### What Makes a Community Healthy?

- Basic nutrition
- Access to health care
- Safe routes to school
- Low crime/safe neighborhoods
- Affordable housing
- Talking about the issues

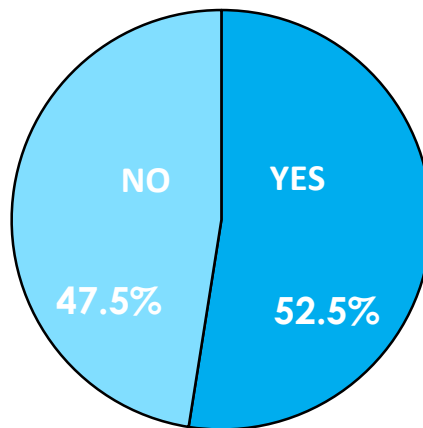




**On a scale of 1-10 how important are the following items to the quality of life in Delray Beach? (1 is not important at all, 10 is very important)**



**Do you think there are enough fresh food sources in the community?**





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

### INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Increasingly, communities are integrating measures that address the health and wellbeing of its residents. Public information campaigns promote healthy food and encourage exercise. Well-planned communities connect parks with sidewalk systems, bike trails, greenways, and other amenities to provide exercise opportunities that can help address health issues such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, attention disorders, and depression in children and adults. Providing an environment that facilitates walking, biking, and visiting nearby parks, shops, and restaurants also provides important social and mental health benefits as residents have more opportunities to interact with each other. Land use and transportation planning provide for access to healthy foods and healthcare and knit these qualities together.

Improvements in the health of the community contribute to the achievement of a better quality of life, reduce the costs for health care for residents, and lead to the reduction or elimination of the disparities that still exist within the city. They can also contribute to a healthier workforce, which leads to economic improvement among other benefits for the residents of Delray Beach. A healthy community is a fundamental goal for the City of Delray Beach.

An inventory and analysis of issues related to the Healthy Community Element has been prepared in compliance with applicable state requirements for an optional element in local governments comprehensive plans as stated in

Chapter 163.3177, Florida Statutes. A variety of socio-economic and health-related issues exist in Delray Beach. Health-related issues include chronic illness, substance abuse, access to health care and healthy food, home affordability, homelessness, deficient home maintenance, and lack of certain physical amenities, such as continuous sidewalks, bike paths, urban trails, open space and parks of different size and type, and urban furniture. State, county and local data also indicate rising rates of obesity and diabetes in younger populations as a significant challenge. The information presented includes the issues, both positive and negative, impacting the achievement of a healthy community, the actions that have been taken to address those issues, as well as the identification of challenges and recommendations for the continued improvement of the health of Delray Beach's residents and visitors.



Gardening at the Delray Beach Children's Garden

Source: <http://www.delraybeachchildrensgarden.org/what-we-do/>



### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD AND NUTRITION

#### What is Healthy Food?

Cambridge Dictionary defines healthy food as food that is naturally grown or prepared, without artificial substances or processes. The converse of healthy food may be referred to as “junk food”, which according to WebMD, generally refers to foods that contribute a high number of calories with little nutritional value.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO) specifically identifies healthier foods as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, seafood and foods with less sodium (salt), saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined grains. They further note that healthy beverages include fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, fortified soy beverages and other lactose free products, 100% juice, and water. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out that the availability of healthy foods most often refers to the physical location or proximity of food retail outlets to residential areas, and the presence of healthy foods within stores. Accessibility includes availability, affordability, and quality of foods.

Food is a crucial part of everyday life. Food quality and access is an important determinant of community health. Factors such as socioeconomic status, geographic barriers, access to transportation, and physical disabilities can impact the ability of an individual or household to obtain healthy foods (Minaker, Fisher, Raine, & Frank, 2011).

The absence of healthy food choices within a community can influence some of the factors that contribute to the likelihood of developing disease and illness. Vulnerable populations are found to be disproportionately affected by poor food access (USDA, 2009). For

example, obesity rates are higher among minorities and individuals with low socioeconomic status (Dannenberg, Frumkin, & Jackson, 2011).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food deserts exist in the United States, which subject some American consumers to limited access to affordable, nutritious foods because they live over a mile from a supermarket or large grocery store and lack easy access to transportation. Some factors that impact food access include income, spending habits, availability of healthy food, and transportation.

#### What is a Food Desert?

“Food desert” is a term used to describe an area with at least 500 residents, or 33% of a census tract's population, living greater than one mile from a grocery store or supermarket (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA 2016)

The *United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)* interactive index and maps indicate that some areas near the Intracoastal Waterway in southwestern Delray Beach are food deserts. This designation appears to be contrary to local estimates, which identify areas within The Set as potential food deserts, or close to meeting the definition of food desert.

Therefore, a physical and geographic study was conducted to identify the locations of different food markets in the city. The locations of full-service grocery stores in the city were mapped with one-mile radii to analyze the service areas. Portions of the city outside of a one-mile radius from a grocery store were further inventoried for smaller food markets, including Specialty Food Markets and Convenience Stores that may provide access to some food options. Specialty Food Markets tend to have a focus, such as food unique to a specific ethnicity. Convenience Stores tend to have a limited selection. Both types can be more expensive than full-service grocery store





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

chains. In addition, the city has two large Farmer's Markets that are also mapped. See Map DIA-2 (Food Markets) and Table HCE-1. The city has two distinct areas: the area east of I-95 that is the original Delray Beach urban settlement and the area west of I-95 that was generally developed later as a suburban expansion of the City. In terms of food access, the western suburbs are served primarily by full service grocery stores located along Military Trail, including Publix, Winn-Dixie, The Boys Farmers Markets, Aldi, and Walmart Supercenter. Neighborhoods in this section of the city include gated communities and suburban subdivisions typically with higher incomes and access to cars.

Map DIA-2 shows an area west of I-95 in the northernmost part of the city that is not within

one mile of a full-service grocery within the city. However, a Walmart Neighborhood Market is located just north of the City of Delray Beach municipal line in the City of Boynton Beach that serves the northwest corner of that area. This store is listed on Table HCE-1 and shown on the map.

The neighborhoods located west of I-95 on the north and south sides of Lake Ida Road are located within a food desert, with some support by a convenience store and local businesses. This analysis shows the City should support redevelopment efforts in the shopping center at the intersection of Congress Avenue and Lake Ida Road, especially if a new grocery store is proposed. The center previously had a Winn Dixie, which served this area.

**TABLE HCE-1**  
**Food Stores in Delray Beach by Type and Location**

NAME	TYPE	ADDRESS
<b>ALDI</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	4801 LINTON BOULEVARD
<b>ATLANTIC MEATS</b>	ETHNIC MARKET	1034 W ATLANTIC AVE
<b>BEDNER'S FARM FRESH MARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	381 NE 3RD AVE
<b>BENSON'S OF DELRAY</b>	CONVENIENCE STORE	30 SE 4TH STREET
<b>BI-LOW MARKET</b>	CONVENIENCE STORE	20 NW 8TH STREET
<b>CARIBBEAN GROCERIES</b>	CONVENIENCE STORE	229 SE 2ND AVE
<b>COMMUNITY MARKET</b>	ETHNIC MARKET	1130 W ATLANTIC
<b>DESHI BAZAR</b>	ETHNIC MARKET	2166 W ATLANTIC
<b>LEOGANE MARKET</b>	ETHNIC MARKET	601 W ATLANTIC
<b>PRESIDENTE SUPERMARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	1565 S CONGRESS AVE
<b>PUBLIX SUPERMARKET- N DELRAY COMMONS</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	555 NE 5TH AVE
<b>PUBLIX SUPERMARKET- THE PLAZA</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	1538 S FEDERAL HWY
<b>PUBLIX SUPERMARKET-DELRAY SQUARE</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	4771 W ATLANTIC AVE
<b>THE BOYS FARMERS MARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	14378 S MILITARY TRL
<b>THE FRESH MARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	1727 S FEDERAL HWY



**TABLE HCE-1**  
**Food Stores in Delray Beach by Type and Location**

<b>TONY'S MARKET AND DELI</b>	CONVENIENCE STORE	301 W ATLANTIC
<b>TRADER JOE'S</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	1851 S FEDERAL HWY #500
<b>WALMART NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	3155 S FEDERAL HWY
<b>WALMART NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORE	12670 S. MILITARY TRAIL
<b>WALMART SUPERCENTER</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	16205 S MILITARY TRL
<b>WALMART SUPERCENTER</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY STORE	3625 N. FEDERAL HIGHWAY
<b>WINN-DIXIE</b>	FULL SERVICE GROCERY	14595 S MILITARY TRL

The area of the city located east of I-95, is better served by full-service grocery stores and fresh food markets than the western suburban section of the city. As indicated on the map, one-mile radii from the diverse full-service groceries, including Publix, Bedner's Farm Fresh Markets, Trader Joe's and Fresh Market cover most of the area. A full-service store located just west of I-95, in the southern portion of the city on Congress Avenue, is within one mile of neighborhoods located both east and west of the interstate and accessed via Linton Boulevard.

Between I-95 and Swinton Avenue, and Lake Ida Road and SW 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the City of Delray Beach has neighborhoods collectively known as The Set, indicated on the map with a blue boundary. Neighborhoods in this area are characterized by several minority groups and generally have lower incomes than other areas of the city. Parts of these neighborhoods are beyond the one-mile radius area for access to a full-service grocery store. The neighborhoods are served by small ethnic markets located along and near West Atlantic Avenue. One of the specialty food markets offers fresh produce, fruits and vegetables at accessible prices, but the majority have a limited selection of produce. Convenience stores and fast food restaurants are more prevalent and accessible. A balanced retail food environment enables consumers to access

healthy foods and make informed decisions about the meals that would be best for them; this appears to be missing in this area.

Due to these constraints, some areas of The Set, both north and south of West Atlantic Avenue are considered a food desert. Several plans, including The Visions West Atlantic 2003 (1993), The West Atlantic Avenue Redevelopment Plan (1995), The Downtown Master Plan (1995), and The Southwest Area Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan (2003), identify the need for commercial businesses that serve the daily needs of the residents in this area. Most plans specify that a grocery store/supermarket is needed or desired in the area. The Community Redevelopment Agency has issued a Request for Proposals for publicly owned land on the south side of West Atlantic Avenue with a full-service grocery store as a required part of the proposal.

Source: Absolute and relative densities of fast-food

The prevalence of fast food restaurants may also significantly influence the rates of obesity in an area. According to Polsky and colleagues (2016), adults residing within a 10-minute walk of at least five fast food restaurants are 2.5 times more likely to become obese.

versus other restaurants in relation to weight status: Does restaurant mix matter? [Polsky JY](#), [Moineddin R](#), [Dunn JR](#), [Glazier RH](#), [Booth GL](#).

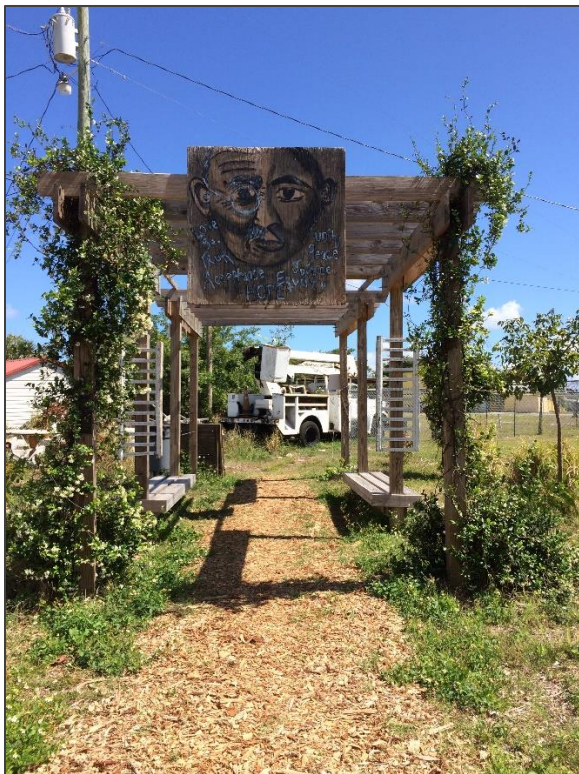


## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

### Sustainable Food Systems

In addition to the traditional food retail outlets, farm and garden scale urban agriculture has benefits for public health, including encouraging people to consume fresh produce and involving residents in social interactions. Urban agriculture also contributes to the creation of safe, healthy, and green environments in neighborhoods through the reuse of otherwise vacant or underutilized land.

Providing a sustainable food system requires the collaboration of both the City and residents. The City of Delray Beach has established policies and regulations that support the expansion of urban farms and community gardens. Several community gardens have been established throughout the city and a community orchard was established within the Catherine Strong Park.



Frog Alley

Collaboration with city residents can be accommodated through supporting community events where fruit trees are provided at no cost; allowing community

events where residents can offer produce for sale; educating residents how to develop their own vegetable gardens; encouraging rooftop gardens; and, working with homeowners associations to remove restrictions on the planting of fruits trees within their subdivisions.



### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Good public health is a fundamental quality in a strong society, as high in importance as public education, safety, and equal access to the benefits of a thriving economy and society. Improving the health-related quality of life and well-being of all residents is a fundamental goal of the City of Delray Beach in creating a healthy community.

In 2005, the World Health Organization recognized the importance of evaluating and improving people's quality of life. As people are living longer, researchers have changed the way they examine health, looking beyond causes of death and illness to examine the relationship of health to the quality of an individual life.

**Optimal Health: A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.**

- The World Health Organization

A significant contributing factor to an individual health and quality of life, is access to health care. The City has numerous health care providers with delivery systems that vary. Health care may be provided on an inpatient basis by a hospital or medical center and may include emergency treatment, whereas,



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

outpatient facilities generally provide routine preventative care in a clinic or health center.

A number of health centers in Delray Beach are located on Linton Boulevard east of the Delray Beach Medical Center, primarily between South Military Trail and I-95 (shown on Map DIA-1 – Health Centers). Five additional medical clinics are located north of Linton Boulevard, three are west of I-95 and two are east of I-95. Table HCE-2 below provides a comprehensive list of the health centers throughout the city.



MD Now along Linton Blvd  
Source: MD Now web site, July of 2018

Table HCE -2 Inventory of Health Centers in Delray Beach			
Center	Location	Type	Services
<b>C.L. Brumback Primary Care Clinic (Health Care District Palm Beach County)</b>	225 South Congress Avenue	Federal Government funded center operating under sliding scale model for free or reduced cost services based on income status.	*Checkups, pregnancy care, immunizations and child care, prescriptions; *Mental/substance abuse treatment, *Homeless health center, *Health Care District dental services.
<b>ExpressDocs Walk-in Urgent Care</b>	14530 South Military Trail	Urgent care facility	Allergic reactions, bloodwork, viruses, physicals, drug screens, wound care, lab services, pre-operative medical clearance, sprains/strains, STD testing, shots/vaccines, wellness exams, workers compensation, X-rays.
<b>MD Now Urgent Care</b>	601 Linton Boulevard	Urgent care facility	EKG, x-ray, lab tests, urine drug test, occupational medicine, physical therapy, urgent care
<b>Delray Medical Center</b>	5352 Linton Boulevard  5130 Linton Boulevard	Hospital	Trauma, behavioral Health, cardiovascular care, emergency services, neurosciences, rehabilitation services, sleep center, surgical services, women's health, wound care, imaging center.
<b>VA Delray Beach CBOC</b>	4800 West Linton Boulevard, Suite E300	Medical clinic	Primary care / internal medicine services, chronic illnesses care, preventive healthcare screenings and evaluations, nutritional consultation and evaluations, outpatient care, mental health assessments, screening, and therapies for a limited number of





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

Table HCE -2 Inventory of Health Centers in Delray Beach			
Center	Location	Type	Services
			mental health diagnoses, social services assessments and referrals.
<b>Delray Med</b>	5162 West Linton Boulevard	Medical Clinic	Affiliated with Delray Medical Center
<b>Whole Health</b>	402 Southeast 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Urgent Care, Family Practice	General illness care, minor injuries and sports injuries, wound care, breaks and fractures, wellness and preventive care, lab testing, women's health, addiction treatment.
<b>Minute Clinic</b>	1690 South Federal Highway	Walk-in Clinic	Treatment of minor illnesses, injuries, skin conditions health screenings/monitoring, travel health, vaccinations/injections, physicals, women services.
<b>Women's Wellness Institute</b>	238 Northeast 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue	Women's Health Clinic	Obstetrics and Gynecology, oncology cancer prevention and treatment.
<b>Outpatient Center</b>	4675 Linton Boulevard	Surgical Services	*Specializes in gastroenterology, pain management, urology
<b>Dr. G's Urgent Care</b>	1425 S. Congress Avenue	Urgent Care Center	Treatment of non-life threatening illnesses and injuries; performs x-rays, labs, and EKGs; provide vaccines, specialized gynecology services, STD testing; and, on-site pharmacy.

Some social and economic factors present deterrents to accessing health care. For school-age children, seniors on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, and those with social and economic disadvantages, the healthy choice is not always the easiest or affordable choice. Racial and ethnic minorities and low-income individuals tend to face greater disease burdens and have shorter lifespans than their nonminority and wealthier counterparts. The physical isolation and lack of access suffered by older people and those with disabilities are linked to early death and disease, and chronic exposure to stress may exacerbate these health disparities.

"Increasing access to healthier living choices among these groups should not be seen as a cost burden. Designing for a variety of abilities

and ages, especially in light of Delray Beach's aging population, can generate value from both a real estate and a community health perspective." Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places, Thomas W. Eitler, Edward T. McHahon, Theodore C. Thoerig.

Table HCE-3 illustrates family size and income based on 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, a measure of income issued every year by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Federal poverty levels are used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits.

<b>Table HCE-3</b> <b>200% of the Federal Poverty Level</b> <b>Guidelines</b>
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## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$24,280	\$2,023	\$467
2	\$32,920	\$2,743	\$633
3	\$41,560	\$3,463	\$799
4	\$50,200	\$4,183	\$965
5	\$58,840	\$4,903	\$1,132
6	\$67,480	\$5,623	\$1,298
7	\$76,120	\$6,343	\$1,464
8	\$84,760	\$7,063	\$1,630
Each Add'l	\$8,640	\$720	\$166

The Delray Medical Center administers a Charity Care Financial Assistance program for households with income below 200% of the federal poverty limit and an Uninsured Discount Program for patients who lack insurance (Delray Medical Center website). Typically, free or discounted medical services require a greater time commitment from patients than medical services provided through self-pay or private insurance. For example, annual earnings of \$50,200 or less for a family of four would qualify for financial assistance at 200% of poverty level at Delray Medical Center.



Delray Medical Center

Source: [www.bizjournals.com](http://www.bizjournals.com)

In 2016, the 5-year census update reported a population of 64,386 in Delray Beach. Of that population total, 21.8% of the city's population were classified as being at less than 125% of the poverty level, suggesting that greater than 21.8% may qualify for hospital financial assistance.

Table HCE-4 125% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines			
Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$15,175	\$1,265	\$292
2	\$20,575	\$1,715	\$396
3	\$25,975	\$2,165	\$500
4	\$31,375	\$2,615	\$603
5	\$36,775	\$3,065	\$707
6	\$42,175	\$3,515	\$811
7	\$47,575	\$3,965	\$915
8	\$52,975	\$4,415	\$1,019
Each Add'l	\$5,400	\$450	\$104

Source: American Fact Finder Community Survey 2012-2016

Data also indicate that 58.9% of the population has private insurance, 38.1% has public insurance and 17.3% has no insurance suggesting that health services may not be affordable despite having health insurance. This is consistent with a bulletin published by the Health Council of Southeast Florida, where the low income segments of the City of Delray are shown as a medical underserved area specifically for primary care, based on May 2017 data produced by the Health Resource and Service Administration.

The City of Delray Beach provides emergency medical services through its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division operated within the Delray Beach Fire-Rescue Department.

The Emergency Medical Services division is responsible for providing pre-hospital emergency medical care and transportation for ill and injured residents and visitors in the City of Delray Beach. This is accomplished by well-trained Paramedics and EMT's, using state of the art equipment and medical protocols. During the period of October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018 the Emergency Medical Services Division responded to 12,335 calls for medical assistance of which 9,089 patients were transported to hospitals.

Other Services offered by the Emergency Medical Services Division includes the Public





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

Access Defibrillation programs and blood pressure screenings:



Public Access Defibrillation programs have been very successful, with nearly seventy AED's strategically placed throughout the city. Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) are available in all major City buildings, in all police cruisers, Fire-Rescue staff vehicles and Basic Life Support Engines, at a number of private companies, doctor's offices, and churches. These devices are proven to save lives in the event of cardiac arrest by "shocking" a patient's heart back into a regular rhythm.

- American Heart Association Heartsaver AED/CPR courses are available by appointment for residents and business owners. Information on these courses are provided on the City's website.
- Complementary blood pressure screenings are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 11:30 am and 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Residents are encouraged to stop by their local fire station to access this service.

### Chronic Illnesses

#### *Obesity and Diabetes*

The state of Florida is currently ranked fourth in the country for obesity in children from 10 to 17 years old. In Delray Beach, estimates suggest one out of three children is obese.

Table HCE-5 provides a comparison of obesity and diabetes rates between the City of Delray Beach, Palm Beach County, and the State of Florida. Adult obesity rates for Delray Beach are not available, but Palm Beach County has a lower obesity rate (19.9%) than the state of Florida (27.4%). The diabetes rates for Delray Beach are also lower (8.7%) than in Palm Beach County (11%) and the state of Florida (11.8%).

**Table HCE-5  
Obesity Rates**

	<b>Delray Beach</b>	<b>Palm Beach County</b>	<b>Florida</b>
Adult obesity rate	NA	19.9%	27.4%
10 yr to 17 yr obesity rate	1 of 3 children	14.3%	36.6%
Adult diabetes rate	8.7%	11%	11.8%

Source: Health Council of Southeast Florida, StateofObesity.org, City of Delray Beach

It is also important to note that being obese or overweight while pregnant can place babies at the risk for health issues. As presented in Table HCE-6, Palm Beach County has seen an increase in the percentages of births to obese mothers, from 18% in 2011 to 19% in 2015. However, this ratio is still lower compared to the state of Florida, 20.6% in 2011 and 21.9% in 2015.

**Table HCE-6  
Births to Obese Mothers  
at the Time of Pregnancy**

	<b>Palm Beach County</b>	<b>Florida</b>
<b>2011</b>	18%	20.6%
<b>2015</b>	19%	21.9%

Source: Florida Department of Health, Health Council of Southeast Florida

### Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse and exposure to tobacco use creates high risk factors for illnesses and lead to negative health and social consequences. Promoting tobacco-free public events and participating in safe rides directory/parking are efforts that could be undertaken to reduce the health and safety impacts associated with these activities.

The City of Delray Beach adopted Ordinance No. 25-17, establishing the regulations regarding Community Residences, for people with disabilities which include residences for people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities, the frail elderly, people in recovery from alcohol and/or drug



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

addiction, and others. The amendment is based on the study entitled, "Delray Beach, Florida: Principles to Guide Zoning for Community Residences for People With Disabilities."

The LDR amendments for other community residences for people with disabilities seeks to protect people with disabilities particularly sober living homes, from exploitation, scam operators, fraud, and the many other abuses documented in our local newspapers and the Study. By protecting people with disabilities, these amendments will also protect Delray Beach's neighborhoods from the impacts of unscrupulous operators of these community residences.

### ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Affordable and accessible physical and mental healthcare provide timely intervention to reduce the impact of illnesses. Preventive measures such as screening for common health problems have been shown to reduce incidences and severity of illnesses. Stress is associated with increased risk of several chronic and mental illnesses. Anxiety is also associated with increased risk of aggression, depression, and substance abuse. Similarly, attributes of the built environment, including the amount of driving, access to green space and nature, and the condition of the environment, can affect mental health by

impacting levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

Providing access to mental health services and opportunities for social interaction in the community are critical in supporting good mental health for all residents. A number of options for outpatient mental health services are available in the City of Delray Beach, which are described in Table HCE-7 and Table HCE-8.

Table HCE-7 Inpatient Mental Health Care Centers		
Facility Name	Facility Type	Occupancy
South County Mental Health Center, Inc. 16158 S. Military Trail	Mental Health	11
Fair Oaks Pavilion	Mental Health	53
Total Inpatient Mental Health Beds		64
Source: City of Delray Beach, 2017		

Table HCE-8 Outpatient Service Centers		
Center	Location	Services
South County Mental Health Center, Inc.	16158 S Military Trail, Delray Beach, FL 33484	Provides adult and children's mental health services through licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health counselors, social workers, and therapists
Volen Center	850 N Congress Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33445	Serves seniors, young adults, children, and families through health care and supportive services. Individual counseling is available for adults age 55 and above for issues such as anxiety, depression, caregiver stress, bereavement, serious health challenges, and life changes
Source: City of Delray Beach, 2017		

Resources are not limited to the facilities listed in Tables HCE-7 and HCE-8. Resources such as the



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

2-1-1 crisis hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**2-1-1 is a free 24/7 community helpline and crisis hotline that provides suicide prevention, crisis intervention, information, assessment, and referral to community services for people of all ages.**

[Or Visit The 211 PBC Website \(http://www.211palmbeach.org/\)](http://www.211palmbeach.org/)



Educating residents on how to access information and resources is critical to the provision of mental health services. One of these local resources is Healthier Delray Beach. Healthier Delray Beach is a community initiative focused on improving Delray Beach's behavioral health by increasing awareness about behavioral health and how it impacts our daily lives. Promoting the provision of behavioral health services to residents where they are, encouraging acceptance and equity, and building community involvement are key goals of this organization. Healthier Delray Beach utilizes its website as a platform to share information regarding resources, facilities and organizations that provide mental and physical healthcare, and community services to the residents of Delray Beach.

Improving social interactions enhances both the physical and mental health of Delray Beach's residents. Integrated, cohesive neighborhoods build community and provide a sense of belonging and acceptance. Land use development patterns that result in isolated residential developments with a lack of connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods, and neighborhoods that are not located within walking distance of schools, supermarkets, and employment, encourage

the continued reliance on vehicles and, in turn, reduce the likelihood of social interactions.

Poor neighborhood quality with limited or no neighborhood maintenance or upkeep can also undermine a neighborhood's sense of safety and security. Substandard physical characteristics can contribute to anxiety and a lack of well-being.

The provision of parks, natural areas, sports facilities, and other public spaces can have great benefits for physical and mental health. They encourage physical activity by creating a venue for organized or casual recreation. They can also provide opportunities for social interaction, relaxation, and a connection with nature, all of which have well-established links to good mental health.

### **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Conditions (e.g., social, economic, and physical) in these various environments and settings (e.g., school, church, workplace, and neighborhood) have been referred to as "place." In addition to the



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more material attributes of “place,” the patterns of social engagement and sense of security and well-being are also affected by where people live. Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on population health outcomes. Examples of these resources include safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, availability of healthy foods, local emergency/health services, and environments free of life-threatening toxins.

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and The Institute of Medicine. Disparities in Health Care: Methods for Studying the Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and SES on Access, Use, and Quality of Health Care, 2002.)

### NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

#### Housing Stability and Risk Factors at Home:

Homes provide shelter, personal identity, and collectively form communities; poor housing conditions can threaten the safety and security of dwellings, compromising the health of occupants and neighbors.

Health risks factors at home include older and substandard homes, which may have been built with hazardous materials; also, the lack of adequate ventilation can increase heat exposure and faulty air conditioning systems can create mold both of which exasperate respiratory illness. “Escalated heat exposure during summer months may increase stress on human functions, the occurrence of heat-related illnesses, dehydration and respiratory system stress”.

(Source: Florida Department of Health, 2015). Old, leaking roofs create unstable ceilings and roof structures and unrepaired plumbing fixtures can also encourage mold affecting the health of residents. Those that live in substandard housing are particularly affected by substandard conditions, often experiencing financial difficulty paying for home maintenance or have absentee landlords who neglect maintenance of their rental properties.

Studies from Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, Census/American Fact Finder Survey

(2012-2016), estimates that there are 999 units or 3.4% of housing units in Delray Beach that meet the criteria for substandard housing.

While these numbers do not represent a serious problem, as only a small percentage of the housing units have one or more of the identified characteristics to be deemed substandard as presented in Table HCE-9, the ultimate goal of all cities is the total elimination of substandard housing. Addressing these factors would contribute to improving the health of these communities, which in turn result in increased property values and neighborhood improvement.

**Table HCE-9**  
**Housing Unit Condition of Occupied Units |**  
**Substandard Indicators**

Condition	# of Units	% of Units
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	227	0.7
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	114	0.3
No Heating System	658	2.4
1.01 or More Persons Per Room (Overcrowded)	858	3.2
Source: Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, from American Community Survey (2012-2016)		



Abandoned Home in Delray Beach

Source: [www.sun-sentinel.com](http://www.sun-sentinel.com)

The City of Delray Beach desires that all residents have shelter and feel secure in their housing. Increasing access to quality affordable housing for all residents provides for housing security and stability, which promotes the community health and well-being. The City through its housing policies must promote equity for safe, affordable



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housing opportunities for all residents. Residents who live in areas that are deteriorating may feel unsafe in their neighborhoods and may be less likely to walk or exercise within their communities. Stable neighborhoods provide a sense of community, safety, and create opportunities for healthy social interaction. The absence or perceived absence of safety and social cohesion can endanger a community's well-being.

### Homelessness

In addition to providing affordable housing options, housing opportunities to ensure the rapid re-housing of the homeless must be explored and participation and coordination with service providers expanded. Members of the Delray Beach Homeless Task Force along with City of Delray Beach Staff participated in the 2017 and 2018 Point-In-Time Study. The Point-In-Time count is generally conducted to identify the number of homeless individuals and families in the County. The count also serves to measure the changing needs of the homeless, as well as provide direction for future development of housing and services. During the 2018 Point in Time Study, 10.2% of the unsheltered individuals surveyed were found within Delray Beach.

As presented in Table HCE-10, Delray Beach has a total population of almost 65,000 with latest counts estimating 110 homeless individuals. For a comparison with other cities in the County, the City of West Palm Beach has a population of nearly 108,000 and 426 homeless people. Delray Beach has a lower ratio of homeless to non-homeless individuals compared to the City of West Palm Beach, but the number is higher than the County's ratios. The City, its local strategic partners, and Palm Beach County continue to coordinate to assist individuals and families, both to prevent homelessness and to provide aid to those who are. Table HCE-11 lists the strategic partners who are helping the homeless.

**Table HCE-10**  
**Point in Time Study**

Homeless Data	Delray Beach	West Palm Beach	Palm Beach County
Population	68,750	108,000	1,471,150
Number of homeless people	110	426	1,080
Percentage	0.16%	0.39%	0.07%

Source: 2017 and 2018 Point in Time Study

According to the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County, 4,295 homeless students were identified as homeless within the Palm Beach County School District in May of 2017; 198 of those children are in the schools within the City of Delray Beach. According to the [HomelessShelterDirectory.org](http://HomelessShelterDirectory.org) Delray Beach has one homeless shelter, *Family Promise of South Palm Beach County*. The next three closest shelters are located in Boynton Beach.

The Palm Beach County Continuum of Care, the City of Delray Beach and community partners, have been participating on the Delray Beach Homeless Task Force which is evaluating strategies specific to addressing homelessness in Delray Beach. Targeted outreach efforts have been conducted in Delray Beach through a Homeless Project Connect coordinated by the Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County.

Many factors contribute to homelessness. Lack of affordable housing is one of these factors. As presented in Table HCE-12, median household income for Delray is \$51,829, for Palm Beach County is approximately \$55,000, and for the state of Florida is approximately \$50,000. Median housing value for an owner-occupied dwelling units in Delray is approximately \$207,100, while for Palm Beach County is \$269,000, and for the State of Florida is \$197,000. Median rent in Delray Beach is \$1,444, in Palm Beach County is \$1,154, and in the State of Florida is \$931. The high cost of housing and lagging incomes increasingly place individuals and families at risk for homelessness. Increasing the number of affordable housing, and increasing rent





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subsidizes offer needed assistance to families at risk.

The population per square mile is also much denser compared to the County or state. The population per square mile is approximately 3,900 in Delray Beach, approximately 670 in Palm Beach County, and approximately 350 in the state of Florida. Lower median household income, higher home values, higher rent and higher population density are contributing factors why people end up being below poverty line, which can lead to homelessness.



The Delray Beach Police Department is dedicated to outreach to assist people who are homeless  
Source: City of Delray Beach

Table HCE-11 Agencies Helping the Homeless	
Agency/Group/Organization	Type
Delray Beach Housing Authority	Public Housing Authority
Delray Beach Community Land Trust	Housing
Habitat for Humanity of South Palm Beach County	Housing
Homeless and Housing Alliance of Palm Beach County	Housing, services
Caring Kitchen	Food
Found Care	Healthcare
Community Action Program	Utility payment assistance
Delray Beach Food Pantry	Food

Source: City of Delray Beach, Annual Action Plan

Table HCE-12 Economic Factors Contributing To Homelessness			
	City of Delray Beach	Palm Beach County	State of Florida
Median household income	\$51,829	\$55,000	\$50,000
Median house value	\$207,000	\$269,000	\$197,700
Median rent	\$1,444	\$1,154	\$931
Population per square mile	3,900	670	350
Persons in poverty (%)	17.2%	12.6%	14.7%
Source			

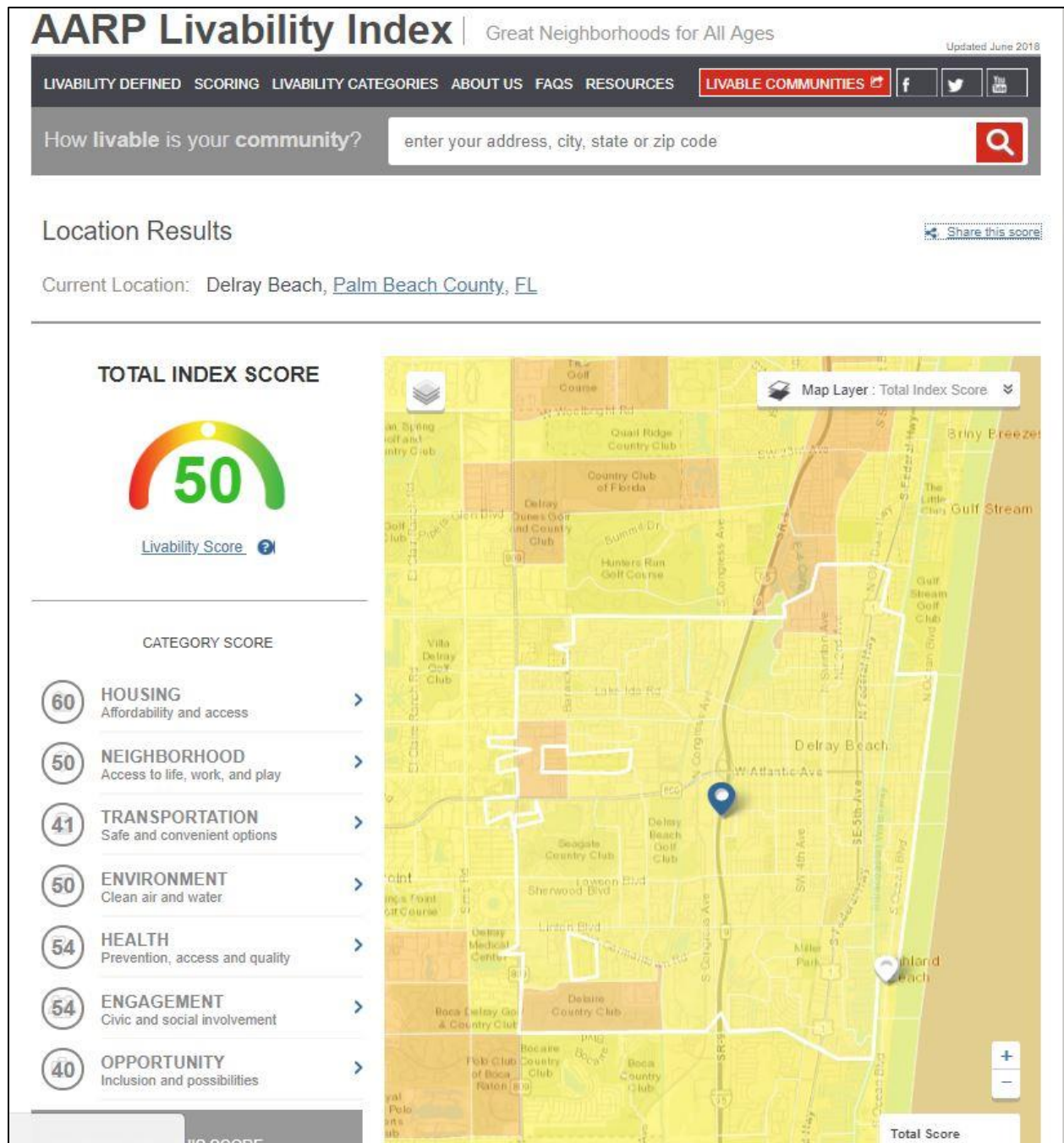
Livability Index





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According to the Livability Index from AARP, the livability score for Delray Beach is 50 out of 100. The lowest portion of the score was transportation, which received a score of 41. This score tells us that residents are largely dependent on their cars for transportation in Delray Beach. The analysis suggests focusing on providing mobility through a wider range of options. In addition to facilitating access to daily needs, broader mobility choices, such as walking, biking, or riding transit, also increase the amount of physical activity engaged, which has positive health effects as well.



Source: AARP website accessed June 2018

### Physical Activity

Physical activity levels are an important

component of maintaining good health and are affected by the quality of the built



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environment, particularly related to mobility options and recreation opportunities. The characteristics of an area, including adequate infrastructure and aesthetic quality, can either encourage or deter walking or biking as viable alternatives to driving. A network of shaded sidewalks, trails, and bike paths that connect desirable destinations and facilities to exercise, swimming, and playing sports is critical to increasing physical activity. The City of Delray Beach is focused on providing a built environment conducive to physical activity and continues to implement projects and policies expand access and opportunities.

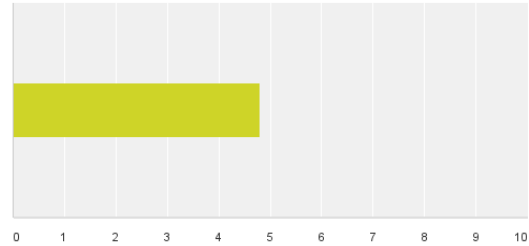
### Mobility

A transportation plan should focus on moving people and goods. Transportation plans have conventionally focused on moving automobiles. Mobility demands are shifting from the automobile to incorporate a wider range of options, including walking, biking, ridesharing, hail services, and expanded transit options. The more travel choices that are available to at risk groups, the more likely they can access healthy foods and mental and physical healthcare. In automobile-dependent communities (those that are designed or located so that a vehicle is necessary to access daily needs), providing choice can be difficult. For those places, establishing connectivity is paramount. Creating a complete sidewalk system, safe bicycle connections, and clear routes to safe and clean transit stops can increase physical activity and improve access to needs.

As part of this Comprehensive Plan update, a Community Survey was launched to collect public input on various issues. Based on the results of the Community Survey, on a scale from 1 to 10, the residents rated Delray Beach as 4.8 for “bikeable”, and a 6.8 for “walkable”. 61% said that it is “very important” to provide areas exclusively for walking and bicycling, 75% said that there is need for more sidewalks, and 77% responded that there is a need for more bike lanes.

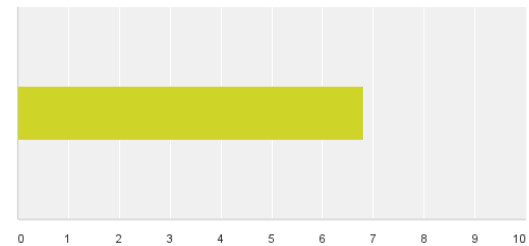
**Q5 On a scale of 1-10 how bikeable do you feel Delray Beach is? (1 is the City is not bikeable, 10 is I bike everywhere and it's great)**

Answered: 456 Skipped: 22



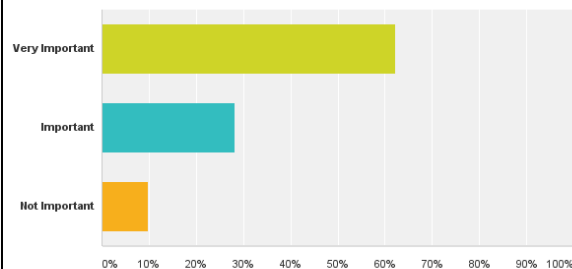
**Q4 On a scale of 1-10 how walkable do you feel Delray Beach is? (1 is the City is not walkable, 10 is I walk everywhere and it is great)**

Answered: 469 Skipped: 9



**Q11 How important is it to provide areas exclusively for walking, bicycling or alternative modes (e.g. golf cart, electric cart, pedicab) throughout Delray Beach?**

Answered: 470 Skipped: 8



The City has made it a priority to have an efficient and effective transportation and mobility system. On November 1, 2016, the City of Delray Beach adopted a Complete Streets policy to advance mobility options. Complete Streets policies support safe, efficient, and



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convenient mobility for all roadway users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists – regardless of their age or ability.

According to Smart Growth America, a national non-profit dedicated to promoting compact, transit supportive development, complete streets help reduce crashes because streets are designed around the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. The following Complete Streets principles were adopted by the City:

1. Serving all users and modes;
2. Connected travel networks;
3. Beautiful, interesting and comfortable places for people;
4. Requiring best-practice design criteria and context-sensitive approaches;
5. Protecting the city's environment and promoting sustainability;
6. Including the work of all City Departments
7. Including all roadways and all projects and phases;
8. Requiring performance measures.



NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Improvements  
Source: spbc.blog.palmbeachpost.com

### Walkability

In 2015, the US Surgeon General published a Call to Action that established the importance of walking and walkable communities for healthy living. Chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes are preventable through and managed by physical activity. An active

lifestyle also reduces the risk of premature death and supports positive mental health and aging. Walking is a simple way to achieve the recommended physical activity to achieve these benefits. (Source: "Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities." Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General; 2015).

The East Atlantic Avenue area has become a destination for Palm Beach County with shops, restaurants, and community activities. This area of the city presents a 95-walkability index, according to Bob Gibbs, of the Urban Retail Institute. However, the rest of the city generally scores around 40% for walking and 49% for biking, according to the walkscore.com data for Delray Beach. The walkability scale from Walk Score is shown below.

#### Scores for Delray Beach

The Walk Score, Transit Score, and Bike Score of Delray Beach are based on a weighted average of the scores of many addresses in the city.



Walk Score	Transit Score	Bike Score
Walk Score measures the walkability of any address based on the distance to nearby places and pedestrian friendliness.		
90-100		<b>Walker's Paradise</b> Daily errands do not require a car
70-89		<b>Very Walkable</b> Most errands can be accomplished on foot
50-69		<b>Somewhat Walkable</b> Some errands can be accomplished on foot
25-49		<b>Car-Dependent</b> Most errands require a car
0-24		<b>Car-Dependent</b> Almost all errands require a car

Walk Score for Delray Beach, Accessed 2018

Opportunities for walking should be available and safe for all residents and visitors. Components of a walkable community include a well-connected street network with short block lengths, adequate street lighting, landscaping, street furniture (such as benches and trash cans), and street treatments





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designed for pedestrians and bicyclists. These treatments need to be context sensitive in design, especially related to protecting pedestrians on higher speed thoroughfares. Numerous sources, including "Dangerous by Design" an annual analysis of pedestrian-vehicle crashes in the United States,

demonstrate the pedestrian fatality rate related to vehicle speed. Not surprising, the faster the car, the higher the incident of pedestrian fatality. However, the graphic below demonstrates the significant difference in survival between only 10 miles per hour increments.

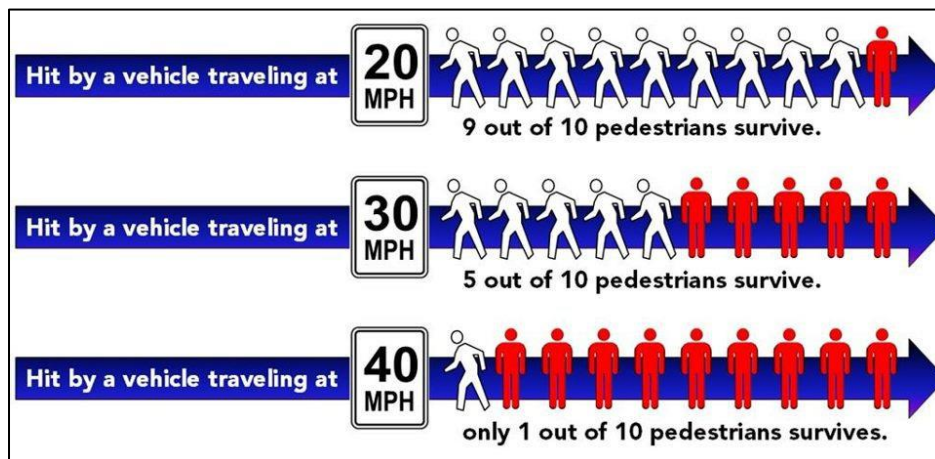


Diagram illustrating the survival rates of pedestrians hit by traffic at different speeds  
Source: theurbanist.org/November 7, 2014

### Bicycle Network

The City has invested in infrastructure to support bicycling. The City has 235 permanent bike rack spaces and 23 temporary spaces, primarily along East Atlantic Avenue and in the downtown area. The City is also evaluating the installation of additional bicycle parking within the existing parking garage facilities. In addition to public bicycle racks, the City's Land Development Regulations require the provision of bicycle parking for all new development within the downtown area, as well as for shopping centers and other larger development throughout the city.

Human Powered Delray, a non-profit citizen advocacy and education group of Delray Beach residents, is an important Strategic Partner in promoting and implementing a bicycle and pedestrian network within the city. Human Powered Delray has developed a master plan for bike-pedestrian infrastructure that consists of a North/South and East/West grid encompassing alleys, greenways, a bike-pedestrian loop in the Central Business District, connection to the Tri-Rail Station, and easy access to the beach.



Bicycle racks in Pineapple Grove  
Source: NZ Consultants



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Downtown Atlantic Avenue  
Source: [www.mydelraybeach.com](http://www.mydelraybeach.com)

Two areas of the city have recently been analyzed for bike-ped needs. The State Road A1A Bike/Pedestrian Feasibility Study completed by the Florida Department of Transportation in 2016 provides analysis and inventory of gaps in the sidewalks and bike lanes on SR A1A between East Atlantic Avenue and George Bush Boulevard. The area within a ½ mile radius of the proposed Tri-Rail Coastal Link was analyzed for connections to the future station to prepare for and facilitate using the new transportation option.

Implementation of new bicycle infrastructure is underway. The first green bike lanes were recently celebrated when they were completed on NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, between NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and George Bush Boulevard. Several future projects include the installation of more bike lanes including SW10<sup>th</sup> Street/Lowson Boulevard, NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from NE 13<sup>th</sup> Street to NE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Seacrest Boulevard from NE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to Gulfstream Boulevard, South Swinton Avenue, and Homewood Boulevard.



Improved streetscape along NE 2nd Avenue  
Source: [www.wginc.com](http://www.wginc.com)

### Safe Routes to Schools

The Florida Department of Transportation Safe Routes to Schools program assists communities in making pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools safer and more appealing, through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates safety, traffic relief, health, environmental awareness, and physical activity. The City does not currently have a Safe Routes to Schools Program. The School District of Palm Beach County does not provide bus service within a 2-mile radius of a school, unless there is a hazardous condition, as defined in the Florida Statutes. Further, the Florida State Board of Education defines a permissible walk distance from home to bus stop as up to 1.5 miles (Rule 6A-3.001). Banyan Creek Elementary School, Carver Community Middle School, Atlantic Community High School, Orchard View Elementary, and Plumosa School for the Arts are all accessible by sidewalk but are part of a limited surrounding sidewalk network.

### Parks & Open Space

A multi-use open space network, including parks and trails, promotes recreation and physical activity. The City has a comprehensive park system that includes 309.56 acres of activity-based recreation facilities. Additionally, the City has another 320.03 acres of open space and natural areas, including the beaches, conservation parcels, and golf courses. These parks and open space amenities provide opportunities for recreation, and perform ecological functions that maintain air quality, reduce the heat island effect, and facilitate stormwater runoff.

The City has been recognized twice as a Playful City USA, most recently in 2017, by KaBOOM! a national non-profit dedicated to providing children access to play through advocacy and funding, for its excellence in providing play spaces in underserved communities.

Within the city the highest percentage of children younger than 18 years is located within The SET and the area located around the intersection of Barwick Road and Lake Ida Road, extending to Military Trail. The SET has





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

several neighborhood parks, two community parks (Pompey Park and the Catherine Center Splash Park), a cultural facility (the SD Spady Cultural Arts Museum) and gateway linear parks. The North Barwick Road/Lake Ida Road area is served by Barwick Park, a community park, and Bexley Park, a neighborhood park. Within this area of the city, the City-owned parks facilities are complemented by private recreation facilities that serve the residents of their communities.-



Veteran's Park Playground

The provision and location of open space and recreation facilities in relation to their distance from households based on per capita incomes, do not reveal a disparity in the provision of facilities for those households. Delray Beach's Parks and Recreation program has been successful with the broad span of providing facilities in all income sectors of the city.

"Long distances to parks are a deterrent of park use. Research demonstrates that people who have easy access to parks are 47% more likely to walk at the daily-recommended level than those who do not have easy access. While long distances from parks is a clear barrier to walkability, lack of physical infrastructure is also a deterrent to park use". (Source National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Publication: Safe Routes to Parks.)

Disconnected streets and a lack of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings deter access to parks. Currently, the City does not have a trail network. Several parks have walking trails within the facility, but a complete trail network

running throughout the City would provide added connectivity and more recreation opportunities, both of which support healthy living.

An additional factor affecting how often people use recreational facilities is the perception of safety. Therefore, providing for safe, well-lighted environments within easy access to residents is also important to create a useful and accessible multi-use open space network.

Through the Parks and Recreation Department, residents are provided a number of opportunities for physical activity and exercise. The City provides opportunity for unprogrammed recreation within staffed parks, as well as programs and leagues for specific activities. Opportunities for physical activities in parks include swimming, golf, trails, shuffleboard, tennis, racquetball/handball, basketball, football, soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, playgrounds, and pickleball.



Tennis Camp  
Source : Google images

### Environmental Impacts

Natural and man-made events present health risks that are determinants to a healthy community. Natural events such as tropical storms and hurricanes result in the destruction of properties. Less affluent households are at higher risk, due to the substandard quality of their dwellings and the financial burden repairs from these events could create.



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Man-made actions affect the environment and pose risks to the health of the community. People today are exposed to an unprecedented amount of harmful substances ranging from particulate matter and emissions from auto and industrial sources to toxic pesticides and ingredients found in every day household and pharmaceutical products. These harmful substances enter into the air and water supplies and accumulate in our bodies, causing a range of health effects, such as increased respiratory illnesses, cancer and other chronic health problems. Consequently, decisions about the location and mix of land uses, transportation investments, design and building practices and building materials can all have an impact on the environment and human health.



Neighborhood Flooding  
Source: Google images

Air quality affects human health and impacts the social and economic vibrancy of a community. Good air quality in a city is essential to having a healthy community and an attractive place to live. Motor vehicles are the principal source of particulate matter and other pollutants that contribute to poor air quality and associated respiratory illnesses. In general, the more vehicle miles traveled in a region, the worse the air pollution. Therefore concentrated efforts must be made to reduce the dependence automobiles and dependence on fossil fuels.

City efforts to improve the air quality can be accomplished by expanding the city's tree canopy, creating multimodal environments, increasing the number of charging stations

that are located in public places, diversifying City fleets, and using sustainable building practices in new facilities.



Delray Beach Neighborhood Development Pattern East of Interstate 95. Source: Google images

The disposal of hazardous materials may also pose a health risk to nearby residents and businesses if the improperly disposed hazardous materials persist in soils or contaminates the potable water supply. Educating the residents and businesses on how to safely dispose of hazardous materials helps in maintaining a healthy community.

### ECONOMIC STABILITY AND EDUCATION

Income is one of the strongest determinants of health status. When people have access to high quality employment that pays a living wage, they are more likely to have access to health care, and more likely to afford necessities such as healthy food and housing. Additionally, people with higher incomes incur less psychosocial stress about how to make ends meet.

Of Delray Beach's residents 17.20% are identified as living in poverty. The area in Delray Beach known as The Set is a concentrated area of poverty where the estimated poverty rate in March 2017, was 29 – 40%. The Set has nearly 5 times the overall unemployment rate as Delray Beach at 18-20%. With high unemployment rates and poverty levels, the area faces higher incidences of crime, which creates unsafe neighborhoods. Residents who often feel unsafe in their neighborhoods are less likely to walk and exercise or visit





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neighborhood parks.

Reducing poverty is the best way to ensure that all residents have the resources to meet their needs and live healthy lives. Local residents should be targeted for job creation initiatives to increase financial stability and further expand the local economy.

Helping Delray Beach's youths succeed through quality education is key to the community's future. The education system should prepare all residents to succeed in Delray Beach's workforce or elsewhere. This effort requires that the system of learning goes far beyond the formal K-12 school system.

A city's economy thrives on the well-trained talents of its youth and provides a strong foundation for future growth and development. This foundation is achieved through the development of a rich learning environment. The City must maintain a strong relationship with the Palm Beach County School District and support initiatives for early learning and adult learning opportunities. Strong partnerships between the formal K-12 school system, businesses and non-profit organizations can provide kids with a multitude of hands-on learning experiences. Young adults emerge from the school system ready to pursue college, technical schools, or other forms of professional development and are provided with the tools to follow their dreams, and have economic opportunities to do so locally if they choose.

Education and communication programs by the City and its partners are crucial strategies to promote healthy choices. An active community life and strong social networks also create conditions for a robust economy, and good health of the city's residents.

### **SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY**

#### **Safety**

Safety is an important component of a community. Fear of violence is a leading cause of anxiety and is a major reason people choose not to walk, use recreational facilities, or allow their children to play outside. The physical features, layout and design of many aspects of communities

influence crime prevention and other crime related outcomes, such as neighborhood deterioration and residents' fear of crime.

The built environment can also contribute to community safety, by including crime mitigation in redevelopment and revitalization projects; continuation of mixed use development, expansion of regulations and incentives that support mixed use development and the maintenance and rehabilitation of traditional neighborhoods within the city; as well as the use of lighting and strategic landscaping and urban design techniques in the prevention of crime.

#### **Drowning Prevention**

Florida leads the country in drowning deaths of children ages 1-4 years. Annually in Florida, enough children to fill three to four preschool classrooms drown before their fifth birthday.

In 2013, Florida had the highest unintentional drowning rate in the nation for children ages 1-4 years with a drowning rate of 7.54 per 100,000 population. Florida had the second highest drowning rate in the nation for children ages 1-14 years with a drowning rate of 2.54 per 100,000 population.

The "WaterSmartFL: Pool Safety Is Everyone's Responsibility" initiative educates parents, caregivers and communities about drowning risks and prevention strategies. The campaign identifies three layers to increase pool safety and reduce childhood drowning: supervision, barriers and emergency preparedness. (Florida Health, Drowning Prevention.)

Continuing efforts in educating residents and visitors on the strategies of drowning prevention can be accomplished year-round by placing advisories on the City's website, and brochures in public buildings and places.

Palm Beach County established a Drowning Prevention Coalition in 1996 to reduce drowning, near-drowning and other water-related incidents by educating the public on water safety and basic rescue techniques.

The Drowning Prevention Coalition is a primary resource for all Palm Beach County residents' and visitors' on water safety needs. The



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Drowning Prevention Coalition offers information on water safety, free swimming lessons to qualified families, guiding group lessons and special needs programs to area swimming lessons.

The City of Delray Beach Parks and Recreation Department also offers varied swimming programs including parents/child swimming classes at the Pompey Park Pool for children 6 months to 3 years old.

### Arts and Culture

Arts and cultural activities are an essential part of a complete, healthy community. Arts and cultural activities contribute to the creation and sense of place, augment local economies, enhance the urban environment and engage residents in productive dialogue about important issues. Thriving arts and cultural experiences contribute to emotional and social development and provide educational opportunities for residents. The City of Delray Beach has fostered arts and culture as an integral part of the community with funding organizations such as Old School Square, The Spady Museum and The Arts Garage. Increasing active lifestyles is Delray Beach's greatest opportunity to improve the health of its residents.



Annual Savor the Avenue  
Source: Downtown Development Authority

### Social Equity

Social equity is experienced when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential, which

will improve overall health and reduced health disparities.

Improving social equity within a residential setting can be achieved through zoning that enhances social connectivity. This tool allows planners to expand access to affordable housing, economic opportunity, as well as other human services such as quality schools.

Enforcing the power of fair housing laws and equitably locating vulnerable populations assists with improved healthy community design (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America, 2008).

Equitable access to basic needs and resources is necessary to build and improve communities within the city. The Set Transformation Plan provided results of studies where residents of The Set stand in terms of income, health, education and equity. The Set Transformation Plan acknowledged that "Overall The Set falls short of the City and County relative to most socio-economic indicators. During the public engagement process, most resident's comments related to socio-economic issues reinforcing the data collected by the planning team. At a fundamental level, residents know that they have not kept pace in terms of opportunities for better jobs or education. Central to The Transformation Plan is developing a community-driven process that provides the tools for residents to improve their lives." The Set Transformation Plan, November 2017.

The City of Delray Beach plays a critical role in ensuring that ample opportunities to connect with all of the benefits of an urban life are provided to the residents. This includes access to jobs and economic advancements, social services, recreational facility access, human services, as well as cultural and educational opportunities.

Community design plays an integral part in ensuring access equity. Applying principles of universal design seeks to provide and ensure access to all populations regardless of background or ability. This is especially key



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when looking to serve vulnerable populations with disabilities and the growing older population. Universal Design seeks to provide a livable environment in which residents are able to age in place.

To consider all community members' needs and concerns, particular efforts must be made to improve communication with traditionally under-represented and under-served groups, including low income communities and minority populations. Consistent with the City's core values and vision for government performance, deep and inclusive community involvement is essential to transparency and equity in long-range planning decisions. It also makes it possible to create and work towards a shared vision for the future.

### Social Capital

Communities that have social capital are healthier and provide a higher quality of life for all residents. Social capital is an integrated system of family, community, and civic networks that is the underpinning and core fabric of social communities. Social capital has a stream of benefits including safety and security, friendship and community, a strong sense of civic identity. Studies show that social connectedness improves cardio-vascular conditions.

In 2010, the Knight Foundation partnered with the Gallup organization to survey 43,000 residents of 26 U.S. cities to determine what attracts people to a place and keeps them there. The study found that the most important factors that create emotional bonds between people and their communities were not jobs, but rather "physical beauty, opportunities for socializing, and a city's openness to all people." The Knight Foundation also found that communities with the highest levels of attachment to place also had the strongest economies. Cohesive communities also report higher levels of safety and security, community activity, and emotional health and well-being.

### COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION ON HEALTHY COMMUNITY ISSUES

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of the nation's largest

philanthropic organizations dedicated solely to improving health in communities, removing the persistent barriers to health and the opportunity to thrive, requires creating or expanding the types of systems that many of the healthiest, most equitable communities have in common. Some of the characteristics of these successful community systems include investments from a wide range of entities, such as banks, hospitals, universities, etc., and networks of people and organizations who understand the factors that shape health and want to make a difference. Bringing about changes to help raise the health of everyone requires the engagement of all sectors of a community, from government and policymakers, to business owners and civic groups, to parents and volunteers.

The City of Delray Beach maintains cooperation and coordination on different aspects related to the health of the community. They include multiple local, county state, and federal agencies, and a variety of other public, private and non-profit organizations, including neighborhood groups. The City considers these groups, agencies and organizations as strategic partners to advance the goals of improving the quality of life for all City residents.

Delray Beach has been identified as a focus area for the **Healthier Together Initiative** of the Palm Healthcare Foundation, Inc. This data-driven process is designed to "change long term health outcomes of the residents in Palm Beach County", "increase capacity among individuals, organizations, and systems to impact lasting and sustainable change related to health and well-being, and "establish a learning framework to evaluate the overall impact of the Healthier Together Initiative as well as the impact at the community level."

Several community advocacy groups have a strong role in promoting a healthy community. **Healthier Delray Beach** is a community-initiative focused on improving Delray Beach's behavioral health. Actions of the initiative are directed by residents with the collaboration and the support of other agencies and support groups.





## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

The **Delray Beach Drug Task Force** is a volunteer organization to provide community leadership and education in the campaign against addiction by maintaining a network and forum to discuss, advocate, and influence issues with regard to public safety, prevention, and rehabilitation related to substance use.

**The Homeless Task Force** is a community-led group of several nonprofit, religious, and volunteer organizations that regularly meet to understand and tackle the complicated issue of homelessness in Delray Beach. The taskforce was established in 2016. Both County and City staff and leaders are invited to participate.



West Settler Village District  
Source: The Set Transformation Plan, Feb 2018

One of the collaborative agencies assisting Delray in formulating strategies for meeting the needs of individuals and families who are, or are at risk of, homelessness is the **Palm Beach County Continuum of Care** (a.k.a. Homeless and Housing Alliance of Palm Beach County). The Housing Alliance of Palm Beach County Executive Committee serve as the decision-making body responsible for community

planning, coordination and evaluation to efficiently bring an end to homelessness in within Palm Beach County. The Continuum of Care is comprised of representatives from government, businesses, formerly homeless individuals, law enforcement, banking, housing service providers, faith groups, veterans and health care providers. Planning by the agency occurs through an inclusive process consisting of the following Committees:

- ✿ HHA Executive Committee
- ✿ HMIS Oversight Committee
- ✿ Housing Inventory/Unmet Needs Committee
- ✿ Financial Committee
- ✿ Youth Focused Committee Standard Policies and Procedures Committee
- ✿ Membership Committee
- ✿ Training Committee Non-Conflict
- ✿ Non-Conflict Grant Review Committee
- ✿ Point in Time Committee
- ✿ Task Specific Work Groups
  - ✿ Homeless Resource Center Workgroup
  - ✿ Veterans Coalition

Several non-profits from Delray Beach are long standing members of the Homeless and Housing Alliance and participate in the Continuum of Care and its Sub-Committees as well as all training events. These non-profits organization also participate in the Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System and Coordinated Entry through the County's only Homeless Resource Center. These agencies also participate in the County's Collective Impact Forums which are held to develop the County's next strategic plan to end homelessness. The Continuum of Care and community partners participate on the Delray Beach Homeless Task Force which continues to evaluate strategies specific to addressing homelessness and target outreach efforts.



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

### CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating and sustaining a prosperous, healthy and equitable community requires the collaborative and inclusive participation of the City, residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Major challenges in improving the health of all residents are the provision of equal access to healthy food and health care and providing an environment that promotes active, healthy living.

"Research shows that a healthy community is one that engages its residents in their own wellness – meeting them where they are - while also encouraging residents to connect and support the community as a whole. Community wellness then is not just about what we do as individuals but also the ways in which we affect each other, and the collective impact we have on the health of our community. Community wellness refers to the ability and willingness of people to act together – in health and tragedy, celebrating successes and working through challenges - in ways that benefit all."

*The Set Transformation Plan*

#### Health Assessment Recommendations:

In promoting a healthy community for all residents, it is important to note the areas where inadequacies persist. Collaborate efforts with city residents, stakeholders, and strategic partners will be needed to identify community health indicators that identify existing quality of life issues and health concerns to provide recommendations for needed improvements or initiatives to enhance residents' well-being.

- Promote collaborative partnerships to create a community health and wellness assessment available in multiple languages and provided through various outlets (door-to-door, web-based) and analyze assessment data with intent to influence future programming. The Set Transformation Plan

#### Access to Healthy Foods Recommendations:

The promotion of healthy nutrition requires the elimination of disparities that prevent access to healthy foods. Assessing the city's food environment is an important first step in determining the tools which will be most effective at creating an environment that encourages and supports healthy choices. Communities identified as experiencing food deserts should receive heightened attention in implementing strategies to bring healthy affordable food outlets to those neighborhoods.

- Increase the establishment of grocery stores that provide healthy produce in food desert neighborhoods.
- Support initiatives that inform the community about healthy eating and nutrition.
- Partner with the School District and local organizations/initiatives to distribute information about nutrition and health and wellness in schools, recreation centers, churches, offices and businesses. The Set Transformation Plan
- Encourage local food options by expanding the presence of community gardens, produce stands, and farmers markets.

#### Access to Health Care Recommendations:

Advocating greater social equity in accessing medical and mental health resources will improve the health and wellbeing of the community. Early intervention and preventive measures greatly improve health outcomes. The City of Delray Beach can improve access to health care services by supporting health related organizations that work with vulnerable residents in providing information about local services, providing health screenings, behavioral health training and neighborhood and community building.

- Encourage co-location of wellness centers and physical and mental health offices and clinics with each other and/or in proximity with job centers, schools, and community centers to improve access and create efficiencies in providing care.



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

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- Support a connected network of community healthcare for residents from prenatal and infancy to end of life that includes education, prevention and early intervention, treatment, and support. The care should be accessible, affordable, and high-quality and work in collaboration with local, county, state and national health programs. The Set Transformation Plan
- Partner and advocate for a physical site for a wellness center within The Set that includes well-care and fitness, integrated healthcare – physical and mental health, social services, education and career support. The Set Transformation Plan

### **Affordable Stable Housing Recommendations:**

Stable housing is a critical foundation to the establishment of a healthy community. The Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity notes that without affordable and safe housing, families struggle to manage daily living which in turn causes health challenges. For lower income families, a larger percentage of their income is used for rent or mortgage payments which may compromise their ability to afford other vital needs such as food, utilities, or health-related expenses.

Homelessness further compromises the quality of health as healthy eating, attending scheduled doctor visits and storing and taking medication is interrupted by the constant need to find shelter.

- Support the continued development and provision of workforce housing homebuyer assistance program.
- Continue programs providing supporting

services for individualized assistance to residents and households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- Continue to offer programs that eliminate substandard housing.

### **Active Living Recommendations:**

Improving the physical, social and cultural environments promote active living experiences which affect the health of individuals. The City of Delray Beach is focused on providing an environment that is conducive to enhancing the quality of life of its residents.

- Improve streetscapes that enhance pedestrian and bike activities.
- Promote the use of parks and open spaces by expanding physical fitness campaigns.
- Partner with the Palm Beach County School District to implement safe routes to school program.
- Promote cultural and leisure activities.

### **Social Equity Recommendations:**

Cities create a healthy community when the residents experience a sense of belonging. Residents must have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential and share in the benefits of community.

- Partner with residents and organizations to implement equitable practices, policies and procedures and community wellness approaches that improve population health. The Set Transformation Plan.



## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

### DEFINITIONS

#### ACTIVE LIVING

For the purposes of this element, is a way of life in communities that are walkable with a diverse mix of commercial, residential and open space choices that allow residents access to amenities for healthy living through safe and pleasant bicycle and pedestrian systems that provide transportation choices for both leisure activities and trips of necessity.

#### AUDIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL (APS)

An accessible pedestrian signal with integrated pushbutton that communicates information about the WALK and DON'T WALK intervals at signalized intersections in non-visual formats such as, audible tones and vibrotactile surfaces, to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

#### CHRONIC ILLNESS

A human health condition or disease that is persistent or otherwise long-lasting in its effects or a disease that comes with time. The term *chronic* is often applied when the course of the disease lasts for more than three months. Common chronic diseases include arthritis, asthma, cancer, obesity, diabetes and viral diseases such as hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS.

#### COMPLETE STREETS

Is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

#### EQUITABLE ACCESS

An effective policy addressing social and economic imbalances that allows individuals from diverse backgrounds and social conditions to have fair access to goods and services, including access to health services, healthy food, active living, transportation and mobility systems, jobs and other services.

#### FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

A measure of income issued every year by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Federal poverty levels are used to determine eligibility for certain

programs and benefits.

#### FOOD DESERT

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), are typically low-income areas that lack easy access to transportation, where a substantial number of residents are at least a mile away from the nearest grocery store, resulting in limited access to affordable, nutritious foods.

#### HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A healthy community is one in which all residents have access to a quality education, safe and healthy homes, adequate employment, transportation, physical activity, and nutrition, in addition to quality health care.

#### HEALTHY FOOD

Food that is naturally grown or prepared, without artificial substances or processes, specifically fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, seafood and foods with less sodium (salt), saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined grains. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) point out that the availability of healthy foods most often refers to the physical location or proximity of food retail outlets to residential areas, and the presence of healthy foods within stores. Accessibility includes availability, affordability, and quality of foods.

#### LIVABILITY INDEX

On a scale from 1 to 10 and based on community survey results, rates a locality as bikeable, and walkable, with access to public and private amenities and open spaces for healthy living and entertainment as indicators of an active and healthy lifestyle.

#### OPTIMAL HEALTH

According to the World Health Organization is state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Involves access to open space, parks, availability of sidewalks, trails, bike paths where



people can walk to open space facilities to exercise, swim, play sports or enjoy a day at the beach.

### **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)**

Is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event - either experiencing or witnessing such an event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

### **WALKABILITY**

The extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area. Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking and has health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks, trails or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others.

### **WOONERF**

A street in which pedestrians and cyclists have legal priority over automobile drivers, and which exhibit extremely low design speeds.