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**Growing Smarter: Building Equity into a Fair Growth Agenda  
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## **Growing Smarter: Building Equity into a Fair Growth Agenda**

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### **Abstract**

Sprawl is a fact of life in urban America and it impacts the daily lives of poor people and people of color. Sprawl has pushed housing, population, and jobs deeper into the suburbs. This paper stresses the importance of including equity into the fair growth agenda. This paper provides a brief overview of different kinds of sprawl such as automobile sprawl, school sprawl, wasteline sprawl, and office sprawl and how they impact us directly and indirectly. A long-term commitment is needed to address the negative impacts of sprawl on central cities. The paper offer several policy recommendations that offer a solution to address race, equity, and urban sprawl that affects almost every aspect of our lives.

### **Introduction**

In most sprawl-threatened areas the politics of race are prevalent. Racism is too often a factor clouding the decision-making process. People of color are seldom included in the planning and implementation of smart growth policies. This lack of inclusion in the process worsens the impact of sprawl and exacerbates rampant apartheid-type development. Segregated housing; lack of economic opportunities; transportation disinvestments, inadequate accessibility to essential land uses such as jobs, and public services like schools, hospitals, and mass transit; are some of the most obvious consequences experienced in communities of people color. New and more effective smart growth policies must be implemented, and they must include people of color communities in order for those policies to be effective.

The President's Council on Sustainable Development, in *Sustainable America*, outlined a vision statement that emphasizes three major pillars: economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity. The vision statement reads as follows:

Our vision is of a life-sustaining Earth. We are committed to the achievement of a dignified, peaceful, and equitable existence. A sustainable United States will have a growing economy that provides equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations. Our nation will protect its environment, its natural resource base, and the functions and viability of natural systems on which all life depends<sup>1</sup>

Social equity has not received much attention in the sustainable development or smart growth dialogue. More important, much of the smart growth dialogue, meetings, and action agendas have only marginally involved people of color, working class individuals, and low-income persons or their organizations.

### **Defining Sprawl**

Sprawl means different things to different people. *Sprawl is random unplanned growth characterized by inadequate accessibility to essential land uses such as housing, jobs, and public services that include schools, parks, green space, and public transportation.* Suburban sprawl is not new. It is an extension of long-established patterns of suburbanization, decentralization, and low-density development.<sup>2</sup> Sprawl-driven development has “literally sucked population, jobs, investment capital, and tax base from the urban core.”<sup>3</sup>

Typically, strip centers, low-density residential housing, and other isolated, scattered developments leapfrog over the landscape without any rhyme or reason. However, it is clear that in order to access these new suburban developments one must have access to an automobile since public transit is usually inadequate or nonexistent. Sprawl creates a car-dependent citizenry. Urban sprawl is consuming land faster than the population is growing in many cities across the

country.

Growth and sprawl are not synonymous. Nevertheless, suburban sprawl has been the dominant growth pattern for nearly all metropolitan regions in the United States for the past five decades.<sup>4</sup> Historically, the decentralization of employment centers has had a major role in shaping metropolitan growth patterns and the location of people, housing, and jobs. Government policies buttressed and tax dollars subsidized suburban sprawl through new roads and highways at the expense of public transit.<sup>5</sup> Tax subsidies made it possible for new suburban employment centers to become dominant outside of cities, and to pull middle-income workers and homeowners from the urban core.<sup>6</sup>

From New York to California and a host of cities in between, smart growth advocates are gradually moving their plans into action. Unfortunately, social equity issues are often marginalized or are left out altogether. In most sprawl-threatened cities race and equity issues are largely skirted in the emerging smart growth partnerships.<sup>7</sup> Poor communities and communities of people of color are “invisible” in the local smart growth initiative.

White racism makes blacks and other people of color “invisible.” This sad fact is true even in the early years of the twenty-first century. In city after city, race and equity issues routinely get left out of national transportation and smart growth dialogue.<sup>8</sup> That is one reason why researchers at the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University wrote *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race and Class Barriers to Mobility* in 1997<sup>9</sup> and *Sprawl City: Race, Politics, and Planning in Atlanta* in 2000.<sup>10</sup>

Sprawl not only has social and economic consequences (i.e., exacerbates school crowding, heightens urban-suburban schools disparities, accelerates urban infrastructure decline, concentrates poverty, creates spatial mismatch between urban workers and suburban job centers, heightens racial disparities, and negatively impacts public health), but it also has environmental consequences (i.e., increases traffic, pollutes the air, destroys forests and green space, worsens flooding, and wastes energy).

### **Getting a Seat at the Smart Growth Table**

The American Planning Association (APA), in its *Policy Guide on Smart Growth*, writes that “smart growth means using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all that: have a unique sense of community and place; preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner; value long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over short term incremental geographically isolated actions; and promote public health and healthy communities.” The APA also reports that smart growth should not be limited to combating the symptoms of sprawl,” but should “promote fairness in rebuilding inner city and inner suburban areas, in the development of suburban communities, and in the growth of small towns and rural areas.”<sup>11</sup>

Talking about smart growth is much easier than practicing smart growth. In the real world, race still underlies and interpenetrates with the other factors in explaining the socio-spatial layout of most of our metropolitan regions, including quality of schools, location of job centers, housing patterns, streets and highway configuration, and commercial development.<sup>12</sup> Some people of color communities and grassroots organizations are taking action on affordable housing, predatory lending, community economic development, poverty, access to jobs, redlining, gentrification, schools, transportation, land use, brownfields, and related concerns.

The smart growth stakes are too high to allow surrogates to speak for and act on behalf of people of color. People of color represent nearly one-third of the nation’s population. Their population share is even higher in the nation’s large cities and metropolitan areas. The fate of many of our metropolitan regions is intricately tied to how the issues of race and social equity are handled. In 1999, the Environmental Justice Resource Center (EJRC) released *Race, Equity and Smart Growth: Why People of Color Must Speak for Themselves* that addresses fair growth issues.<sup>13</sup> People of color and the poor are often underrepresented in the decision-making arena that affects their quality of life and their livelihood. The smart growth movement is not exception. One need only attend a meeting, forum, conference, or summit on smart

growth to see this scenario play out in living color. With few exceptions, smart growth meetings are generally white and dominated by environmental and business elites. They often mirror the “WHOM” (we have one minority) scenario. It is not enough to have people of color speaking on smart growth, people of color groups, organizations, institutions, and associations need to have parity at the smart growth table.

### **Sprawl “Poster Child”**

Atlanta has been deemed the “poster child” for sprawl. In a 1999 report entitled *Sprawl Atlanta: Social Equity Dimensions of Uneven Growth and Development*, researchers at Clark Atlanta University's Environmental Justice Resource Center placed race and class factors as major drivers behind Atlanta's sprawl problem.<sup>14</sup> A year later, the same authors penned *Sprawl City: Race, Politics and Planning in Atlanta*.<sup>15</sup> The book illuminates the rising class and racial divisions underlying uneven growth and development, and provides an important source of information for anyone concerned with these issues, including the growing environmental justice movement as well as planners, policy analysts, public officials, community leaders, and students of public policy, geography, planning, and related disciplines.

The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy report, *Moving Beyond Sprawl: The Challenges of Metropolitan Atlanta*, also confirmed the region's racial and economic divide. Released in March, 2000, the report found the following: 1) there is a stark divide between northern, affluent parts of the Atlanta region and poorer, slow-growing southern areas; 2) the challenges of the northern and southern portions of the region are fundamentally connected; and 3) the Atlanta region can move beyond sprawl and embrace a wide range of solutions that address the problems faced by both sides of the region.

In October 2000, CNN's hour-long documentary on Democracy in America briefly touched on the region's growing disparities. CNN.com writer Douglas S. Wood's article, “For a Growing Atlanta, Race Has Always Mattered,” provides an insightful account of race and equity in smart growth.<sup>16</sup>

### **Equity Matters and Fair Growth**

Urban sprawl impacts the daily lives of poor people and people of color. The smart growth movement also influences what happens in and around their communities. Sprawl is fundamentally a civil rights issue.<sup>17</sup> If this is the case, then why are there so few organizations of color leading the charge to ensure that fairness and equity principles are imbedded in the smart growth debate? The key rests with how smart growth is defined and what remedies are proposed.

When smart growth initiatives incorporate “fair growth” elements—elements that build in strategies to address longstanding issues such as fair housing, redlining, abandonment and economic disinvestments, poverty, gentrification, transportation, public schools, etc.-then one can expect an entirely different turnout among African Americans and other victims of institutional and government-subsidized racism.

There are other strong equity arguments to arrest sprawl. The report *Driven to Spend* found that sprawl drives up transportation costs for American families.<sup>18</sup> Americans spend more on driving than on health care, education or food. The study found that many low-income minority families spend from one-third to one-half of their income on transportation. When housing and transportation costs are combined in a low-income household.

The politics of race and metropolitan development are intertwined. Race is a major component in white flight, residential segregation, urban infrastructure decline, and the recent “rediscovery” of urban neighborhoods, and the “back-to-the-city” migration. Fair growth is smart. It involves expanding opportunities and breaking down artificial barriers (i.e., housing, employment, education, transportation, land use and zoning, health and safety, public investments, etc.) that limit social and economic mobility of racial and ethnic groups.<sup>19</sup>

Much of the core smart growth movement involves choices, protection of the environment, using resources wisely, investing in and rebuilding our inner cities, regionalism, cooperation, families, neighborhoods, and communities.<sup>20</sup> People of color communities have been redlined, abandoned, and targeted for locally unwanted land uses or LULUs. Many people of color urban core neighborhoods have also been “rediscovered,” accelerating gentrification and

displacement of incumbent residents. Smart growth initiatives in sprawled-threatened regions will not work if people of color and low-income community residents' interests are not protected.

### **Automobile Sprawl**

The automobile is a major contributor to suburban sprawl and air pollution. Transportation sources account for 80 percent of carbon monoxide (CO), 45 percent of NO<sub>x</sub>, 36 percent of hydrocarbons (HC), 32 percent of CO<sub>2</sub>, 19 percent of PM, and 5 percent of SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, nationally.

Few would argue that transportation dollars are not dispensed on a level playing field. Follow the dollars and one can easily determine who is important and who is not. Public transit has received roughly \$50 billion since the creation of the Urban Mass Transit Administration over thirty years ago. Roadway projects have received over \$205 Billion since 1956. Most state DOTs are road-building programs that buttress the asphalt and construction industry.

Nationally, only about 5.3 percent of all Americans use public transit to get to work. In areas with populations from one million and below, more than half of all transit passengers have incomes of less than \$15,000 per year. There are some positive signs. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that ridership in 1999 was 4.7 percent higher than in the previous year. Increased transit ridership appears to be unabated.

Building roads is more about money than mobility or health. More roads translate into more political campaign contributions and also more cars. More cars mean more air pollution and more illnesses. Everyone is affected by air pollution generated by cars, trucks, and buses. However, children are at special risk from the ground level ozone—the main ingredient of smog.<sup>21</sup> Air pollution from vehicle emissions causes significant amounts of illness, hospitalization and premature death.<sup>22</sup> Asthma, not gunshot wounds or drive-by shootings, is the number one reason for childhood emergency room visits in most major cities in the country.

Representatives from the grassroots environmental justice networks have begun to mobilize around and demand clean air as a basic civil right, environmental justice, transportation equity, and a fair distribution of regional spending.<sup>23</sup> They have called for new interagency approaches to foster greater public participation of impacted populations to create healthy and sustainable communities through wise transportation investments. These new transportation advocates are demanding fair and smart growth.

### **Widening Urban-Suburban School Disparities**

The drift toward separate and unequal society has not abated. America's metropolitan world is more complex than the black-white race relations paradigm. New ethnic immigrant enclaves now dot the urban and suburban landscape. A new wave of ethnic segregation dominates many large central city neighborhoods, first ring suburbs, deep suburbs, and some rural communities in metropolitan regions that attract low-wage laborers.

The drift toward racially segmented metropolitan areas is most pronounced in public education. Schools are a powerful perpetrator of metropolitan polarization.<sup>24</sup> Rapid growth of mega-schools on undeveloped land is replacing the traditional small, walkable community-centered schools. Schools built in recent years take up more land and are farther from the city. These large schools outside of the city promotes sprawl and destroy the sense of community of those neighborhoods that have to bus their students to these schools.

Urban and suburban schools are not created equal. Huge disparities exist between the education quality and funding of suburbs and inner-city schools. These disparities are buttressed by the archaic school property tax financing method. Over \$326 billion was collected for public elementary-secondary education for the year 1997-98 in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. An average of \$6,189 was spent on each student—an increase of 4.5 percent from \$5,923 in school year 1996-79.<sup>25</sup>

Students of color comprise 36 percent of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Over a third of the nation's children attend schools where the enrollment is 90 percent to 100 percent minority. Students of color

comprise a majority of the students enrolled in nearly all of the Sierra Club's "most sprawled- threatened" large cities. *These cities include Atlanta (93.4%), St. Louis (82.2%), Washington, DC (96.0%), Cincinnati (71.0%), Kansas City (81.9%), Denver (74.7%), Seattle (59.0%), Minneapolis (67.9%), St. Paul (60.6%), Ft. Lauderdale (54.0%), Chicago (89.7%), Detroit (95.1%), Baltimore (87.2%), Cleveland (79.7%), Tampa (44.7%) and Dallas (89.9%).* People of color enrollment ranged from a low of 44.7 percent in Tampa-Hillsborough schools to 96.0 percent in Washington, DC schools.

Huge disparities often separate the highest-spending and lowest-spending school districts in a given state. In California, the gap ranges from \$16,343 per pupil at Indian Springs Elementary to \$2,713 at Pacific Union Elementary. In New Jersey, Union County Regional spends \$18,116 per pupil while Prospect Park Borough spends \$5,144.<sup>26</sup> The GAO reports that wealthy school districts had about 24 percent more total funding per weighted pupil than poor districts in the 1991-92 school year.<sup>27</sup> Over a third of the nation's children attend schools where the enrollment is 90 percent to 100 percent minority.<sup>28</sup>

### **Decline in Walking and the Rise of Mega-Schools**

Sprawl is a major reason for the decline in walking. The most dramatic impact is seen in the decline of school children walking or riding their bikes to school. Twenty-five percent of the trips on the road in the morning are parents taking their children to school. Fewer than one in eight students walk or bikes to school according to a recent report released by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.<sup>29</sup> The report, *Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School*, focuses on the growing problems of school sprawl. The problems are fivefold: 1) acreage standards, 2) funding biases, 3) lack of coordination between community and the school planning bodies, 4) appropriated codes, and 5) poor public involvement.

Rapid growth of mega-school sprawl on undeveloped land is replacing the traditional small, walkable community centered schools. The construction of these large schools outside of the city promotes sprawl, while destroying the sense of community of those neighborhoods that have to bus their students to these schools. There are building codes that support new construction which are biased toward existing historic neighborhood schools. The National Trust recommends "smart codes" legislation that would encourage school renovations and provide safety for students in respective neighborhoods.

### **Wasteline Sprawl**

Not walking is contributing to "wasteline" sprawl, obesity, and ultimately ill health.<sup>30</sup> Obesity among American adults has increased 60% over the past decade. Today, one in five American adults is defined as obese. One quarter of American children aged 6-17 is overweight. Changes in our lifestyles and communities have played the greatest role in the decline of physical activity among Americans.<sup>31</sup>

Between 1977 and 1995, trips that Americans made by walking decreased from 25 to 10 percent while trips by auto rose from 84 percent to 90 percent. There are many reasons why people choose not to walk. Lack of structures or facilities (such as sidewalks and parks) and fear of safety are the main two reasons many people choose not to walk.<sup>32</sup>

### **Office Sprawl**

A 2000 study from the Brookings Institution, *Office Sprawl: "The Evolving Geography of Business*, reported that suburbs now contain the majority of office space in many of the country's top metro areas.<sup>33</sup> Downtowns are losing their share of office space to sprawl development. Sprawl and decentralization are the dominant trends. Detroit had the highest percentage (69.5 %) of office space outside the city. The report found that New York and Chicago are "core dominated; Boston, Washington, DC, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are "balanced;" Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, and Detroit are "dispersed." Philadelphia and Miami are classified as "edgeless" cities. Sprawl-fueled growth is widening the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" and is pushing people further and further apart geographically, politically, economically, and racially.

Atlanta was second with almost two-thirds of its 132 million square feet of space outside the city. This is a dramatic shift from two decades ago when over 43 percent of Atlanta's office space was in the city. They are generally not mixed use, pedestrian friendly or accessible by transit. The share of metropolitan office space has diminished dramatically over the past two decades.

### **Urban Apartheid American Style**

A form of urban apartheid exists in many metropolitan regions with clear economic and racial lines drawn between the "haves" and "have nots." The notion of a racially integrated America is just an idea whose time has not come. While some progress has been eked out over the past four decades, no dramatic breakthrough has been made. Sociologists John Logan summed the current state of housing affairs in the United States. He states: "It's a mistake to talk about a breakthrough. The only evidence of [integration] comes from places where there are few minorities to incorporate. In the other America, where 80 to 90 percent of minorities live, there's been very small change [in integration], if any."<sup>34</sup>

Racial segregation in housing, as well as schools and jobs, is fundamental to the geography of the modern American city.<sup>35</sup> The top three most segregated cities for African Americans in 2000 were Detroit, Memphis, and Chicago.<sup>36</sup> In addition to being the most segregated big city for blacks, Detroit also leads the nation in office sprawl (percent of office space located outside the central city) and falls at the bottom of the list of metropolitan areas whose workers use public transit.

Where the economic activity centers and public transport systems extend are not unrelated. Similarly, spatial mobility and social mobility are interrelated. Sprawl development promotes racial and economic segregation. Sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton contend that "segregation constitutes a powerful impediment to black socioeconomic progress."<sup>37</sup> Residential apartheid continues to be the dominant housing pattern among African Americans.<sup>38</sup>

Most growth in metropolitan regions is occurring outside of central cities. Over 80 percent of the country's future growth (if current trends hold) is expected to occur in "edge cities" and other suburbs.<sup>39</sup> Nationally, 32 percent of Americans live in central urban areas, 32 percent live in urban fringe areas, 25 percent live in rural areas, 6 percent live in small towns, and 5 percent live in midsize towns.

New job growth and economic activity centers are concentrated on the fringe of the metropolitan areas and beyond. The exodus of low-skilled jobs to the suburbs disproportionately affects central-city residents, particularly people of color, who often face more limited choice of housing location and transportation in growing areas. Between 1990 and 1997, jobs on the fringe of metropolitan areas grew by 19 percent versus 4 percent job growth in core areas. While metropolitan regions expanded, many of America's central cities became forgotten places.<sup>40</sup>

The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University in its *The State of the Nation's Housing: 2000* reports that between 1990 and 1998, new construction added 25 percent or more to the housing stock of 21 metropolitan areas in the West and South.<sup>41</sup> From 1990 and 1997, new construction in outlying counties in metropolitan areas grew by 15%, compared with only 5% housing growth in counties closer to central cities.

In 1998, 12.7 percent of the United States population lived below the poverty line.<sup>42</sup> Despite record employment figures over the past decade, the poverty rate for African Americans changed from 30.8 percent in 1989 to 26.1 percent in 1998, still nearly three times the rate of poverty for white Americans (10.5 percent). The poverty rate among Hispanics was 27.1 percent in 1997.<sup>43</sup> Sprawl development concentrates poverty in central core areas.

### **Neighborhood Gentrification and Displacement**

Every decade or so people "rediscover" the city and close-in neighborhoods. They soon discover that living in the city has many advantages. Over the past five decades, government-subsidized initiatives have cleared "blighted" neighborhoods and slums under various urban renewal programs. Successive waves of urban revitalization programs all resulted in "urban removal" of large numbers of renters, poor, and black residents, resulting in gentrification.

Gentrification refers to the tearing down of housing and buildings that accommodate the poor, usually blacks, and building of new, upscale housing and other amenities in their place that cater to a new group, usually white, middle class residents.

Gentrification is a back-to-the-city movement of capital.<sup>44</sup> Gentrification fuels a “growth machine” that defines place as a commodity.<sup>45</sup> Representatives from government, media, small businesses, large corporations, utilities, transportation, unions, universities, and even some neighborhood associations are the chief constituents and boosters of the growth machine. Moreover, the causes and consequences of gentrification are closely linked with the processes of suburbanization, urban abandonment, disinvestments by corporations and government, declining schools, and race and class stratification.

### **Racial Redlining**

Discrimination persists in housing and real estate markets despite the passage of the Federal Fair Housing Act in 1968 and the Fair Housing Amendment in 1988. Real estate agents, brokers, and mortgage lenders cater to the racist attitudes of some of their clients--and in effect determine the racial mix of neighborhoods, cities, suburbs, and metropolitan regions. Housing discrimination denies a substantial segment of people of color communities a basic form of wealth accumulation and investment through home ownership.<sup>46</sup>

Studies over the past three decades clearly document the relationship between redlining and disinvestment decisions and neighborhood decline.<sup>47</sup> Redlining accelerates the flight of full-service banks, food stores, restaurants, and other shopping centers from inner-city neighborhoods. In their place, inner-city neighborhoods are left with check-cashing stations, pawn shops, storefront grocery stores, liquor stores, and fast-food operations--all well buttoned up with wire mesh and bullet-proof glass.

### **Policy Recommendations**

People of color communities are not waiting for government, business, or mainstream environmental groups to come up with a “silver-bullet” solution to address race, equity, and urban sprawl problems that directly and indirectly impact them. Some communities are taking action. Whether central city, suburb, or rural, it will take a coordinated effort among the divergent interests to fix the nation’s transportation problems.

It will also take time and resources to arrest sprawl and negative impacts it has on central cities. Clearly, people of color organizations that have long and rich track record on social justice and equity have a ready-made issue in transportation and smart growth. They need only siege the issue. They might bring their considerable collective resources to the table.

*Proactive Anti-Racism Strategy.* Race still matters in the United States. Addressing social equity and improving race relations need to be an explicit priority in smart growth initiatives. Racial polarization is impeding community and economic development in almost every metropolitan region that have large concentrations of people of color. Dismantling racial barriers and institutional racism would go a long way in boosting financial incentives and reinvestment in central city neighborhoods.

*Building a Equity/Fair Growth Movement.* The equity and smart growth issue has the potential for bringing together diverse community-based organizations, homeowners associations, civic clubs, academic institutions, activists, and government to form broad coalitions and alliances. Working together, neighborhood groups in central cities, suburbs, and surrounding rural areas can band together to arrest sprawl and at the same time begin to address longstanding equity issues that divide people by race, income, class, and spatial location.

*Plans to Narrow the Public Education Gap.* Education is an investment in the future. The nation’s public schools remain an integral part of our nation’s future. Disparities exist in financing urban and suburban schools. Innovative approaches need to be taken to equalize inherent funding inequities resulting from an outdated taxing system—namely

property taxes. As an example, tax revenue collected from retail sales can be shared regionally, allowing jurisdictions with struggling educational systems to invest in them. This would enable the region to provide a well-trained workforce to attract new economic investments.

*Neighborhood Revitalization without Gentrification.* Neighborhood revitalization initiatives that minimize “gentrification” pressures and displacement of incumbent residents should be undertaken. In-fill development should be encouraged in place of uncontrolled sprawl. Public space should be planned in the general welfare of all residents, regardless of race, income, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Other strategies include: provide economic opportunities, including jobs and housing linkage programs; develop and enforce Fair Share Housing; institute Community Land Trusts and land banking that could be used for developments from parks to housing; and design Community Equity Impact Reports to assess the benefits of projects to the community.

*Regional Fair Housing Initiatives.* Discrimination is still a major barrier to open housing in most regions. Discrimination costs. A targeted regional fair housing strategy could maximize housing, employment, and educational opportunity options for low-income persons and people of color. Private fair housing efforts should be expanded and coordinated with state fair housing initiatives. Special initiatives are needed to eliminate the “discrimination tax” that is levied on people of color homeowners. Similar efforts are also needed to protect small, disadvantaged, and minority businesses from this illegal tax.

*Greenspace Development.* Promote greenspace development that promotes community cohesion, reduces crime, and improves mental health. Trees and greenspace need to be an integral part of all community planning since they increase the shade around buildings and parking lots, and lower air temperatures surrounding vegetation.

*Energy Efficient Housing.* Improving energy efficiency in housing is a money saver and could play a major role in improving air quality. Reduction in energy consumption benefits all households. It is especially pertinent for low-income residents since efficiency measures save money, improve human health, reduce air pollution, increase building durability, and enhance property values.

*Urban Brownfields Redevelopment.* Current land-use decision-making favors development in the suburbs or “greenfields” rather than inner city areas. Some policies foster abandonment and infrastructure decline. Alternatively, existing policies, such as criteria for funding water/sewer infrastructure could be modified to favor existing, rather than new development. In addition, “brownfields,” or abandoned or underutilized property or buildings, need to be reclaimed and brought back into production. Residents in neighborhoods with brownfields sites must be an integral part of the redevelopment process.

*Change Zoning and Promote Transit-Oriented Development.* Change existing zoning codes to encourage multiuse land-development that makes it possible for people to walk, work, shop, and go to school within walking distance of their homes. Planners can shape land uses and development that are amenable to walking, bicycling, and transit use. Transit stations can become more than a place where commuters pass through on their way to somewhere else. Transit-oriented development (TOD) that promotes more dense mixed land uses.

*Streets for Walking, Bicycles, and Transit.* Design communities around people rather than around automobiles. As a rule, sprawl development is not pedestrian, bicycle, or transit friendly. Infrastructure enhancements and service improvements are needed to get people out of their homes and cars. Walking and biking are two major travel modes that produce zero pollution. In addition, sidewalks, bike lanes, jogging paths all encourage physical activity, enhance public health, and promote social interaction and a sense of community.

*Environmental Justice/Equity Analysis.* Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) should demonstrate that their regional transportation plans comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which assure transportation investments promote greater equity in access to opportunities and economic benefits. The assessments will also need to address equity, environmental justice, and adequacy and appropriateness of current data, computer modeling capabilities, processes for assessing needs and developing projects, and use of performance measures.

*Improving Access to Jobs.* Sprawl-driven development diverts funds away from central cities. Improving low-income residents' mobility, particularly for those making the transition from welfare to work, may be the difference between employment and unemployment. Innovative programs are needed to improve transportation efficiency, reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment, reduce the need for infrastructure investment, provide efficient access, examine development patterns and involve the community in such efforts.

*Air Quality and Health.* Metropolitan Planning Organizations should incorporate social equity and environmental justice into air quality conformity requirements at all stages of the transportation planning process. It should also encourage the spending of congestion mitigation investments to benefit low-income communities and communities of color, especially if these areas exhibit disproportionately high levels of criteria pollutants. The U.S. DOT should work closely with the federal EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor air quality levels in nonattainment regions.

*Public Health and Safety.* Fund research that examines the impact that changes in the built environment can have on public health, such as addition of greenspace, sidewalks, bike paths, lighting, crosswalks, traffic calming, etc. Target research funding to community based organizations (CBOs) and historically black colleges/minority institutions (HBCUs/MIs) to study and design remedies to address pedestrian fatalities and transportation safety issues in people of color communities.

Finally, a national strategy is needed to develop and disseminate transportation equity and smart growth messages to the various people of color leaders, organizations, educational institutions, professional associations, fraternal orders, business associations, and other voluntary associations, i.e., church-based, civil rights, education, housing, community development, bankers, health care, legal, etc. People of color take ownership of the transportation equity and smart growth message, they will remain marginalized and on the periphery of the smart growth debate.

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## Endnotes

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