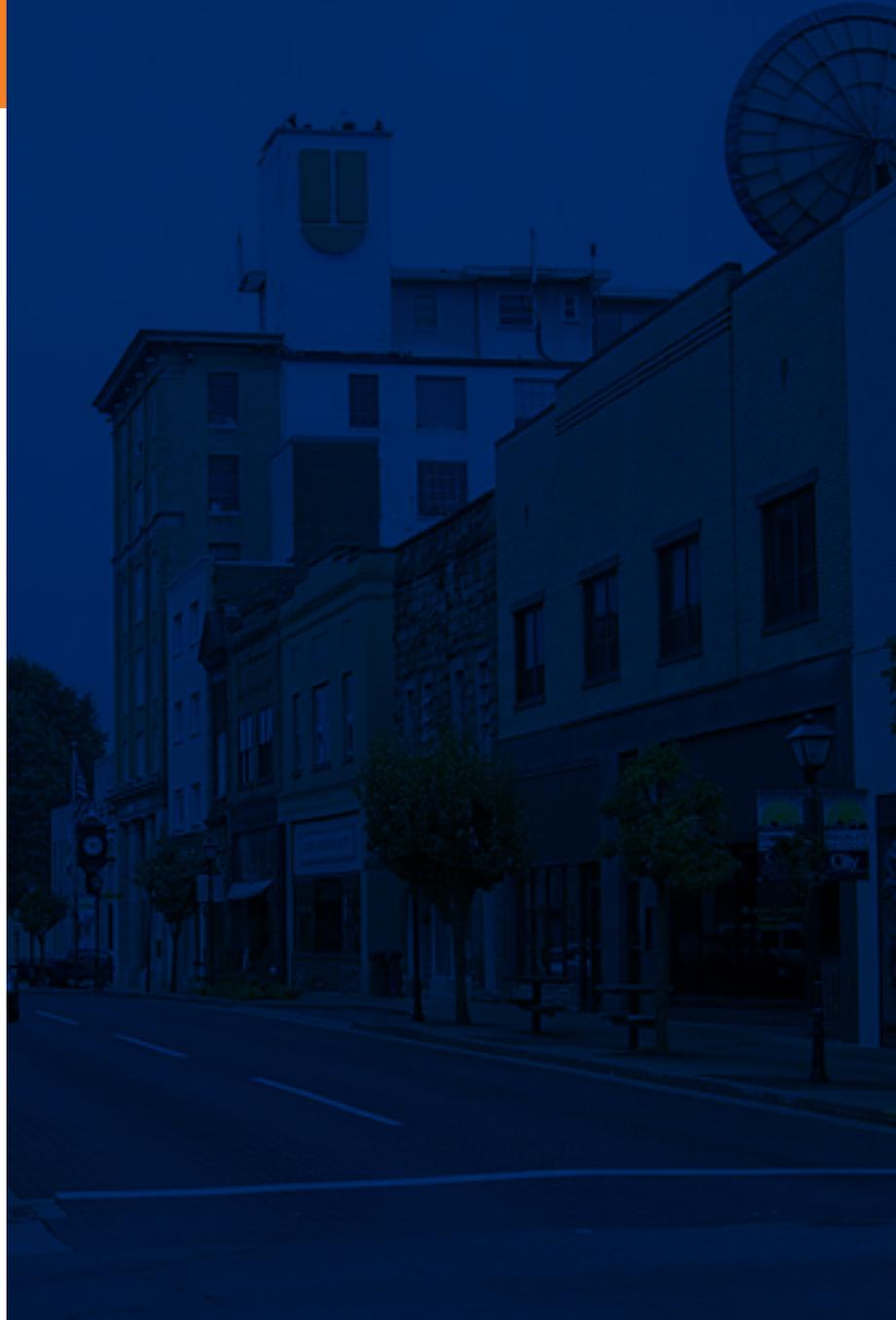# TRENDS & IDEAS
ALREADY SHAPING THE FUTURE

5

TRENDS AND IDEAS ALREADY SHAPING THE FUTURE

any realistic look toward the future of Beckley should begin with considering major

trends and ideas that are shaping cities. some trends and ideas are

already at work defining what Beckley will look like in the next ten years.

"The Best Way To Predict Your Future Is To Create It"
-Abraham Lincoln

5.1

INTRODUCTION

Communities never stay the same. Obvious changes to the built environment occur with construction and demolition, and more subtle changes occur as buildings are improved, repurposed or neglected over long periods of time. The characteristics of residents also change over time, influencing demands for municipal services and amenities. Along with local trends, national trends are also actively shaping cities of all sizes in significant ways. Recognizing this, it is clear that any realistic look toward the future of Beckley should begin with considering major trends and ideas that are now shaping the City.

The following material provides a brief description of five major trends that are relevant to Beckley's future. These trends include new ways of thinking about cities in light of changing demographics and attitudes toward what people want from the places they call home. In subsequent material, other trends will be identified, but they are somewhat more specific and contextual to certain development issues. While the five trends identified below are general, they have implications for multiple development issues, and provide a good beginning for a better perspective for the future.

5

Trends and Ideas

1	AGING RESIDENTS
2	OLD ECONOMY VS. NEW ECONOMY
3	PLACEMAKING
4	TRANSPORTATION CHOICES
5	HEALTH

Many people people believe that the aging of the population is one of the most important trends of the 21st century, and that successful communities of the future will be those that embrace an aging population.

5.2

AGING RESIDENTS

The relationship between aging residents and the physical characteristics of the City may not be immediately apparent; but the connection is very strong. In recent years, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has funded a number of studies (with other organizations) to address how American communities meet the needs of a growing senior population. This issue grows in importance in light of projections that indicate that during the next 20 years, the number of adults age 65 and older will nearly double in the United States. Put

Image Source: Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce from October Sky Rocket Boys Festival, 2012.

another way, more than 10,000 Americans are now reaching age 65 every day, and this trend is expected to continue for many years.

Generally, many older adults have a strong desire to "age-in-place" and stay connected to the communities they live in. As noted previously, Beckley, Raleigh County and West Virginia already have a much higher proportion of residents 65 years old and older. We can expect this segment of the population to grow to be an even more dominant part of the community, as existing residents age and enjoy longer life expectancy.

While a growing elderly population touches on many health care and related social issues, it also raises community planning issues, since perceptions about how livable a community is can vary according to a person's age. Older residents have unique needs related to housing choice, transportation options and social interaction. In terms of housing, young and middle-aged families often are drawn to low-density, auto-dependant suburban-style homes and neighborhoods. Older residents on the other hand, may be more inclined to choose low-maintenance housing options close to social amenities and transportation alternatives.

In 2012, the Milken Institute, (a nonprofit, nonpartisan economic think tank) produced a document titled Best Cities for Successful Aging in an effort to measure, compare and rank the performance of metropolitan areas in terms of promoting and enabling

successful aging. They defined successful aging in the following way:

- Seniors want to live in places that are safe, affordable, and comfortable.
- Seniors want to be healthy and happy.
- Seniors want to be financially secure and part of an economy that enables opportunity and entrepreneurship.
- Seniors want living arrangements that suit their needs.
- Seniors want mobility and access to convenient transportation systems that get them where they want and need to go.
- Seniors want to be respected for their wisdom and experience; to be physically, intellectually, and culturally enriched; and to be connected to their families, friends, and communities.

The Milken Institute used these factors to develop its Best Cities for Successful Aging index. Among the top 20 small Best Cities for Successful Aging was Morgantown, West Virginia (Number 13).

Material from AARP studies strongly suggests that a community's capacity to provide affordable and accessible housing, transportation, and other services for older residents rests largely on local planning and zoning policies. It also describes components of more livable communities and common barriers including those on the following table.

Components of Livable Communities and Common Barriers

Component	Common Barriers
Housing	- A lack of diverse housing options (e.g., single-family, multifamily, accessory dwelling, assisted living and other supportive housing) restricts choices.
	- Rigid separation between residential, commercial, and recreational areas makes it difficult to reach daily necessities and community amenities.
	- Markets fail to provide affordable and accessible units for all incomes and abilities.
	- Homes lack design features to serve residents across their life span.
Transportation and mobility	- The automobile is the main, and often exclusive, mode of transportation.
	- Other transportation options, such as public transit, are limited or nonexistent, particularly in suburban and rural areas.
	- Road design in many suburbs separates neighborhoods and impedes mobility; there is often little connectivity between different modes of transportation.
	- Walking is neither facilitated nor encouraged.
Land use	- Expansion into less dense or undeveloped areas is frequently favored over efficient use of existing urban areas.
	- Development tends to be scattered and separated by function and design.
	- Open spaces are inaccessible and unconnected.
	- Former industrial sites ("brownfields") are abandoned.
	- More energy is consumed because land uses are kept separate.
Cooperation and communication	- Cooperation among adjacent communities is limited.
	- NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) reactions hinder development of livable community projects.
	- Communication among agencies that could help advance livable community objectives is limited.
	- Communication between livable community advocates and community residents is poor.
Public education and involvement in community planning	- Planning takes place without sufficient knowledge about the community and its residents.
	- The public does not fully understand the aging boom on a community level and how it may affect decision-making and service delivery over time.
	- Inadequate public engagement and participation in community planning affect possible options.
Leadership	- A lack of "political will" often hinders measures that would make the community more livable.

Source: Opportunities for Creating Livable Communities, AARP Public Policy Institute, Mia R. Oberlink, Center for Home Care Policy and Research, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, March 2008.

While each community must strike its own balance among competing planning issues, the two key areas where steps can be taken to improve livability for seniors include housing and transportation.

In terms of housing, a community can encourage more diverse housing options (e.g., single family, multifamily, accessory dwelling, condos, assisted living and other supportive housing) to offer choices and alternatives. This can support interest in downsizing and lower maintenance responsibilities. Communities can also encourage mixed uses so that travel times to reach daily necessities, services and community amenities are not as great. Local government can also encourage home construction with features that serve residents across their life span. Housing options can be increased by looking for opportunities to allow accessory dwelling units (sometimes called "mother-in-law

suites") which could be attached to the main house or located elsewhere on the lot.

In terms of transportation and mobility, the auto-dominated landscape of most cities works well for many residents – but not all. For some, use of an auto is not possible because of income or physical ability. Many in this latter group are elderly. Transit is the important alternative to private auto use, but non-motorized transportation options are also important to older residents. This means reliance on a well developed sidewalk system with well-defined and safe pedestrian crossings. This is especially important for those in wheelchairs or scooters, or those with specific mobility impairments. This issue is explored more later in the context of transportation choice.

"There is increasing recognition by AARP and other aging advocates and researchers that many of the solutions for successful aging will arise through multi-faceted local planning and decision-making—be it land development planning, zoning, transportation planning, road design, or housing policy. Each element of the planning process offers opportunities to create more livable areas. But success is often dependent on overcoming one or more seemingly intractable barriers."

Source: Opportunities for Creating Livable Communities, AARP Public Policy Institute.

"**Aging in place** is the ability to remain in one's own home or community in spite of potential changes in health and functioning in later life. Aging in place has received an increasing amount of attention in recent years. This is due to a number of factors, including the aging of the population, a potential increase in chronic disease and disability in future cohorts of older adults, and an inadequate U.S. long-term care system. Furthermore, a survey by AARP in 2003 and another survey by the AdvantAge Initiative in 2004 demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of adults would like to remain in their own homes for as long as possible."

Source: Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place, MetLife Mature Market Institute, Stanford Center on Longevity, March 2013

In Beckley, the issue of a growing senior population may mean greater shifts in demand for housing and transportation. As these changes occur, a key policy issue is how well zoning and planning tools respond to this emerging need. Future elements of this plan will delve into this topic more, and consider the specifics of how Beckley can embrace and support aging residents.

Seniors are often very engaged residents and they are often very connected to a community. Older residents often have more time for volunteer efforts and have considerable insight and wisdom to share. They are often inclined to want to "give back" to their communities in terms of time and resources. Many seniors are also homeowners with strong community ties and are very liklely to be voters.

80.7%
Percentage of householders 65 and older who owned their homes as of fourth quarter 2012.

Source: Current Population Survey/ Housing Vacancy Survey <http://www. census.gov/housing/hvs/>

70.3%
Percentage of citizens 65 and older reporting casting a ballot in the 2008 presidential election.

Source: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 (Table 2) <http://www.census.gov/ prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf>

5.3

OLD ECONOMY VS NEW ECONOMY

The US economy is transitioning in direct and sometimes painful ways. Increasingly, reference is being made to the emergence of a "knowledge economy" or "new economy" that is based on information management and technology in many forms. The knowledge economy relies on intellectual capability and technical old economy development. Historically, industries located in places that gave them a competitive advantage were close to raw materials and transportation. The jobs they created became a magnet for people and cities grew. Today, talented knowledge workers can choose to live almost anywhere and can create their own employment opportunities.

Massachusetts, Washington, Maryland, New Jersey and Connecticut are the top five states at the forefront of the nation's movement toward a global, innovation-based new economy, according to The 2010 State New Economy Index, released by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF). The bottom five states were unchanged from 2008. Mississippi and West Virginia have lagged most in making the transition to the New Economy. The other lowest-scoring states include, in reverse order, Arkansas, Alabama and Wyoming.

Source: The 2010 State New Economy Index, Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) & Kauffman Foundation.

know-how. This activity can cover a wide range of industry sectors and can include diverse fields such as health care, computer-related activities, financial services and other businesses. Old economy industries on the other hand, often include extraction of natural resources or manufacturing of products that do not require high skill levels or complex technology.

A key difference between the old economy and the new economy is that brain power, talent and entrepreneurial spirit are primary drivers of new economic development. For decades, the availability of cheap labor, raw materials and transportation options drove

In recognition of this, economic development strategies at work in many American cities today are shifting toward concerted efforts to lure creative and talented people with the ability to innovate and create jobs. Creative people can choose where to live. They don't look for a job, and then move to a place – they find a place they want to live, and then create their job (and sometimes many jobs). Richard Florida is probably best known for identifying this trend, having published books such as the Rise of the Creative Class in 2004. Similarly, research published by an organization called CEO's for Cities concludes that:
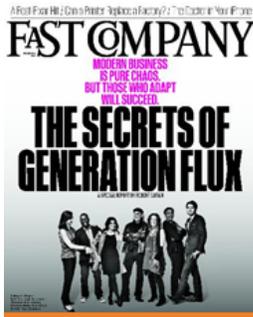
CEO's for Cities Conclusions

- Young educated people are the most mobile people in the U.S. population.
- Young educated people are an indicator of a city's economic vitality, but they are also a key contributor to economic vitality.
- People in the 25 to 34 year-old group are the most entrepreneurial in our society.
- For the first time, women in this age group are better educated than men, making them key to developing a base of talent.
- Place matters: young educated people are being disproportionately drawn to certain cities, and once in them, they are more likely to choose vibrant, close-in neighborhoods than other Americans.

Source: The Young and Restless in a Knowledge Economy, CEO's for Cities, December 2005.

For Beckley, the shift in thinking from old economy to new economy may simply involve new perspectives. It is not suggested that traditional economic development efforts should be abandoned. Rather, it is suggested that there are new dimensions to consider in terms of building more employment opportunities and economic stability. Such efforts include placing greater attention on defining Beckley as a unique place where young entrepreneurs can flourish. It can also include efforts to capture and retain new college graduates. In some areas, the phenomena of a "brain drain" is identified, and calls attention to the fact that college graduates will often leave for other areas of the country that are perceived to offer more opportunity.

Two-thirds of college-educated young people report that they will make the decision of where they live first, and then look for a job within that area.

The attributes of a city or area that are most important to college educated young people are basic quality of life issues – a clean, safe and green place to live. After basic quality of life needs are met, college-educated young people look for more aspirational attributes – a place that will allow for professional and personal growth and a place to raise a family. The third tier of needs is about connections and lifestyle.   Young adults want an interesting and diverse place to live that has space for social interactions and is close to family.

Based on Research provided by The Segmentation Company (A division of Yankelovich).

5.4

PLACEMAKING

Communities are increasingly recognizing the value of "place." In contrast with auto-oriented suburban strips that exhibit many forms of franchise architecture, there are more unique places that draw people and economic opportunity. A non-profit organization called the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has defined 11 key elements of placemaking, and they include:

- **The Community Is The Expert.** The important starting point in developing a concept for any public space is to identify the talents and assets within the community.

- **Create a Place, Not a Design.** The goal is to create a place that has both a strong sense of community and a comfortable image, as well as a setting, activities and uses that collectively add up to something more than the sum of its often simple parts.

- **Look for Partners.** Partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space improvement project.

- **You Can See a Lot Just By Observing.** We can all learn a great deal from others' successes and failures. By looking at how people are using (or not using) public spaces and finding out what they like and don't like about them, it is possible to assess what makes them work or not work.

- **Have a Vision.** The vision needs to come out of each individual community. However, essential to a vision for any public space is an idea of what kinds of activities might be happening in the space, a view that the space should be comfortable and have a good image, and that it should be an important place where people want to be.

- **Start with the Petunias: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper.** The complexity of public spaces is such that you cannot expect to do everything right initially. The best spaces experiment with short-term improvements that can be tested and refined over many years!

- **Triangulate.** "Triangulation is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other" (Holly Whyte).

- **Form Supports Function.** The input from the community and potential partners, the understanding of how other spaces function, the experimentation, and overcoming the obstacles and naysayers provide the concept for the space.

The observation that a community is never finished, points to the fact that placemaking (like community planning in general) is a process that builds quality spaces that people are drawn to and want to invest in. It celebrates local character, history, uniqueness, and typically is more pedestrian-scale, as people are less likely to fully experience an area from their car.

One very good illustration of the contrast between placemaking and common forms of development is shown on the following page. In this illustration (produced by the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute) it is evident that the people-focused

They Always Say "It Can't Be Done" One of Yogi Berra's great sayings is "If they say it can't be done, it doesn't always work out that way," and we have found it to be appropriate for our work as well. Creating good public spaces is inevitably about encountering obstacles, because no one in either the public or private sectors has the job or responsibility to "create places."

- **Money Is Not the Issue.** This statement can apply in a number of ways. For example, once you've put in the basic infrastructure of the public spaces, the elements that are added that will make it work (e.g., vendors, cafes, flowers and seating) will not be expensive.

- **You Are Never Finished.** By nature, good public spaces that respond to the needs, the opinions and the ongoing changes of the community require attention. Amenities wear out, needs change and other things happen in an urban environment.

development pattern focuses less attention on accommodating cars and much more on attention on human scale environments, quality spaces and social interaction. Demand for parking is reduced with mixed land uses and the pedestrian environment becomes much more important for residents and businesses. Such people-focused places are far more likely to enjoy economic stability over the long term, whereas auto-oriented strip commercial development often carries with it a greater likelihood of obsolescence in 20 years or less.

Source: Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

In 2012, 125 communities adopted Complete Streets policies. Policies are now in place in 488 communities nationwide, including 27 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia; 42 regional planning organizations; 38 counties; and 379 municipalities of all sizes.

Source: The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2012, The National Complete Streets Coalition & Smart Growth America, April 2013.

5.5 TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

In recent years, increased criticism of transportation planning has centered on the fact that the public right-of-way in urban areas has been largely designed to be the domain of motorized vehicles. Traffic engineers typically consider the safe and efficient movement of vehicles as the principle goal of roadways, and the opportunity to bike or walk in the public right-of-way has often been a secondary concern (if at all). This perspective has been changing with the growing recognition that the public right-of-way should more fully accommodate both motorized and non-motorized transportation. This perspective is called "Complete Streets," and an organization called the National Compete Streets Coalition is an associated advocacy group spearheading this national movement. It was founded in 2005 by a coalition of groups, including AARP, the American Planning Association and the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The object of Complete Streets is to make roads accessible to all legal users—autos, bicycles, and pedestrians. The concept applies to road projects where all types of roadway users are considered during the planning and design phases to determine if any relevant accommodations are necessary or appropriate.

Nearly 500 local governments and about one half of the states have adopted a Complete Streets policy that directs designers to consider Complete Streets principles when making road improvements. Two general samples of best practices related to Complete Streets include pedestrian enhancements and road diets.

Existing Conditions

Proposed Future Conditons

Source: Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc. Photo Simulation of Proposed Complete Streets Concept

Images of Complete Streets Projects in Various Cities

Pedestrian Enhancements: There are a large number of improvements that can be made to help protect the pedestrian. Intersections can be improved with count-down signals, signage can be improved, and paint markings can define pedestrian space across an intersection. Refuge islands can be constructed across busy corridors to provide a safe stopping point for pedestrian safety.

Road Diets: The US has many 4-lane roads with two vehicle lanes in either direction. These roads often generate excessive speeds, and diminish safety for transit, walking and bicycling. In some cases, where there are lower traffic volumes, 4-lane roads can be redesigned. With only two travel lanes, the extra room can be used for a center landscaped boulevard and/or bike lanes on both sides of the road.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

of Proposed "Road Diet" and Re-Striping Project on Daniel Morgan Avenue in Spartanburg, South Carolina

APRIL 2012

5.6

HEALTH

There is a growing recognition of the connection between the health of residents in a community and how it is physically designed. Public health experts have reported that obesity rates have increased dramatically over the last 30 years, and obesity is now considered to be an epidemic in the United States. Diabetes is also responsible for huge health-care costs and the incidence of diabetes is expected to continue increasing. At the same time, health care spending has escalated dramatically in recent years and poor health conditions result in increased lost business productivity and an overall reduction in labor force participation.
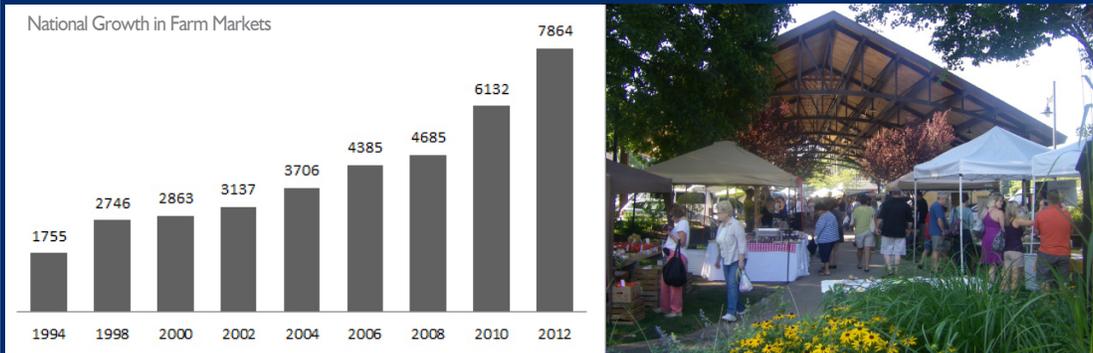
Alarming facts about health are particularly troublesome since our community planning decisions (or lack thereof) is sometimes to blame. Auto-oriented design, sprawling development patterns and an absence of pedestrian or bike amenities mean that people are more sedentary, and motorized vehicle travel is the only viable means to travel for most adults. Overall city design typically does not encourage walking or biking.

In response to these health issues, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advocated that communities conduct Health Impact Assessments (HIA). A HIA is a process that evaluates the potential health impacts of a plan, project or policy before it is built or implemented. An HIA offers recommendations related to positive health outcomes and brings potential public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process. Typically, health impacts are absent from conversations about transportation planning, land use and zoning, and many now recognize that improvements in public health will occur only when such health considerations are part of decision-making process. In 2011, the National Academy of Sciences produced a document titled "Improving Health in the United States: The Role of Health Impact Assessment" which describes the elements of a HIA and recent experiences with HIA's in communities.

Along with increased attention to health issues, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of farmers markets. The popularity of farmers markets relates to both health matters, as people pursue more healthy food alternatives, and in terms of activating downtown spaces. There are now nearly four times the number of farmers markets in the U.S. as there were in 1994.

National Growth in Farm Markets

Year	Number
1994	1755
1998	2746
2000	2863
2002	3137
2004	3706
2006	4385
2008	4685
2010	6132
2012	7864

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"According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), fully one-third of American children born after 2000 will become diabetics. This is due partly to diet, but partly to planning: the methodical eradication from our communities of the useful walk has helped to create the least active generation in American history.

This insult is compounded by the very real injuries that result from car crashes-the greatest killer of children and young adults nationwide – as well as an asthma epidemic tied directly to vehicle exhaust. Comparison of walkable cities and auto-dependant suburbs yields some eye-opening statistics-for example, that transit users are more than three times as likely as drivers to achieve their CDC-recommended thirty minutes of daily physical activity.

Increasingly, it is becoming clear that the American healthcare crisis is largely an urban design crisis, with walkability at the heart of the cure."

Jeff Speck, "Walkable City" Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2012. Page 38.
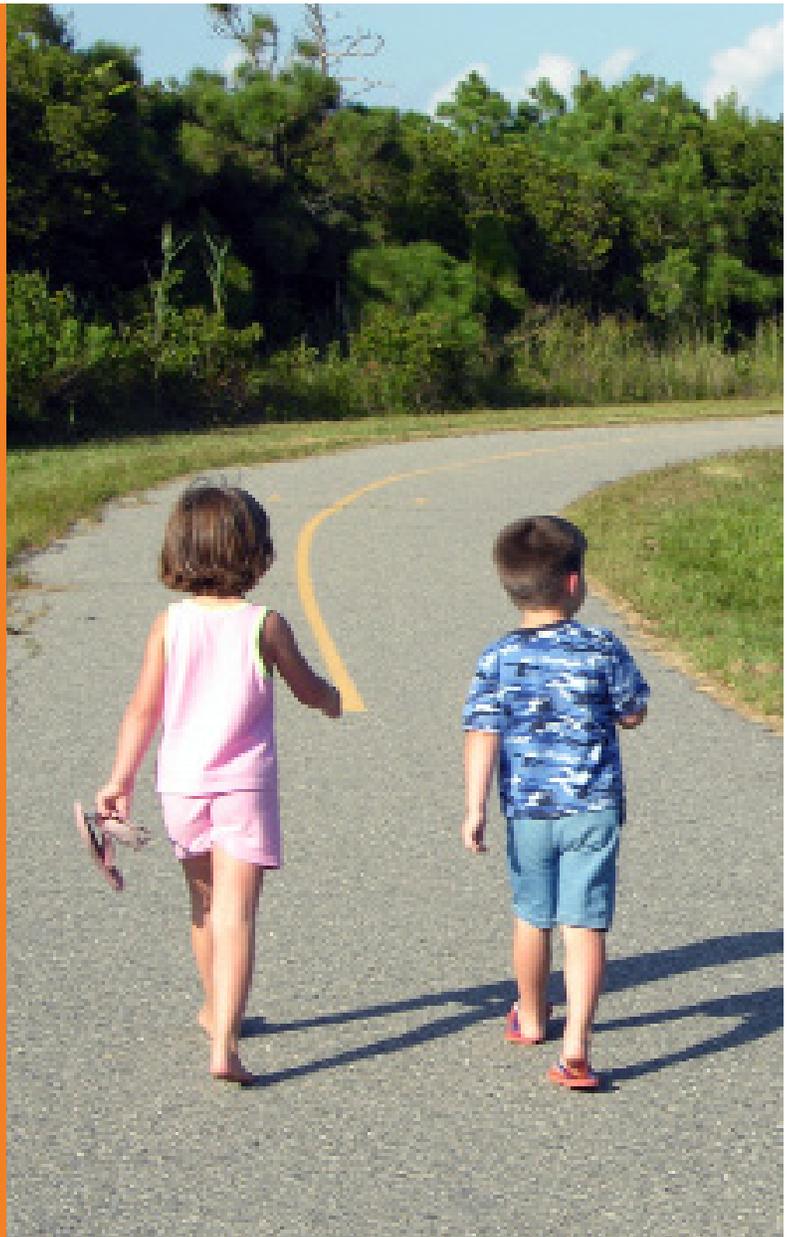
5.7

CONSISTENT THEMES – SMART GROWTH

In describing the previous trends, common themes are very evident and all relate to Smart Growth Principles. The Smart Growth Network (SGN) is a partnership of government, business and civic organizations that support smart growth. Since 1996, the network has facilitated the sharing of best practices. It is led by a core group of partner organizations. US EPA is one of the founding partners of the Smart Growth Network.

Ten smart growth principles are defined as follows:

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

Considerably more information is available from the Smart Growth Network, and each principle is explained in much more detail.

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