8 Thoughts for Greener, Healthier Cities

F. Kaid Benfield, PlaceMakers LLC
PEOPLE HABITAT

25 Ways to Think About Greener, Healthier Cities

Essays by F. Kaid Benfield
The Damage Done
1. It’s Not Really About ‘Cities’
Regions & Neighborhoods
Jurisdictions Aren’t Real Life
Not relevant to:

- Air, water, energy
- Transportation
- Commerce
- How we actually live
2. Americans Don’t Walk Much, and I Don’t Blame Them
Is This What We Really Wanted?

- 1969: 48% of kids walked to school
- 2009: 13%
Warehouse? Mall? Prison?
Obesity
Diabetes and Obesity: The Continuing Epidemic

What to Do: Getting Connected

Driving-only transportation pattern

Walkable connected transportation network
Safety and Convenience

- Good infrastructure ("complete streets")
- Calm traffic
- Things to walk to (shops, food, parks, transit, etc.)
- (8-10 lbs/person difference)
3. Cities Need Nature
Benefits of Urban Nature

- Softens density
- Public health
- Climate resilience
  - Rainwater absorption
  - Summer cooling
  - CO$_2$ absorption
- Shade for walkability
4. The Impacts of Development Depend on Where We Put It
In Most Cases, Transportation Has the Bigger Impact

kBtu/ft²/yr, Average Office Building
But It Varies by Location
Carbon Map of Baltimore
Des Moines
Cedar Rapids
Strengthen & Reinvest
5. There Can Be So Much in a Name (or Not)
LOST FARM

- 5+/- Acre Parcels
- Expansive Views
- Light Covenants
- Underground power and phone

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6. Great Cities Have Respect for Legacy
Continuity of Place
Cultural Engagement
Civic Vitality
“The Greenest Building”
Impact of Demo & Replacement
History + Green Technology
7. But the Future Is Not the Past
We’re Sprawling Less

Annual increase in developed land, 1000s acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Increase (1000s acres)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982-1987</td>
<td>1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987-1992</td>
<td>1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992-1997</td>
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<td>1997-2002</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-2007</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2010</td>
<td>800</td>
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</table>
We’re Driving Less (Still)
Why Trends Are Likely to Hold
Millennials & Housing

- 2X as likely to prefer a core city
- 71% seek walkable places
- 78% seek diverse neighborhoods
- Seek walkable & urban at same time as baby boomers are downsizing
Millennials & Transportation

- 30% of 19-yr-olds do not have a driver’s license
  - In the 1980s: 13%
- 1995-2009: miles driven by ages 16-30 dropped 25% per capita
- 2X as likely to use public transit as baby boomers
Places for Younger Adults
8. There Must Be a There
Sustainability Is Where the Heart Is
Indicator Species for People Habitat