

## **Sustainable Suburbs: Reimagining the Inner Ring**

*The Eighth Annual Urban Design Forum*

*Feb. 12, 2011*

A few highlights --

CAR-CENTERED development is going to kill us.

*-- Marvin Malecha, N.C. State Design College Dean*

SUBURBS CAN GO toward death – or life. We will have decay if we do the same old things. We need to reimagine a sustainable future. Planning must be regional. Our suburbs need to become more urban – with shopping, walking and offices. We have unsustainable traffic. Vehicle Miles Traveled are outstripping road building and population growth. It is no longer sustainable to pave & drive. Sprawl sucks away the tax base and people

“Well-designed development is the antidote to sprawl.”

*-- William Hudnut*

*former four-term mayor of Indianapolis, congressman and think-tank fellow. Senior fellow at the Urban Land Institute.*

### **Seven Rules for Sustainable Communities**

- 1) Restore the streetcar community. Streetcars create networks in small communities.
- 2) Design an interconnected street system. Streets should be webs and not dead ends.
- 3) Locate commercial transit and schools within a five-minute walk. Do not aggravate the demands on intersections.
- 4) Locate good jobs close to affordable homes. Stop putting jobs anywhere and building roads to get to them.
- 5) Provide a diversity of housing types.
- 6) Create a linked system of natural areas and parks. Increases property values. Better for our kids. You can urbanize around streams but be careful.
- 7) Lighter – greener – cheaper – smarter infrastructure.

Aim for zero impact systems – zero percent runoff.

*-- Patrick Condon, professor*

*School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of British Columbia.*

HUMAN SPRAWL (obesity) and suburban sprawl correlate.

Retrofit dead urban spaces by building in parking lots. Create streets within large parking lots. Adaptation is key. New suburbs leapt over older ones, now they are old, too. They are all losing value if we don't address them. Make a library out of a closed Food Lion store. Get universities, community colleges even doctors offices to use old / empty retail spaces. Create public spaces in dead retail places. Museums, pools. Bright paint & good food are transformative.

**Case study: Asheville tax yield per acre**

County residential -- \$1,236

City residential \$1,716

Commercial \$2,406

Asheville, N.C. Mall -- \$7,995

1-2 story office buildings - \$7,059

4-story apartments \$18,109

4-story mixed use condos \$44,887

4+-story mixed use condos \$250,125

(source: *Public Interest Projects*)

-- *Ellen Dunham-Jones*

*Architect and professor, Georgia Institute of Technology.*

SUSTAINABILITY: "Your well-being is my well-being." Buildings must address human spiritual needs. 25 years ago the U.S. was in the top five metrics for health. Now we are in the bottom five. There is a misconception that green building is not affordable. Green building goes with social responsibility and fiscal stability.

-- *V. John Knott*

*President, CEO and founder of the Noisette Company*

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<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/design-projects/urban-design-conference/>

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