



COMMON GROUND

TOWARDS A
STABLE, UNIFIED
METROPOLITAN
REGION

FALL
2005

Changing the Rules of the Game

*Making Urban Development
Accountable to
the Public*

by Russ Adams

In the current urban redevelopment climate, our older urban core cities are trying to take advantage of the revival of interest among private developers to invest along the downtown riverfronts, underutilized commercial strips, and major transportation corridors. This takes the form of higher density housing and condo projects, new commercial/retail business development, sports and entertainment districts, and "Transit Oriented Development" (TOD).

But in the rush to lure new private market investments, are cities giving away too much in the way of public subsidies, zoning variances, permit waivers and special tax considerations? Do citizens have any say when a development project receives no direct public subsidy? A growing local movement among advocacy organizations, unions, the faith community, neighborhood groups, and community leaders is taking a very hard look at our current land-use development decisions and asking some new questions.

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The Battle of Lexington & University

by Unny Nambudiripad

It's a rare occasion when five acres of land in the Twin Cities becomes open to redevelopment. It's even rarer when that piece of land lies near the geographic center of the city and along a major transportation corridor.

When the southwest corner of Lexington Avenue and University Avenue in St. Paul became available for development, community activists and organizations jumped on the opportunity to create an intersection they could be proud of. "It's critical that people living in the area be included in what happens in their community and that

includes all stages of development (from the design to the finished product). People need to feel ownership over their communities and this is definitely a way to secure that feeling," states Jolene Mason of Community Stabilization Project.

The Alliance was asked to assist organizations to form a community campaign around the development. This project allows a broad coalition of groups to unite around a common theme: public accountability in publicly subsidized development projects.

See **Battle of Lexington & University**, page 3



Photo courtesy of Transit for Livable Communities (TLC)

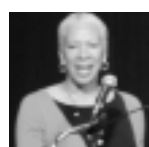
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Sept. 17
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The alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a coalition that links the religious, social justice and environmental communities to address the issues of economic development, fair and affordable housing, transit, and the environmental consequences of sprawling growth. We work to involve citizens in local and regional policy decisions.

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Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)

Family & Children's Service,
Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign

Minneapolis Consortium of Community
Developers (MCCD)

Minneapolis Urban League

Minnesota Public Interest Research Group
(MPIRG)

Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy
(ME3)

Office for Social Justice,
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St. Paul Area Coalition for the Homeless

The Sierra Club, North Star Chapter

Transit for Livable Communities (TLC)

Unitarian Universalists
Affordable Housing Partnership

University UNITED

The work of the Alliance is generously
supported by the following **FUNDERS**:

**Stephen & Lusie Hornstein Family Fund
of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation**

Grotto Foundation

Otto Bremer Foundation

Ford Foundation

St. Paul Foundation

Family Housing Fund

McKnight Foundation

**Jay and Rose Phillips Family
Foundation**

Minneapolis Foundation

and by individual contributions
from readers like you.

From the Director's Desk

Sierra Club Chapter Launches New Environmental Justice Partnership

Mercury poisoning, air pollution, ground-water and land contamination problems don't often respect geographic or jurisdictional borders. A coal-fired power plant in one state creates a plume of pollution that can cross over into other states in the form of acid rain, smog, and harmful ozone levels. A transportation system that relies too heavily on cars and trucks for moving goods and people leaves our neighborhoods choking on unhealthy air and fine particulate matter. These environmental challenges truly unite people of all ages, racial, and cultural backgrounds around a common agenda.

But we also know that many environmental problems have a disproportionate impact on low-income people and communities of color. Don't just think of the big petrochemical industry in states like Louisiana. Think about the coal-fired plants of St. Paul and Minneapolis, or the asbestos contaminated park in Northeast Minneapolis, or the seven Brownfield sites along Plymouth Avenue in North Minneapolis, or the expanding "arsenic triangle" in the Phillips neighborhood in South Minneapolis. Our region has seen a historic pattern, at times encouraged by government policy, of placing polluting industries in poor communities of color.

And because most environmental organizations are largely white led, it is important that we learn to reach out and engage people and groups from other cultures and racial backgrounds to better understand what it means to be treated as a "disposable community." The Sierra Club Northstar Chapter has begun to do this through a promising collaboration with a fairly new group on the environmental advocacy landscape, **Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, or EJAM.**

EJAM is an emerging group that has successfully worked with environmental groups and social justice organizations to identify and take action on health disparities and polluting industries affecting low-income, communities of color. Incubated by the Minneapolis Urban League, EJAM has focused on broader policy issues related to toxic hot spots in urban areas, brownfields, harmful pesticide exposure to farm workers and consumers, air quality impacts, mercury poisoning, and state legislative remedies.

Last year, EJAM helped secure a major air quality policy victory. Hundreds of north Minneapolis community members turned out in force to help persuade the Public Utilities Commission to approve the conversion of the Minneapolis Riverside coal-fired power plant to natural gas – eliminating mercury and other toxic emissions. There were over 200 community members filling the room, providing testimony about multi-generational incidences of air-borne diseases, mercury poisoning and fish consumption, the economic and social costs associated with respiratory related emergency room visits, and unconscionable rates of asthma among

African-American children.

The national Sierra Club recognized the outstanding work of both the chapter and EJAM by awarding them one of three coveted "Environmental Justice Organizer" staffing grants. This two year Sierra Club position will provide a full time organizer to help both groups build stronger relationships in communities of color, identify pressing environmental problems, and craft community-based solutions to address them.

For more information or to get involved,
contact Alecia Carter at 612-436-5402.



"I never thought of myself as an environmentalist, but then folks in our community started talking about cleaning up the local coal power plant and linking the alarming child asthma rates in African American communities to air pollution. Now I am an environmentalist who's willing to take a stand for justice too."

— State Representative Keith Ellison

The Battle of Lexington & University *(continued from page 1)*

The developer owns seven acres at the southwest corner of Lexington and University in St. Paul and has been vague regarding what could be done with the site, hinting that the community's vision could only be considered if a large infusion of public dollars were available. The Alliance coordinated an unprecedented coalition of neighborhood leaders, community based organizations, and Labor representatives and facilitated over a dozen strategy meetings and roundtable sessions to press the issue of what exactly will be done with the entire site. A *Statement of Principles* was approved and served as the common organizing framework for all participants. Several meetings with city council members were also initiated to raise some of the larger questions represented by redevelopment of University Avenue.

These efforts have caught the attention of members of the St. Paul City Council and new zoning policies for the University Avenue corridor are being considered to address loopholes identified by the



Unny Nambudiripad joined the Alliance in January 2005 as Organizer for the Smart Growth Organizing Project. Unny previously organized for the Sierra Club and the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group and is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. An avid bicycle commuter and lifelong Twin Cities resident, he is looking forward to making the metro region a better place to live.

community coalition partners. The coalition has pressured the city to uphold established policies, such as Comprehensive Plans, Transit Oriented Development, and card check neutrality and to ensure that they support redevelopment policies that benefit low-income communities. Furthermore, the developer has been challenged to meet the farsighted visions that neighborhood groups have fashioned.

During the last year, the coalition has organized four well attended community meetings to identify their concerns to the developers and city officials. Hundreds of neighborhood leaders participated in these forums and raised questions about:

- the extent of housing density and affordability
- the use of minority contractors during the construction phase
- the number of living wage jobs to be created and community access to those jobs
- the right to organize for union wages and benefits at new businesses
- the need for a mix of uses (commercial, retail, housing, local entrepreneur/small business incubation), and
- the site's orientation to mass transit and interfacing with the University transportation corridor.

Through these meetings and numerous interactions with city decision-makers and the developers, the coalition has already had a positive influence on development in this corridor. Mason concludes, "I think it is imperative that this process and outcome become a model for future projects in the Twin Cities (and beyond)."

When neighborhood groups fashion farsighted visions for major urban corridors, how responsible should private developers be towards meeting this vision?

See **The Battle of Lexington & University**, page 9

The dozens of coalition planning meetings and large community convenings have already made a difference:

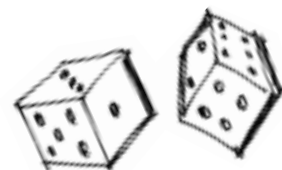
- *Councilwoman Montgomery is committed to getting more housing on this site, including affordable housing for people who want to live in the neighborhood.*
- *The developer of the site has turned to several well respected, community based housing developers to potentially develop the affordable housing (however, negotiations have been difficult – and any affordable housing plan would require some public subsidy)*
- *TCF Bank is also seriously considering adding a second story to its bank that would include job training for people in the community – a direct result of community demands.*
- *Relocation of the Wilder Foundation to the site, along with a potential affordable senior citizen housing project by Episcopal Homes, has opened up new conversations between the community and these institutions about local hiring.*
- *A plan is in the works to hold a Community Design Charette to be co-facilitated by an African American architect, James Garrett, from the Assembly of Architects and Tim Griffin from the St. Paul Design Center.*



Who decides what is good for a community: cities, developers, or citizens?

Changing the Rules of the Game

Making Urban Development Accountable to the Public

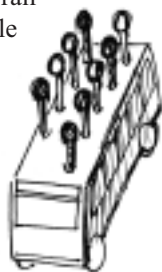


(continued from page 1)

Public Subsidy & Support. Our regional communities are in a battle for amassing an expanded share of available tax base, and countless studies (including the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and a new report by Good Jobs First) have pointed out the futility of this approach and the harm this causes to our metropolitan area. Cities continue to wield a variety of development tools, zoning incentives, and public subsidies to attract residential, commercial, and industrial development — but countless opportunities are being lost to tie these public investments into measurable community benefits and neighborhood reinvestment demands.

Community Redevelopment. Some urban redevelopment activities in the Twin Cities have provided immeasurable benefits to local neighborhoods and have greatly enhanced the livability of our communities. One recent example is the new library at University & Dale Avenue in St. Paul that provides affordable housing on the upper levels of the building. Community Development Corporations have used public subsidies to revitalize many neighborhood areas in the twin cities.

However, there are still projects that receive public support but have not delivered significant benefits to existing community members (controversial projects that have led to the demolition of affordable housing and displacement of area residents, for example). Mega-development projects attract the most attention (think publicly subsidized sports stadiums, light rail lines, and highway projects), but smaller scale developments at intersections and along commercial streets can also be seen as opportunities to raise public subsidy accountability issues. How can the **community benefit** from these large, publicly subsidized projects?



A Community Benefit Agreement is a legally enforceable contract, signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of strategic investments, services, and tangible dividends provided to local communities as part of a development project.



How can we include communities as authentic partners in the urban redevelopment process?

How can we restore meaningful community influence when developers receive large public subsidies and tax waivers for local projects?

What is a Community Benefit Agreement?

In response to these issues the Alliance began researching innovative **equitable development** approaches that attempt to link community needs to community investments. We zeroed in on **Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs)**, because of the way they have been used in other parts of the country to compel negotiations between cities, labor-community coalitions and developers before economic subsidies are made available to a local project. This concept helped inspire our initial organizing efforts on the Lexington-University Avenue Redevelopment campaign in St. Paul. (See page 3.)

A **Community Benefit Agreement** is a legally enforceable contract, signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of strategic investments, services, and tangible dividends provided to local communities as part of a development project. It is the result of direct negotiations between a developer and organized representatives of affected communities (often with the support of local public officials) — typically locking in an agreement by the developer to shape the project in ways that deliver specific benefits for the community.

Community Benefit Agreements may include living wage requirements, first source hiring preferences, job training programs, land banking & affordable housing set asides, increased urban densities, transit integration, open space protections, environmental clean-up, community service centers, direct community involvement in the development planning process, and other provisions. CBA's have united community and neighborhood groups and led to unusual alliances with transit, land-use, housing and labor advocates. (See *What's in a CBA?*, next page.)

WHAT'S IN A COMMUNITY BENEFIT AGREEMENT?

The Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) process begins with interested members of the community, who identify how a proposed development project can benefit residents and workers. Once a list of potential benefits is determined, community members meet with the developer and representatives of the city to negotiate a CBA.

The CBA is a legal document that becomes part of the city's agreement with the developer. It contains numerous provisions stipulating exactly how the development will benefit the community.

Each CBA is unique, reflecting the needs of particular communities. CPI has developed a CBA menu, which provides a list of potential benefits and how they can help workers and communities. The menu includes:

QUALITY JOBS

Public financial assistance can be used to create good jobs for our communities. This is one of the most important ways new development can benefit disadvantaged communities. To help create quality jobs, a CBA might include some of the following provisions:

- Living Wage Jobs
- Locally Owned Operators
- Worker Retention
- Responsible Contractor

COMMUNITY SERVICES

New developments offer a great opportunity to provide much needed services to communities who lack such services. Often a developer can offer one part of the solution like space, free rent or seed money that can make it possible for community organizations to do the rest.

- Childcare
- Filling Gaps in Neighborhood Services
- Community/ Youth Centers
- Health Clinics
- Neighborhood Improvement Fund

FIRST SOURCE/LOCAL HIRING AND JOB TRAINING

First Source Hiring and Local Hiring Programs can help link job opportunities to low income communities surrounding developments. Through a First Source Program, employers agree to hire from a specified source like a community group or a One Stop Center. Through a Local Hiring Program, employers agree to hire from certain zip codes surrounding the development. First Source Programs can help employers by cutting down on their recruitment and training costs. Developers can take steps towards establishing one of these programs in the following ways:

- Agree to Participate
- Provide Seed Money
- Provide Space

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

A healthy environment is part of a healthy community. Especially because development has negative environmental impacts on communities, environmental considerations, above and beyond the legally required Environmental Impact Report ("EIR"), will help protect the community from environmental dangers. Developers if the needs of the community are taken into account and proper resources invested.

- Parks
- Construction and Traffic Management
- Mitigation of Negative Environmental Impacts
- Green Building Practices

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is an affordable housing crisis. People do not make enough to afford rent. While we strive for better jobs it is also important to provide quality affordable housing for all who need it.

- Affordable Units
- Low or No Interest Housing Loans
- Linkage Fee
- Land To Build Housing
- Responsible Landlord Policy
- Developer Contribution to Relocation Benefits

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The community is the best judge of what it needs. Much of economic development work is meant to uplift communities and the best way to make sure this happens is to involve affected communities in the development approval process.

- Community Input in Development Process
- Community Input in Selection of Tenants
- Community Support

From the **Center on Policy Initiatives**. For more information visit their website: www.onlinecpi.org/index.html

The Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI) is a nonprofit research, organizing and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of the working poor by building a movement for economic justice in San Diego. Promoting CBA strategies is a cornerstone of their "Responsible Development" campaign.

CPI's mission is to ensure that none of San Diego's low-income residents go hungry, homeless or without health care because they don't earn enough to meet their basic needs. They argue that every worker deserves to live with dignity – this means livable wages, access to health care, affordable housing and access to economic opportunities.



TRANSPORTATION CHOICES: Governor Became Lone Obstacle to Expanded Transit Funding

by Dan Walsh, *Transit for Livable Communities (TLC), Organizer*

After a long special session that ended in early July, the Governor and legislative leaders reached a broad budget agreement. The final negotiations centered on four critical areas: Education, Taxes, Health Care, and Transit. In the final agreement, transit received \$46 million in stop-gap funding for 2006-2007 (\$40 million of which will cover metro needs). The actual budget gap for our region's transit system is \$60 million.

Transit advocates were frustrated that an opportunity was missed to secure a larger, permanent funding commitment this year. Governor Tim Pawlenty ignored a clear, bi-partisan consensus on fully funding the state's transportation and transit needs and vetoed a bill championed by an impressive coalition of advocacy groups. The bill was the only transportation measure to pass out of the legislature this year, only to succumb to the narrow tax "pledge" of one elected official.

As a result, our transit system will endure another round of fare increases and route cuts. However, by at least securing the stop-gap funding, a much smaller amount of service reductions will occur. While \$46 million is not the full \$66 million in stop-gap funding that transit groups wanted, it is a win and vastly better than the Governor's initial recommendation of zero dollars. The fact that transit remained in the mix of end-of-session concerns indicates a startling shift in power on this issue.

AN EXPANDING COALITION

At the beginning of the legislative session the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, the Sierra Club, Transit for Livable Communities, the Senior Federation, Isaiah, Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, the Amalgamated Transit Union and Sherry Munyon from Capitol Hill Associates, Inc. formed a group called Transit Partners (TP). As the session progressed a number of transportation proposals were introduced. None of the bills fully met the needs for transit, and none had any money for bicycling and walking facilities. In response, Transit Partners introduced a bill entitled Transportation Choices 2020 (TC2020). TC2020 was an historic initiative to significantly increase funding for transit, biking and walking. Chief authors Sen. Sharon Marko (D-Cottage Grove) and Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) were joined by a bi-partisan group of 17 legislators with ultimately 24 additional organizations signing on in support.

The Transportation Choices 2020 bill instituted a half cent regional sales tax exclusively for transit, bicycling and walking and phased in additional revenue from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax to transit. The bill would allow the region to:

- Dramatically expand bus service and facilities.
- Create new park-and-ride capacity.
- Construct at least eight new dedicated bus and rail transitways by the year 2020.
- Provide local communities with revenue for local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.
- Expand transit in Greater Minnesota to all counties and provide more evening and weekend service.
- Prevent fare increases and service cuts this year.

Throughout the session, Transit Partners implemented a campaign to build relationships and remind decision makers to increase the quality of life in our communities by providing mobility to all Minnesotans and building a more efficient transportation system.

The coalition executed a number of strategies to build support for more Transportation Choices, including: mobilizing people to attend rallies, providing expert & citizen testimony at public hearings, packing House and Senate hearing rooms, orchestrating constituent-legislator meetings, producing several op/ed articles and influencing newspaper editorials, holding press conferences, and generating thousands of phone calls and letters to legislators.

SHOWDOWN ON THE HOUSE FLOOR

The Transit Partners coalition was instrumental in grafting a key element of TC2020 into the overall transportation bill in the House, winning the floor vote to amend the existing bill (favored by the House Transportation Committee Chair) by two votes. This event led to a mad scramble by the House Speaker and their leadership to try to reverse what was coming next — a showdown on the passage of a newly amended bill that would have provided hundreds of millions of dollars for new transportation and transit improvements. After a tumultuous internal debate (and a creative stall tactic) and against all odds, the amended bill passed the House floor by a bi-partisan vote of 72 – 61. This result astounded longtime legislative observers.

The Senate quickly followed suit and passed the same bill, only to see the Governor veto the most comprehensive transportation bill in the state's history. If Governor Pawlenty had not vetoed it, all Minnesotans could have expected major transit improvements including more frequent bus service, new rail lines and more park and rides. The Governor's veto also left no obvious solution for addressing the looming budget shortfall for transit.

MORE THAN A MORAL VICTORY

To fill the funding gap the Transit Partners built a significant bi-partisan, pro-transit coalition of legislators in both the House and Senate that negotiated with the legislative leadership (dubbed the "Big 3" by the media) during the special session. In the end, \$46 million in stop-gap funding was a top priority and one of the few specific items included in the "global agreement" negotiated by the leadership. "We are gratified by the progress made this year," offered TLC executive director Lea Schuster, "we built power and saw broad acceptance of a regional vision for transit, an understanding of the true costs to make that vision a reality and a growing consensus about how to increase our investment in transportation choices."

Nevertheless, the July fare increase will be painful to thousands of Minnesotans. The outcomes of this session makes our work even more important and challenges all of us to raise our voices even louder to force Governor Pawlenty and more legislative leaders to make a strong commitment, and to support purposeful investments, for public transportation. For more information, visit TLC's web site at www.tlcminnesota.org

Advocates
Pull Off
Improbable
Victory on
House Floor

Regional Equity Summit— *Sign of a Growing Movement*

Sixty people from the Twin Cities region joined over 1,200 people from around the country at the Second National Summit on Equitable Development, Social Justice, and Smart Growth. Sponsored by PolicyLink and the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, the summit was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from May 23-25 and featured a diverse group of presenters from the worlds of philanthropy, community-based organizations, media, advocacy, and business.

Summit participants — over half of whom were people of color — came from urban, suburban, and rural communities. Through panel sessions, plenary dialogues, and skills-building workshops, summit participants shared the progress being forged in promoting quality affordable housing, better schools, living wage jobs, environmental justice, and accessible public transportation. Twin Cities attendees were eager to learn about best practices across the nation and to share our own experiences and strategies for accepting challenges and seizing opportunities to work together to

build a movement to achieve regional equity.

Angela Glover Blackwell, President of PolicyLink, describes the essential elements of regional equity as equal and meaningful access to both participation and prosperity. Suburban sprawl, or the continuous spread of development beyond the boundaries of the central city and first ring suburbs into more distant and rural areas, exacerbates the already unequal distribution of resources and opportunities within metropolitan regions.

The conference, and the regional equity movement in general, highlights the fact that suburban sprawl, regional inequity, and the hardships they cause are not merely the results of a free market. Rather, they derive from a set of public policies which have deliberately subsidized certain types of growth at the expense of low-income communities and communities of color. The exchange of information regarding successful campaigns and strategies for reversing these policies strengthens our work to make all neighborhoods stable, healthy, and livable for all members of our community.

Just a Bump in the Road: Critics of Urban Planning Struggle to be Relevant

On the weekend of June 24th in Bloomington, Minnesota, a collection of anti-regional planning groups, property rights proponents and light rail critics gathered in the Twin Cities on the first anniversary of the enormously successful launch of the local Hiawatha LRT Line. Called the 'American Dream Coalition,' this annual national convention has developed a reputation for bashing communities for choosing a variety of growth and development strategies, including those that balance housing choices, retail, living wage jobs, neighborhood livability, transit access, and pedestrian needs. The local hosts for the event were **David Strom** and the **Minnesota Taxpayers League**.

After three years of staging this event, promoters are still struggling to attract even 100 people to the two-day conference — a sign that opposition to transportation and development choices is weakening, if not downright stagnant. While there is a growing trend in major U.S. metropolitan regions for pursuing compact urban growth and development models, the conference attendees are still trying to box our communities into a narrow, "single solution approach" to these issues. In contrast, the 1200 people that attended the Philadelphia Regional Equity conference represented a 50% increase from the previous conference held in Los Angeles — a sure sign that momentum is building for more just and sustainable growth models.



Angela Glover Blackwell, CEO of the research and advocacy group PolicyLink, speaks during the closing plenary to attendees of the Advancing Regional Equity conference recently held in Philadelphia, PA. Among the panel participants was Maura Brown of the Alliance (far right)."



Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America

Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder and CEO, PolicyLink; Stewart Kwoh, President and Executive Director, Asian Pacific American Legal Center; and Manuel Pastor, Executive Director, Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community, University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC)

Searching for the Uncommon Ground, the fourth in The American Assembly's Uniting America Series, explores new dimensions to the search for racial equity in the 21st century. The three authors identify solutions to continuing causes of inequity such as the digital divide, an unfair criminal justice system, and the negative racial impact of uncontrolled sprawl. The book challenges Americans to aim for the highest levels of unity, the uncommon common ground. *Description—PolicyLink*

Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism & New Routes to Equity

Robert Bullard, Ph.D., *Ware Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University*

In the United States all communities do not receive the same benefits from transportation advancements and investments. Transportation spending has always been about opportunity and equity. The modern civil rights movement has its roots in transportation. For more than a century, African Americans and other people of color have struggled to dismantle transportation policies that promote and exacerbate racial and economic disparities and social exclusion. The decision to build highways, expressways, and beltways has far-reaching effects on land use, energy policy, and the environment. Similarly, the decisions by county commissioners to limit and even exclude public transit to job-rich suburban economic activity center have serious mobility implications for central city residents. In an introduction and nine chapters, *Highway Robbery* presents real case studies that call into question the fairness and legality of many of our nation's transportation policies, practices, and procedures and offers corrective solutions. *Description—PolicyLink*

THE FAILURES OF INTEGRATION

How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream

Sheryll Cashin, *Professor, Georgetown University Law Center*

The Failures of Integration is a provocative look at how segregation by race and class is ruining American democracy. Only a small minority of the affluent are truly living the American Dream, complete with attractive, job-rich suburbs, reasonably low taxes, good public schools, and little violent crime. For the remaining majority of Americans, segregation comes with stratospheric costs. In a society that sets up "winner" and "loser" communities and schools defined by race and class, racial minorities in particular are locked out of the "winner" column. African-Americans bear the heaviest burden. *Description—PolicyLink*

Selling Women Short:

The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart

Liza Featherstone, *Journalist and Author*

On television, Wal-Mart employees are smiling women delighted with their jobs. But reality is another story. In 2000, Betty Dukes, a 52-year-old black woman in Pittsburg, California, became the lead plaintiff in *Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores*, a class action representing 1.4 million women. In an explosive investigation of this historic lawsuit, journalist Liza Featherstone reveals how Wal-Mart, a self-styled "family-oriented," Christian company exploits their employees.

Featherstone reveals the creative solutions Wal-Mart workers around the country have found-like fighting for unions, living-wage ordinances, and childcare options. *Selling Women Short* combines the personal stories of these employees with superb investigative journalism to show why women who work low-wage jobs are getting a raw deal, and what they are doing about it. *Description—PolicyLink*

Handbook on Community Benefits Agreements Updated, Re-Issued

Good Jobs First and the California Partnership for Working Families announced the release of an updated version of their handbook on Community Benefits Agreements. CBAs are innovative contracts between developers and community-labor coalitions to ensure that development projects really benefit local residents.

These agreements include benefits such as living wages, local hiring, affordable housing, environmental improvements and funding for other community needs such as health clinics and youth centers. The report also includes a section on monitoring and enforcement of such agreements, as well as verbatim excerpts of key agreements.

"These agreements are the most comprehensive contracts ever won by labor-community coalitions," said Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First. "They are best-practice models for any group seeking to make development dollars really pay off for workers, communities and taxpayers."

"The power of these agreements is that they are legally binding," said Madeline Janis-Aparicio, executive director of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), an organization that has played a key role in the Los Angeles agreements. "We now have the ability to make sure developers really follow through on their promises."

"Community Benefits Agreements: Making Development Projects Accountable," was written primarily by attorney Julian Gross, legal director of the California Partnership. It draws heavily upon the work of Los Angeles community groups and unions in negotiating a recent series of agreements, including the landmark Staples Center deal and a CBA around the expansion of Los Angeles International Airport.

The report is available at Good Jobs First's website at www.goodjobsfirst.org/cbarelease.htm and at the California Partnership's website at:

www.californiapartnership.org/article.php?id=120

This Media Advisory is from Good Jobs First and the California Partnership for Working Families.

The Battle of Lexington & University

(continued from page 3)

How can cities be held accountable to ensure that they support redevelopment policies that benefit low-income communities?

At the most recent community meetings, residents spoke loud and clear about what new housing and businesses should go into their neighborhood. Attendees indicated a desire for housing that is affordable for people living in this community, including senior citizens. They wanted new businesses, owned by people in the neighborhood and paying higher wages. They also spoke about the importance of development that would benefit young people, creating decent places for them to visit or work. Everyone from the community was clear that they wanted this development to be something the neighborhood could be proud of for a long time to come.

Coalition partners include:

- Assembly of Architects
- Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Community Stabilization Project
- Hamline Midway Coalition
- Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association
- ISALAH
- Jewish Community Action
- Just Equity
- Lexington-Hamline Community Council
- MICAH & its Organizing Project of African American Congregations
- SEIU Local 26
- Transit for Livable Communities
- UFCW Local 789
- University UNITED

The 10th Annual Tour de Sprawl is Saturday, Sept. 17th

Time to tune up your bicycle for the Sierra Club's "annual conference on wheels!" **The 10th Annual Tour de Sprawl takes place this year on September 17, 2005.** The Tour offers a unique opportunity to learn about land use and transit issues while enjoying a fun, leisurely bicycle ride.

TEN YEARS OF TOURS The tour is growing in popularity. Last year, it attracted nearly 200 riders, one of the premiere events held by the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter. With over a decade of rides, the Tour has focused on land-use & urban growth issues in areas throughout the Twin Cities region. Over 100 community leaders have spoken to more than 1,400 riders over the years.

THIS YEAR'S ROUTE Since the first tour was in St. Paul, the Land Use and Transportation Committee thought it important the Tour return to its roots. This year's route will explore the West Side of the "River City" and the communities of Northern Dakota County. Considered by many as "the metro region's best kept secret," this area has a strong history of good parks and wise public investment. The Tour will highlight large development proposals on St. Paul's West Side, a new Mendota Heights town center, the Robert Street transit study corridor, and Dakota County's excellent, growing trail system.

LOGISTICS The Tour de Sprawl begins Saturday morning, September 17th, at 10:00am with check-in beginning at 9:30am. The majority of this fun, leisurely bicycle ride of about 20 miles will be on quiet, scenic bicycle paths. The ride will last around four to five hours and feature rest stops where bikers will hear from city officials, historians, developers and open space advocates in St. Paul, South St. Paul, West St. Paul and Mendota Heights. The tour appeals to both the serious recreational rider and those who rarely ride their bike. Sag wagon support, lunch and snacks are also provided! Register now! **More detailed information and online registration is also available at www.northstar.sierraclub.org**

Additional questions? Please email joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org or call 612-659-9124. Don't miss this year's 10th Annual Tour de Sprawl!



Saturday, September 17, 2005

10th Annual Tour de Sprawl

Registration Form



Return with payment to:

Sierra Club
2327 East Franklin Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Sierra Club Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (Day): _____ (Evening): _____

Email: _____

Waiver

I, the undersigned, know that bicycling is a sport carrying significant risk of personal injury. I know there are obstacles, hazards, environmental conditions, and risks, which in combination with my actions can cause me severe injury. I agree to take an active role in understanding and accepting these risks. I also agree that I, not the Sierra Club and/or its staff, volunteers and sponsors, am responsible for my safety while I participate or train for the Tour de Sprawl. I hereby waive, release, and dismiss all claims for damage and personal injury, which I may incur before, during, or after the above named event, against any and all ride officials, persons or organizations involved with the Tour de Sprawl. **While bicycling in this event, I agree to wear a bicycle helmet and obey all traffic laws!**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: Riders under the age of 18 will not be allowed to participate in the Tour de Sprawl without the consent and signature of a parent or legal guardian.

Cost	
Adults	\$15
Students	FREE
T-Shirt	\$10
Total	\$ _____

Method of Payment

☐ Check (to "Sierra Club") ☐ Credit Card (Visa or MasterCard)

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: ____/____ Signature: _____

Tour de Sprawl T-Shirt Size: ☐ S ☐ M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ XXL



Smart Growth Sampler

From the MN Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA) e-newsletter

NATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION: SMART GROWTH RESOURCES

www.neighborhoodcoalition.org

For over 25 years, this non-profit organization, based in Washington, DC has generated resources, public policies and solution-oriented strategies for strengthening and sustaining neighborhoods. As a leading advocate for lower-income neighborhoods, the Coalition promotes and educates around the impact of neighborhood development, sprawl, and Smart Growth.

The Coalition observes that some public decisions about and the commitment of public money to suburban (as opposed to urban) development — larger minimum lot and house sizes (and thus less affordable housing), freeways allowing those with cars to commute longer distances, little transit and affordable housing — result in a region more divided racially, economically and spatially into more white and affluent suburbs and more non-white and poorer urban centers. One consequence of this pattern, according to a National League of Cities study, is that job growth is lowest in cities that have the largest gap between city and suburban incomes. (See studies at www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=158)

Thus the Coalition has prepared a number of free on-line resources to help those working in neighborhoods to understand how urban, suburban and rural development affect each other. These are available under the Smart Growth tab at the web site above.

- *Neighborhood Principles for Smart Growth*
- *Affordable Housing and Smart Growth* (57 pages).
- *Smart Growth for Neighborhoods: Affordable Housing and Regional Vision* (25 pages).
- Case studies examining strategies for community involvement in Smart Growth and development.

From the MN Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA) e-newsletter

FIVE POSITIVE GREEN TRENDS

www.emagazine.com/view/?2477

E-Magazine's free weekly e-newsletter for the week of April 17, 2005 (see www.emagazine.com to subscribe) offers some positive news for Earth Day. The newsletter references an April 12, 2005 article by Joan Lowy of the Scripps Howard News Service (see www.knoxstudio.com/shns/story.cfm?pk=EARTHDAY-04-12-05&cat=AN). Five positive trends identified in Lowy's article (and our suggestions of resources for learning more on these topics) are:

- 1) **GREEN CARS** - Over 200,000 hybrids have been sold in the United States since 1999 (see www.hybridcenter.org/hybridcenterindex.cfm).
- 2) **GREEN BUILDINGS** - Over 200 commercial and public buildings have been certified by the US Green Building Council in the last five years, representing 217 million square feet (see www.usgbc.org).
- 3) **GREEN ROOFS** - This environmentally friendly technology, beginning to be used in Minnesota, has taken off in Germany, where more than 1 billion square feet of green roofs have been installed (see www.greenroofs.com/).
- 4) **GREEN ENERGY** - Electricity generated by wind energy in the United States has been growing at about 25% a year over the past five years (see www.awea.org/).
- 5) **GREEN CHEMISTRY** - This emerging area focuses on promoting innovative chemical technologies that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances in the design, manufacture, and use of chemical products (see www.epa.gov/greenchemistry/).

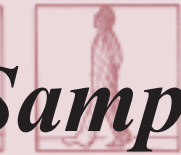
From the Housing & Community Development Newsletter/KnowledgePlex Editors

MINORITIES SUFFER FROM 'JOB SPRAWL,' RACIAL STEERING

Programs requiring affordable housing set-asides or offering car rentals or loans to low-wage workers can help Cleveland cope with a regional "job sprawl" problem that may disproportionately harm black residents, reported the *Plain Dealer*. A nationwide study by The Brookings Institution found that more than a third of Cleveland's workers commute to jobs in the outer suburbs, where affordable homes are scarce. At the same time, inner-city residents without cars or access to information about suburban jobs are cut off from employment opportunities. "Cleveland's black residents are more isolated from employment opportunities than those in all but five U.S. cities," the article said. For poor people, having reliable transportation in the form of a car does more to boost earnings than access to public transit, said one author of the study.

According to a report in the summer 2005

Journal of the American Planning Association, racial steering may be illegal but it's not extinct, reported the Portland, Oregon, *Daily Journal of Commerce*. Racial steering is the practice of directing home buyers to specific neighborhoods based on their race or ethnicity, the article said. Researchers from Wayne State and New York universities looked at 1989 and 2000 HUD studies comparing the behavior of real estate agents toward white and minorities posing as prospective home buyers. Defying common assumptions, racial steering persisted between 1989 and 2000, said the Wayne State researcher. The authors recommend increased enforcement of fair housing laws and consumer education. Racial steering isn't prevalent in Portland because groups such as the National Association of Realtors® offer fair housing and diversity training, said a local agent.



Smart Growth Sampler

"All the ants on the planet, taken together, have a biomass greater than that of humans. Ants have been incredibly industrious for millions of years. Yet their productiveness nourishes plants, animals, and soil. Human industry has been in full swing for little over a century, yet it has brought about a decline in almost every ecosystem on the planet. Nature doesn't have a design problem. People do."

— William McDonough, *Architect and Designer*

From the Housing & Community Development Newsletter/KnowledgePlex Editors

INVESTORS TO SUPPORT URBAN, ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

Later this year, investors will formally launch "the first bona fide venture fund dedicated to growing businesses in the shattered urban core of Milwaukee," reported the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. According to the article, Midcities Investment Management Inc. in Milwaukee will join a growing number of venture capital funds setting up shop in distressed urban areas as traditional sources of urban revitalization funding decrease. About 80 such funds nationwide raise money and invest it in innovative businesses that are too small to get bank loans, the article said. Usually, venture-backed start-ups have seven to 10 years either to grow their profits and go public or to find other means of repaying the fund. With the highest African-American poverty rate among the nation's 30 largest cities, Milwaukee needs the help, the article said.

As part of a new effort to engage in environmentally friendly business practices, Wells Fargo & Co. announced plans to lend or invest \$1 billion in environmental projects over the next five years, reported the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. The company will support projects in "green" home building, sustainable forestry, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and water-resource management, the article said. Wells Fargo also plans to make more consumer loans for energy-efficient projects, increase grants to environmental groups, and sponsor internal resource conservation programs. Although environmental advocates praised the initiative, some say it doesn't go far enough. According to the head of a San Francisco-based conservation group, the program lacks the specificity and timelines outlined in similar programs adopted by Citigroup, Bank of America, and J.P. Morgan Chase. Wells Fargo will work with many groups to enhance the program, a company official said.

From the MN Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA) e-newsletter

HOMEBUYERS PREFER SMART GROWTH COMMUNITIES

www.smartgrowthamerica.com/

A new national poll conducted for Smart Growth America and the National Association of Realtors (NAR) shows 86% of Americans want government to fund improvements in existing communities over new development in the countryside. Significant numbers believe communities have too little affordable low or moderate income housing, insufficient public transportation or shops within walking distances, and not enough places to walk, bike or exercise.

Asked to choose between two communities, six in ten prospective homebuyers chose a smart growth neighborhood that offered a shorter commute (most important), sidewalks and amenities like shops, restaurants, libraries, schools and public transportation within walking distance — over a sprawling community with larger lots, limited options for walking and a longer commute.

NAR President Walt McDonald observes that realtors have seen a trend toward smart growth communities, which "are the wave of the future, especially since they're heavily favored by prospective buyers and minorities, who represent a growing share of the homebuying market."

The survey also found that Americans are more likely to see improved public transportation and changing patterns of housing development as the solutions to longer commutes rather than increasing road capacities.

The full 24-page report, graphs of the numbers and a summary are available at no cost on the web site of Smart Growth America, whose site houses many excellent community development reports, news items and handbooks such as:

- *Smart Growth Fosters Job Growth Study.*
- *Making the Case for Mixed Income and Mixed Use Communities.*
- *Our Graying Suburbs.*
- *How businesses and local economies profit from smarter use of tax dollars for smart growth.*
- *How smarter growth land use policies and practices offer a viable way to reduce U.S. energy consumption.*
- *The benefits to state economies of fixing and enhancing existing infrastructure rather than building new.*
- *Demand for compact housing near transit.*
- *Form-based zoning.*

Become a Sprawl-Fighting Activist!

Support the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability!

Yes!!! I support the work of the *Alliance for Metropolitan Stability* to promote inclusive, mixed-income communities in a metropolitan region where planned growth checks urban sprawl by encouraging transit-friendly development and wise stewardship of environmental resources.

☐ *You can count on me! Here's my tax-deductible contribution to support your efforts:*

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ (Other \$ _____)

☐ *Please contact me so that I can become more involved:*

_____ write letters to editor _____ attend public hearings _____ serve on a committee

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

*Make checks payable to: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
and send to: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, 2525 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55406*



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Suite 200
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Phone: (612) 332-4471
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Address Service Requested

