

Are We There Yet?

CREATING COMPLETE COMMUNITIES
FOR 21st CENTURY AMERICA



Are We There Yet?

CREATING COMPLETE COMMUNITIES FOR 21st CENTURY AMERICA

Introduction	2
Indicators	8
Living	10
Working	30
Moving	48
Thriving	68
Conclusion	86
Grades	88
Methodology	90

Introduction



WE ALL REMEMBER BEING A CHILD on what seemed like an endless journey to Grandma’s house or the Grand Canyon and asking “Are we there yet?” In America’s cities and towns, we are having one of those “Are we there yet?” moments — although it seems the GPS is malfunctioning and we have lost the ability to chart a course toward our future.

What does “there” look like? How will we know when we are “there”? What are the critical investments we need to make in order to strengthen our regional economies and ensure that America remains globally competitive? What are the attributes of communities and regions that help the people who live and work there succeed? How can we ensure that every child – regardless of what zip code they are born into or the color of their skin — has access to opportunities to improve their lives and contribute to America’s prosperity?

America is confronting serious issues in this second decade of the 21st century: The gap between rich and poor continues to widen, the middle class is shrinking, and nearly one in four children live in poverty. At the same time, the U.S. is in a transitional period in our economy and our demographics are changing, presenting profound possibilities for creating a 21st century America that offers opportunities for all.

Reconnecting America believes that when communities — urban, suburban or rural — offer what people need, we begin to get closer to “there.” We see higher high school graduation rates, reduced rates of obesity and diabetes, and reduced traffic congestion and cleaner air. We see more people walking and biking and engaging in their communities and we see a reduction in crime. Our children live in safe and affordable

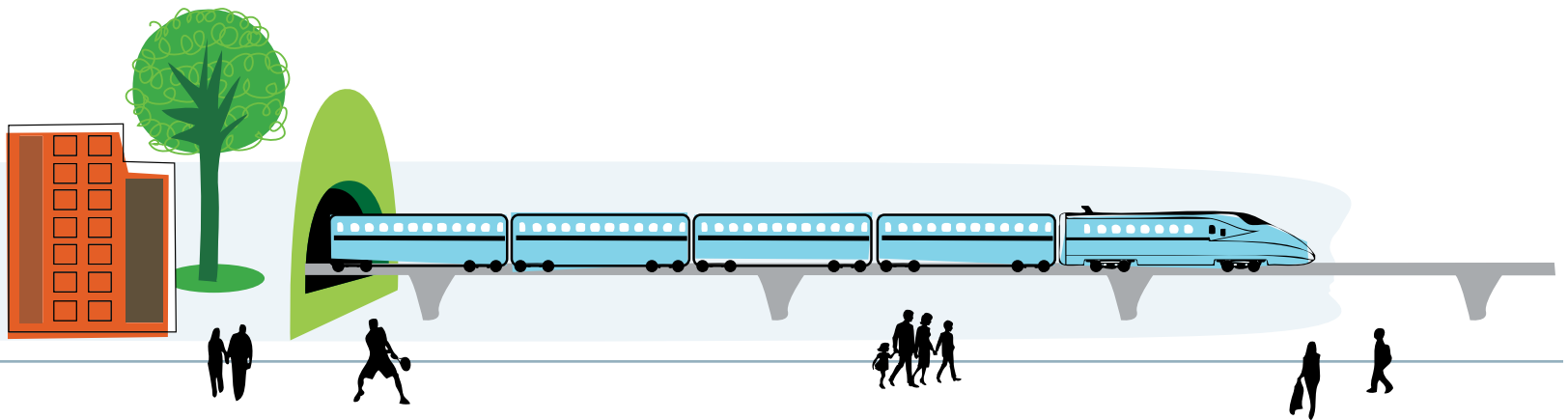
housing, and we see citizens getting active in the democratic process and the creation of civic environments that foster more economic activity and jobs — which gives the U.S. an economic competitive advantage.

Some of these are measurable outcomes, some we only know when we see and experience them.

In the following chapters we lay out some fundamentals of daily life – how we live, how we work, how we move and how we thrive as individuals, as families, and as a part of communities. We have collected and analyzed data to develop original metrics, and we have studied the metrics others have developed, to come up with an analysis we believe can be useful for helping leaders in cities and regions track how close they are to “there.” We want to highlight some key features that will be described in greater detail throughout this report.

First, we are introducing two key terms: We envision creating “complete communities” across the country, places where people can live, work, move, and thrive in a healthier, more equitable, and more economically competitive way. We also write about “opportunity areas,” the places within our cities and regions where we can get a jumpstart on this vision.

Second, Reconnecting America has collected data to help all of us understand the existing conditions of our regions and to track progress at the regional level in all 366 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the country. A lot of work is underway by different organizations to measure progress at the neighborhood or even development scale. We believe regional measures can be very useful in capturing and compiling the impact



of neighborhood change on regional performance. Though complete communities exist on a neighborhood scale, the benefits of complete communities are regional in nature because they produce better air quality, less congestion, lower obesity rates, reduced poverty, job growth — the list continues. Ultimately, efforts to improve individual neighborhoods must “trickle up” to change regional performance, or we’re not making a dent in the performance of our regions.

Third, we have graded every one of the 366 metro areas based on how they measure up to our vision, as detailed in the chapters entitled Living, Working, Moving and Thriving, with metro areas being graded on a curve against metro areas of a similar size. For instance, Altoona, Pennsylvania, is not measured against New York City, but against regions of similar size.

Finally, the narrative report describes real-life examples that we have collected — and in some instances that we have experienced first-hand — of leadership, innovation and collaboration occurring in all sorts of places and by all kinds of people. From Oklahoma City to Des Moines to Seattle, we have compiled stories that illustrate forward thinking with tangible outcomes — getting people to work, reducing obesity and engaging in a productive civic dialogue.

But there are more stories than we could include in this report, and some of these can be found at reconnectingamerica.org/arewethereyet. These stories and anecdotes aren’t tinged blue or red — these are stories of people of all political persuasions who are employing creativity, ingenuity and collaboration to make our cities and regions better places to live for everyone.

WHAT IS A COMPLETE COMMUNITY?

OUR COMMUNITIES NEED basic elements to support economic opportunity and health for all people, regardless of income level, cultural background or political persuasion. In this report, Reconnecting America does not claim to have captured or addressed all of the complex – and sometimes intangible — elements that contribute to the quality and character of our communities, but we identify some essential elements that help transform our neighborhoods into complete communities.

These elements include a quality education, access to good jobs, an affordable roof over our heads, access to affordable healthy food and health services, the ability to enjoy artistic, spiritual and cultural amenities, access to recreation and parks, meaningful civic engagement, and affordable transportation choices that get us where we need to go.

Complete communities are inclusive, measured by how residents and workers benefit and not necessarily the shape or form they take, and may likely require other supportive assets we have not covered in this report.

What’s the difference between a “complete” community and an “incomplete” one? The metrics and the composite grades we have developed for every MSA in the country indicate whether one region, and the communities that comprise that region, is closer to being complete than another. A region with more As will have more of the components of a complete community than one with many Cs and Ds. The grades also give a sense of where the gaps are and help regional and city leaders focus resources and energy in the most productive places. “A Tale Of Two Cit-

A Tale Of Two Cities

Greensboro, North Carolina, and Lincoln, Nebraska, are examples of two very different regions, despite their similarities at first glance. Both are relatively small, with less than 1 million people. (Greensboro has around 723,000; Lincoln around 302,000.) Neither region has fixed-guideway transit, though both have a variety of bus, vanpooling, and other transportation options.

However, Lincoln scores straight As in Living, Working, Moving, and Thriving, while Greensboro is one of several communities that scored straight Ds. Evaluation of the opportunity areas in each region reveals why these communities score so differently: Lincoln has 12 opportunity areas, while Greensboro has just five, but the real difference is in how they have used their assets.

In Lincoln, nearly a quarter (23 percent) of all jobs and 15 percent of all households are in opportunity areas. In Greensboro, only 7 percent of jobs and 1 percent of households are in opportunity areas. (For comparison, an average of 10 percent of jobs and 15 percent of households nationally are in opportunity areas.)

Practically, this means that homes and destinations in Greensboro are much more scattered, making it fiscally unrealistic to connect them with transit and more expensive to provide schools, parks, services, and other infrastructure. Thus, Greensboro residents will have to drive more often, because it is simply too far to walk or bike from home to any given destination.

In Greensboro, only 1.1 percent of commuters use transit to get to work, and 1.8 percent walk and bike. In Lincoln, the percentage of commuters who use transit is similar, 1.2 percent, but 4.4 percent of the population walks or bikes to work. The opportunity areas have a great deal to do with this difference, and, as a result, according to Transportation for America's Pedestrian Danger Index, Lincoln's streets are safer as well. (Transportation for America is a project of Reconnecting America and Smart Growth America.)

What has been happening on the ground to make these two places perform so differently? Among the many factors that influence the built environment and transportation choices, planners for the City of Lincoln have worked hard to rein in sprawl.

The city created a three-mile buffer around city limits for agricultural uses. To complement this policy, the city ensures there is enough land within the existing boundaries to provide for forecasted development and housing needs. The region's metropolitan planning organization — which is responsible for many transportation policies in Lincoln — has also adopted a “complete streets” policy, which recognizes the role land-use decisions and proximity to jobs and services play in creating safer streets for everyone.

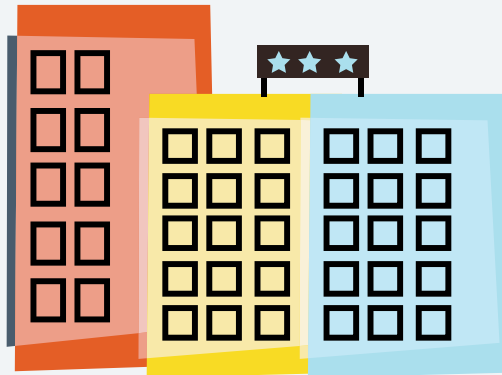
Economic depression has been a major challenge in recent years for the Greensboro region (known as the “Piedmont Triad,” for its three major cities: Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem). Once a hub for the textile, tobacco, and furniture industries, their decline in the past decade resulted in the loss of 70,000 jobs.

Greensboro also has been identified as one of the most sprawling places in the United States. Smart Growth America recently ranked the Piedmont Triad as second in the country in terms of sprawling growth. It has proven challenging, however, to offer transportation choices and concentrate growth in a region defined by three major, disparate economic centers, and three separate major jurisdictions, each in control of its own land

use policies. This is a challenge that is unique to a handful of regions in the country, and coordinated policies will be needed in the Piedmont Triad to bring up the region's grades.

However, change is in the air. The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) received a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2010, and is busy creating a plan for better coordination between the Triad's cities and counties. PART also completed a long-range Regional Transit Development Plan that created a regional vision for transportation investments that will be considered in the regional land use plans developed with the grant.

In the meantime, individual jurisdictions are considering their own local transit investments, and there are plans for streetcars in Winston-Salem and Greensboro, and passenger rail from Greensboro to Winston-Salem. Our D student is well on its way to a higher grade.



ies” on the opposite page illustrates the case of two different regions — Greensboro, North Carolina, and Lincoln, Nebraska — and discusses how the history and context of these places contribute to the grades received.

WHAT IS AN OPPORTUNITY AREA?

TO MEASURE PROGRESS toward complete communities, we have identified neighborhoods in each region that we are calling “opportunity areas.” Characterized by smaller blocks or moderate density housing or jobs, opportunity areas have some of the infrastructure in place to help get us “there” — neighborhoods that national research proves can lead to improved connectivity and increased rates of walking, biking, and transit use at the regional scale. While these places might lack other critical assets found in a complete community, such as parks, grocery stores, or a mix of housing choices, it is easier to transform an opportunity area into a complete community because the foundational elements or “bones” — such as street grid, water and sewer system, storm drainage, street lighting — are in place.

The good news is most regions — of all sizes — have opportunity areas in which to start creating complete communities. In our analysis of the 366 MSAs, only 49 do not have an opportunity area. That means just about every region in this country has a foundation upon which to start building a complete community. And those that don’t have an opportunity area (and even those that do) can get started by planning for neighborhoods with the fundamental characteristics of opportunity areas — streets that are safe and enjoyable for walking and homes, shops, jobs and other services clustered in hubs of community activity.

WHY THE FOCUS ON FIXED-GUIDEWAY TRANSIT?

FEW OF US LIVE IN the same neighborhood where we work, go to the doctor, or run our daily errands. In many cases our jobs, schools, family, recreation and places of worship can be miles away. That distance makes having quality public transportation choices an important part of the equation of building complete communities. In addition to having a well-maintained and efficient road network, we need to know that when we step to the curb to wait for a bus or train, it will show up often, on time, with a clearly marked route and, ultimately, take us where we need to go.

Reconnecting America is a strong proponent of all types of transportation and believes that taking the bus, driving a car, riding the train,

bicycling and walking all need to be accommodated and supported in our regional transit systems. That said, for the purposes of the metrics developed for this report, we are primarily measuring how well connected we are to our “fixed-guideway” transit.

“Fixed-guideway” transit describes public transportation that operates on a track (streetcar, light rail, or commuter rail), or within a lane of its own that won’t get stuck in traffic (bus rapid transit and ferry service). In this report we measure performance in “station areas,” or neighborhoods located within a half-mile of fixed-guideway transit.

Several key issues necessitated our focus on fixed-guideway transit. First, no national source of information exists for bus lines, even high-frequency bus routes. In many regions it can be difficult to find even a bus map. This makes it incredibly difficult to gather quality bus data for every one of the 366 metro areas in the country.

Because of the challenges of accessing bus data, we have utilized the data captured through our opportunity areas analysis to evaluate how our 366 metro areas support walking and biking and transit. We have also evaluated the extent to which workers already take transit to work. We acknowledge this approach is insufficient, and we are hoping this report can serve as a national call for a coordinated effort among transit agencies across the country to make their bus data readily available in a consistent format so that we capture the full dynamics of transit systems in different regions.

Second, it is the permanent nature of fixed-guideway transit investments that provide assurances to developers that the infrastructure will be in place over the long term, whereas bus routes can be easily changed — moved to another place or the frequency of service reduced. The permanent investment in fixed-guideway transit has significantly greater potential to catalyze the real estate market once the infrastructure is in place, strengthening the promise of potential profits for developers, and thereby spurring reinvestment and change in the community.

Moreover, because transit traveling on a fixed-guideway is generally able to avoid traffic, and has a clearly marked route, it is perceived as more reliable than regular bus service, which has to contend with the same congestion issues we face in our cars.

Building fixed-guideway transit is costly, however, and many regions will not be able to afford this investment for decades to come — if ever.

Regions With

Moreover, in many places, bus lines in mixed traffic are just as likely as light rail or streetcar to offer a predictable, comfortable transportation alternative.

In this report, we assert that, despite its potentially transformative impact on regions, fixed-guideway transit is not needed to create a complete community. Rather, our nation should focus on developing clear regional measures to evaluate how different modes of public transportation service support our communities and economies, including local bus lines.

GETTING THERE

IN THE CURRENT POLARIZED national political climate where every decision seems to turn into a vitriolic ideological battle, we have lost sight of the big picture. While mired in a political system predicated on short-term gains and long-term denial, it is extremely challenging to chart a long-term vision for our cities and regions that adequately addresses critical issues such as the needed recalibration of our regional economies and workforce so that we can be out in front of global market forces.

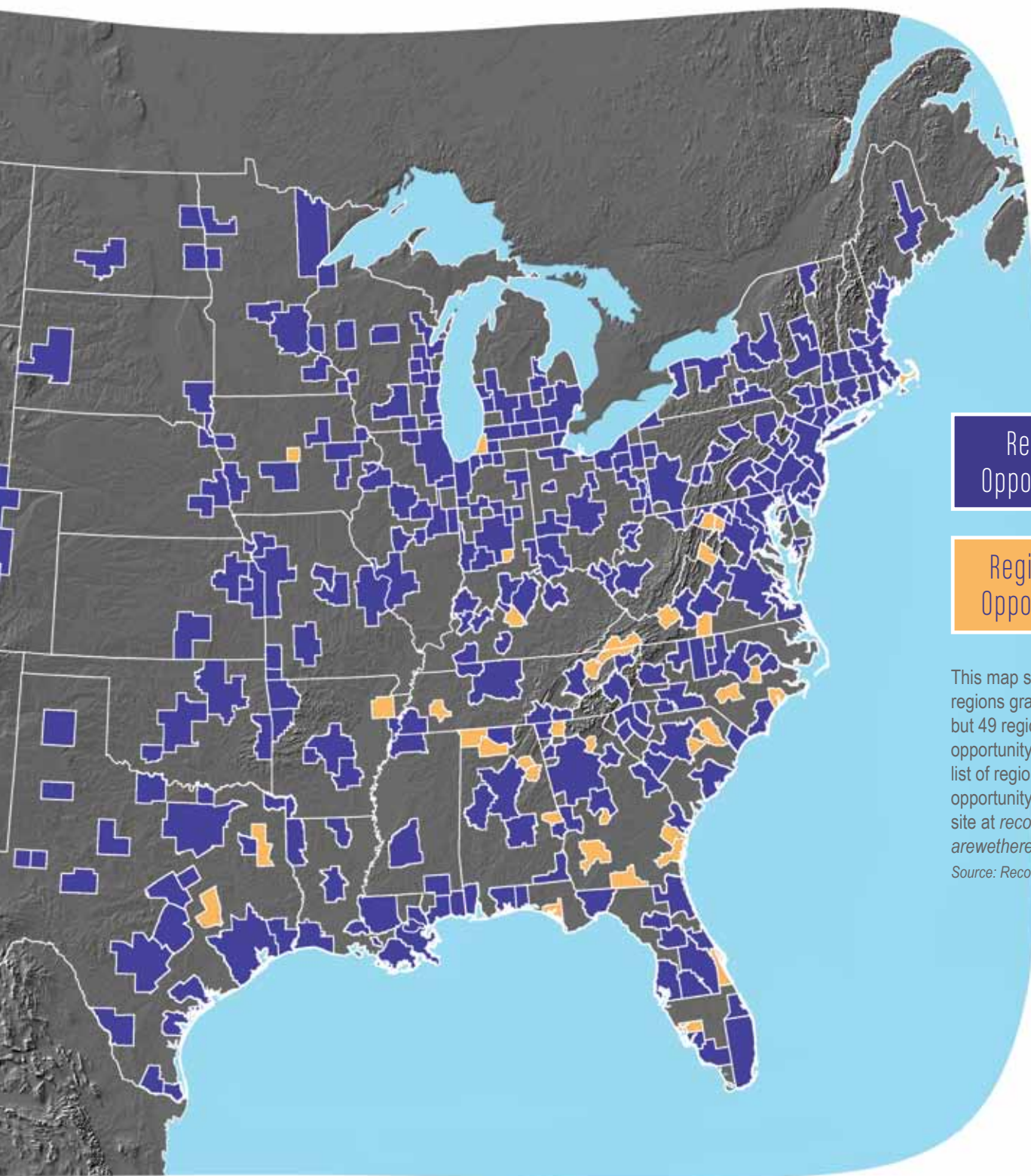
We need a vision that provides children and families living on the economic margins with the support systems they need to improve their lives. Such investments across our country not only make economic sense but will serve all of us in the long term.

But don't just take Reconnecting America's word for it: Throughout this report we explore a multitude of perspectives on the value of building complete communities. We share examples of how people of all political leanings are deploying innovative strategies to advance and accelerate progress on issues related to Living, Working, Moving and Thriving. And, as the data illustrates, people are voting with their feet, moving to towns and cities and suburban communities where it's easier and more affordable to get around and access daily needs.

For Reconnecting America, this is the start of an ongoing dialogue to bring to life what "there" looks and feels like in all kinds of places. How do we know we are moving in the right direction? How will we know when we are there? Let's work together and make it a national project to build complete communities that will strengthen the promise of America's future. Join us.



And Without Opportunity Areas



Regions With
Opportunity Areas

Regions Without
Opportunity Areas

This map shows the 366 metro regions graded in this report. All but 49 regions have at least one opportunity area. For a complete list of regions with and without opportunity areas visit the website at reconnectingamerica.org/arewethereyet

Source: Reconnecting America

Indicators

RECONNECTING AMERICA collected information on 33 indicators that can be used to measure a region's progress toward becoming a complete community, and each of those indicators was used to grade all 366 metro regions in the U.S. Those indicators are listed here, and they are

grouped under Living, Working, Moving and Thriving. More information on how we measured different indicators is in the Methodology section at the end of this report. Indicators for all 366 metro regions can be found on our website: reconnectingamerica.org/arewethereyet.

Goals

Create affordable communities with transportation choices that:

Indicators / Sources

Living

Maximize the number of households ... in fixed-guideway transit station areas and opportunity areas	Percent of households near fixed-guideway transit <i>CTOD</i> Percent of households in opportunity areas <i>Reconnecting America</i>
Maximize the range of households ... in fixed-guideway transit station areas and opportunity areas	Percent of households near fixed-guideway transit who are low income <i>CTOD</i> Percent of households in opportunity areas who are low income <i>Reconnecting America</i>
Preserve and stabilize existing neighborhoods ... in fixed-guideway transit station areas and opportunity areas	Percent of section 8/202 units near fixed-guideway transit <i>Reconnecting America</i> Percent of section 8/202 units in opportunity areas <i>Reconnecting America</i>
Focus future growth in opportunity areas	Growth in opportunity areas compared to the region <i>Reconnecting America</i>

Goals

Use transportation options to enhance regional economic growth that:

Indicators / Sources

Working

Provides more transit options for accessing our jobs	Percent of jobs near existing fixed-guideway transit <i>CTOD</i> Percent of jobs near planned fixed-guideway transit <i>Reconnecting America</i> Percent of jobs accessible by transit (within a 45 minute commute) <i>Brookings Institution</i>
Clusters jobs to allow easier transit access	Percent of jobs in opportunity areas <i>Reconnecting America</i> Weighted employment density <i>Public Policy Institute of California</i>
Retains and attracts new regional talent and firms	Percent of 18- to 34-year olds with a college degree <i>U.S. Census</i>
Provides access to a range of job opportunities	Percent of low- and moderate-income jobs accessible on transit (within a 90 minute commute) <i>Brookings Institution</i>

Goals

Reduce Auto Dependency and Vehicle-Related Emissions that:

Indicators / Sources

Moving

Increase transit options	Number of fixed-guideway transit stations <i>CTOD</i> Number of future fixed-guideway transit stations <i>Reconnecting America</i> Percent of fixed-guideway transit stations in opportunity areas <i>Reconnecting America</i>
Increase transit usage	Percent of commuters who take transit <i>U.S. Census</i> Change in number of commuters who take transit <i>U.S. Census</i>
Make walking and biking safe	Pedestrian Danger Index <i>Transportation for America</i>
Make walking and biking accessible and attractive	Percent of commuters who walk or bike <i>U.S. Census</i> Percent of blocks smaller than 6 acres <i>Reconnecting America</i>
Reduce per-capita vehicle miles traveled	Average vehicle miles traveled per household <i>Center for Neighborhood Technology</i>

Goals

Support complete, vibrant communities that:

Indicators / Sources

Thriving

Provide access to healthy food	Percent of low-income households more than a mile from a grocery store <i>USDA Food Atlas</i> Percent of households with no car more than a mile from a grocery store <i>USDA Food Atlas</i> Percent of opportunity areas in food deserts <i>Reconnecting America/USDA Food Atlas</i> Number of fast food establishments for every healthy one <i>USDA Food Atlas</i>
Promote physical activity	Percent of population getting no regular physical activity <i>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>
Provide access to arts, recreation and entertainment	Percent of households who live near parks <i>Reconnecting America</i> Percent of the households near parks who are low income <i>Reconnecting America</i> Acres of parks for every household (in opportunity areas) <i>Reconnecting America</i> Employees in arts and entertainment jobs <i>Reconnecting America/U.S. Census County Business Patterns</i>
Make us happy	Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index <i>Gallup</i>



Living

EXPANDING CHOICES

AMERICANS ARE BEGINNING to change their expectations of what makes a house a home. We are less interested in spending three hours a day slogging to work from the fringes of suburbia — and less and less able to pay for the gas to do so. We're beginning to return to cities as well as to closer-in suburbs that offer more housing and transportation choices. We're looking for lofts, apartments, places where we can walk to shops, take a bus or train or bike to work, and more easily enjoy the companionship of neighbors.

The realities of the 21st century are calling for these different lifestyle and real estate choices: high gas prices and traffic congestion; the increasing expense of heating, cooling and maintaining a large home; a severe, long-term recession, tough job market and the need to reduce spending; a rapidly aging population and more single-person and single parent households; concerns about America's public health, and our ability to compete in the global economy; concerns about the environment and climate change.

"A new image of America is in the making," notes Brookings Institution demographer William Frey after Brookings released its analysis of 2000-2008 census data. "What used to be white flight to the suburbs is turning into 'bright flight' to cities that have become magnets for aspiring young adults who see access to knowledge-based

jobs, public transportation and a new city ambiance as an attraction. Old stereotypes no longer apply."

Carol Coletta, then director of CEOs for Cities, adds in a 2011 *USA Today* interview, "Clearly the next generation of Americans is looking for different kinds of lifestyles — walkable, with art, culture and entertainment. This is no longer anecdotal. Every metro area has good suburbs, but if you don't have a strong downtown and close-in neighborhoods then you are not offering a choice that many of them are seeking. Offering that choice is a real competitive advantage for cities."

More choices are indeed what Americans seem to want now, and one popular choice — not for all Americans, but an increasing number — is what some people are calling "complete communities." These are neighborhoods in cities and suburbs where daily exercise is routine and pleasant and could involve walking or biking to work, where daily tasks, including shopping and taking the children to school, can also be done on foot or bike, where neighborhoods are clean and safe and "neighborly," and both housing and transportation is more affordable.

These "complete communities" are built upon "opportunity areas," a term we use to denote those neighborhoods — or even just a part of a neighborhood — with smaller blocks and moderate density housing and/or jobs so that some people can live and work in the same neighborhoods.

Opportunity areas and complete communities can be in urban or suburban places, though they tend to be in the downtowns and “first-ring” suburbs of older cities. In many downtowns and close-in suburbs the combination of vacant lots and abandoned properties as well as historic rail infrastructure offer redevelopment potential, and investment in these places could bring new life to neighborhoods that would offer people the kind of housing and transportation choices that have become popular.

According to Reconnecting America’s research, more than 1 in 6 American households are in opportunity areas, a total of more than 17 million households. See List below: *Top 10 regions with households in opportunity areas.*

THE EXODUS

THE “OLD STEREOTYPES” TO which Frey refers are the “incomplete communities,” the single family homes in single-use residential neighborhoods that became defined after WWII as the American Dream. They are connected by wide roads and freeways, and were built farther and farther out from downtowns. These are the neighborhoods that were promoted first by the loan guarantees provided by the G.I. Bill, and supported by the mortgage tax deduction, the lending policies of private banks and a massive road-building program, which together with other factors prompted an exodus from cities to the suburbs.

As Buzz Bissinger writes in the 1998 book *A Prayer for the City*: “The FHA, founded in 1934, was intended to help revive the nation’s dormant housing industry during the New Deal. But the ultimate influence of the FHA and its housing cousin, the Veterans Administration, went far beyond that, making the dream of home ownership available to millions of middle-class Americans, just as long as it was a dream that largely confined itself to the suburbs and not to the older cities.”

Mark I. Gelfand provides more detail in *A Nation of Cities*, a book published in 1975, explaining that the Federal Housing Administration “red-lined vast areas of the inner cities, refusing to insure mortgages where the neighborhoods were blighted or susceptible to blight.” Blight was defined not only in terms of the physical quality of the neighborhood, but also its racial and ethnic composition. “This action practically guaranteed that these districts would deteriorate still further and drag cities down with them.”

As a result, the suburban population increased by 43 percent from 1947 to 1953, compared to an increase of only 11 percent for the general population, according to Harvard professor Lizabeth Cohen. And over the 1950s families continued their escape to the suburbs, which grew an explosive 45 percent, compared to a growth rate in cities of just 0.1 percent. To meet this enormous demand, the home building industry developed a mass production model geared for large tracts of suburban homes linked by freeways, and the suburban population continued to grow, reaching 50 percent of the total national population in 2000, according to Cohen.

But this trend seems to have turned around, at least in the near term. As of July 2011 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that suburban growth had slowed to less than that of urban areas and that the nation’s cities were growing faster than the country as a whole, as the financial and foreclosure crises pushed more people to rent, soaring gas prices made long commutes unappealing, and high unemployment drew more people to big job centers.

“There’s a pall being cast on the outer edges,” says John McIlwain of the nonprofit Urban Land Institute, in an April 2012 *USA Today* story. “The foreclosures, the vacancies, the uncompleted roads. It’s uncomfortable out there. The glitz is off.” Adds Frey of Brookings, “This could be the end of the exurb as a place where people aspire to go when they’re starting their families. So many people have been burned by this . . . First-time home buyers, immi-



grants and minorities took a real big hit.”

Unfortunately, the real estate industry’s mass-production model doesn’t work when it comes to building infill housing on small lots in urban neighborhoods — which is where the real estate market is most active now — because there isn’t the same economy of scale. An article in *The Atlantic* in 2011 summed up the situation, pointing out that the suburban McMansion on a large tract of land exemplified a way of life in America at a particular point of time in the 1990s when Baby Boomer families were at the height of their income and household size, consumerism was at an all-time high and so was debt. But that moment has passed — parents are retiring, children have left home — and the foreclosure crisis has hit the suburbs hardest.

CHANGES IN THE HOUSING MARKET

ONE LESSON THAT EMERGES from the housing market meltdown is that people need and want more choices — in both urban and suburban locations — especially more affordable choices. If the McMansion typified one extreme, Tiny House blog typifies the other, and offers options for downsizing. This is a trend that has also been tracked on the cover of *Dwell*: While a 2005 magazine cover was headlined “Small Is the New Big: Homes Under 2,200 Sq. Ft.,” and a 2006 cover read “Think Small: Homes Under 1,700 Sq. Ft.,” the 2008 cover read “Small Wonders: Homes Under 1,000 Square Feet.”

Further evidence of this trend is the Katrina cottage, which ranges in size from 308 to 1,800 square feet and was designed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina as an alternative to the FEMA trailer. The earliest version of the cottage was mobile, like the FEMA trailer, but of higher design quality and for the same \$70,000 price. The Katrina cottage, which has gained popularity around the U.S. as an affordable housing choice, can be installed on site from a kit.

The popularity of small is likely also due to the fact that household size is decreasing. The new census numbers show that while nearly half of the U.S. population lived in households of six or more people in 1900, by 2000 more than half lived in households of one, two or three people.

The *Atlantic* article mentioned earlier focuses on the housing market research of Arthur C. Nelson, director of the Metropolitan Research Center at the University of Utah, who offers some provocative ideas about reviving the housing market by providing more choices: Nelson

suggests converting McMansions — many of which sit empty — into affordable housing for multi-generational or multi-family households. He points out that while the average 3.5-person home was smaller than 1,000 square feet in 1950; a 6,000-square-foot McMansion is roomy enough for 12, with parking for five or six cars.

Nelson also contends that homeowners could spark a housing boom by retrofitting their current homes to include granny flats, backyard studios, garage and basement apartments. What better way, he argues, to increase density and affordability in neighborhoods near public transit? His studies show that a third of American households want to live where they can own fewer cars but that less than 10 percent can find housing in these locations.



ON THE WAY THERE

The Resilience Of Complete Communities

In a recent article on *bizjournals.com* a spokesman for Wells Fargo, the nation’s largest mortgage lender, noted that while the housing crisis is likely to take a decade to rebound, the places that are seeing gains today are urban areas with infill projects. “We are seeing gains in more and more cities, and builders are more upbeat,” says Mark Vitner, senior Wells Fargo economist. “The gains are small, however, and are often in infill locations or in partially built-out projects near key employment centers.”

These projections are bolstered by studies such as one recently conducted by the Metropolitan Council in the Twin Cities, which has built one light rail line and is building another. The Met Council study shows that residents in the seven-county region are moving closer to the urban core where there’s more transit: While 67 percent of all residential units permitted in the 1990s were single-family houses, the number fell to 44 percent during the past decade. Similarly, while 8.4 percent of development was higher-density and mixed-use in 2010, the study predicts the percentage will increase to 55 percent in 2030.

Met Council analyst John Kari says in the *Finance & Commerce* newspaper that this shift is the most significant that he’s seen since the council began developing comprehensive plans in the 1970s. He adds that he believes the shift in demand toward apartments, condos, townhomes and small-lot detached housing is permanent.

HOUSING AND TRANSIT

IF SMALL IS ONE SOLUTION to the problem of affordability, locating housing near good public transportation is definitely another important solution in this era of dramatic gas price increases. Nelson believes the demand for housing near frequent bus lines and rail stations is so high that meeting it would require that every new residential unit constructed between now and 2050 would have to be built near transit. This supports research by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development (CTOD) in 2004 that projected the demand for housing near fixed-guideway stations by 2030 would be 14.6 million households.

Robert Lang, professor of urban affairs at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas, believes that locating housing near transit provides a housing choice that could revitalize the suburbs. Lang has analyzed the fastest growing “boomburbs” in the Sun Belt, and he told *USA Today* in 2012 that of the 76 suburbs he studied the 43 with rail service — including Plano, Texas, Tempe, Arizona, and Aurora, Colorado — grew faster than those without rail lines. “In the last decade boomburbs grew one way: out,” Lang says. “This decade, large suburban cities can grow up around station stops.” Suburbs and smaller towns can both benefit from locating housing near transit. See chart at right: *Households near transit in smaller regions*.

The good news is that as the demand for more transportation choices has increased, regions are building more transit lines and more stations. Research by CTOD shows that the number of people who live near “fixed-guideway” transit — either rail or bus rapid transit that runs in a dedicated lane apart from other traffic — increased from 6.2 million households in 2000 to 6.6 million today. See list on opposite page: *Top 10 regions with the fastest household growth near transit*.

CTOD also found that regions with more extensive transit networks

have exponentially more people living in neighborhoods around stations. See chart on page 16: *Transit system size matters*.

This is not only because there are more transit stations and because the neighborhoods around these stations typically allow taller buildings and higher densities. It’s also because larger transit systems connect residents and workers to more destinations, which make these station area neighborhoods more attractive places in which to live and work. Also, because these systems are bigger they provide greater potential to organize a region’s growth, thereby minimizing traffic congestion — which is key to ensuring that people and goods can keep moving, rather than idling in traffic. And this enhances a region’s economic competitiveness.

A NEW HOUSING MARKET

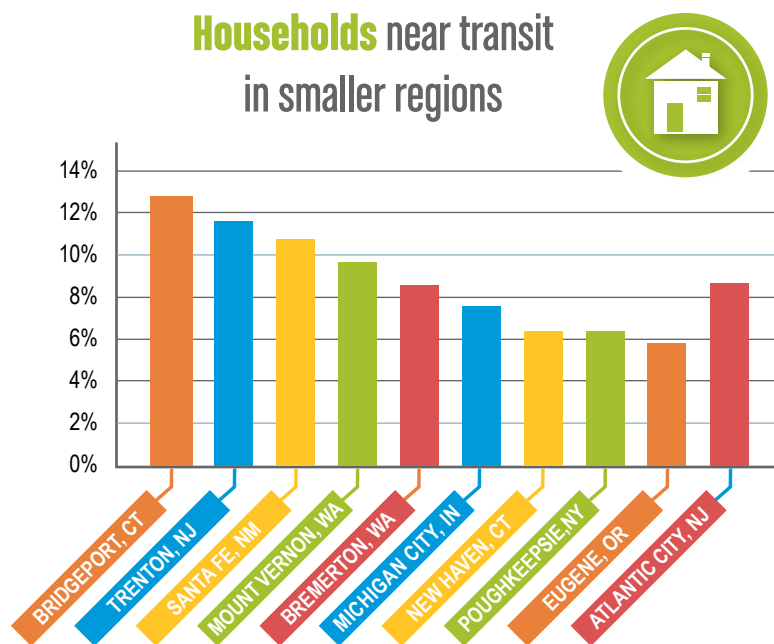
BUILDING THE KIND OF housing that people want in the locations where they want to live matters a great deal, Brookings Institution real-estate

expert Christopher Leinberger wrote in *The New Republic* in 2010, because fixing the housing market is key to fixing the economy. Leinberger wrote that the built environment — defined as housing and commercial real estate and the transportation infrastructure that supports it — constitutes more than 35 percent of the assets of the American economy, the largest percent.

Leinberger also believes that an increasing share of the market is demanding something different. “What we need is ‘alternative’ transportation including rail, bike and walking infrastructure,

and walkable development,” he wrote. “Without building this second half of the transportation system — and redeveloping our cities and transforming our suburbs with mixed-use, walkable development — we’ll be condemned to years of stagnation.”

Households near transit in smaller regions



Top 10 regions with a population of less than 1 million where the highest percentage of people live near transit.

Source: CTOD

It's not only the real estate market that's demanding something different. Municipalities that have been struggling because of the recession have come to understand that sprawl isn't an efficient or feasible development pattern. This point of view was compellingly explained in a 2012 opinion piece on *cnn.com* by Bill Fulton, a well-known planner and former mayor of Ventura, California.

"The way in which we plan and build our towns and cities has a direct impact on how well they do," Fulton writes. "Financial resiliency and prosperity is woven into the very fabric of cities. Where businesses go, where houses go, where roads go, where sidewalks go, where farms and natural spaces go — all of these things collectively affect a community's economic performance and the cost of providing services. Put things closer together, the services cost less. Put things farther from each other, the services cost more for the jurisdiction and its taxpayers. But in the case of many American towns and cities, we haven't always planned and built in this fiscally conservative way – and that's one of the biggest reasons why cities are struggling today."

The housing market is also challenged by the fact that home ownership is declining. While home ownership peaked in 2004 at 69 percent, according to David Shulman, senior economist at UCLA's Ziman Center for Real Estate, the percentage fell to 66 percent in 2011 and is likely to fall to 65 percent by the end of 2012. Because of this, Nelson and others suggest that if the housing market is to deliver the choices that people need now not only should every new residential unit be built near rail stations but it should also be a rental unit.

While real estate values have fallen in the suburbs, they have risen in walkable and bikeable urban neighborhoods, a change quantified in

a study by the Brookings Institution that looked at real estate values in urban communities compared to suburban communities. "Until the 1990s exclusive suburban homes that were accessible only by car cost more, per square foot, than other kinds of American housing," writes Leinberger in the *New York Times*. "Now, however, these suburbs have become overbuilt, and housing values have fallen. Today the most valuable real estate lies in walkable urban locations."

ARTISTS HELP TRANSFORM NEIGHBORHOODS

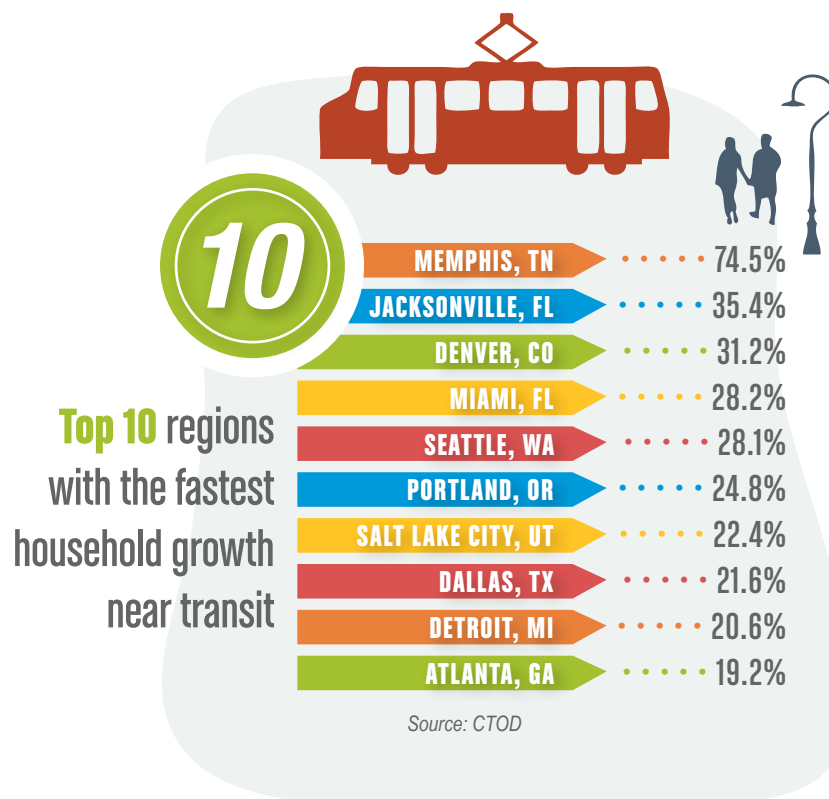
TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT and energy to their urban cores and build the walkable neighborhoods that the market is demanding, some cities have begun building housing specifically for artists. Artists often look for studio space in abandoned downtowns and industrial neighborhoods, where they can find large spaces and low rents. Once these artists have established themselves in the neighborhood, they often attract retail,

bars and restaurants, and non-artists join them, boosting property values and the tax base — resulting in the transformation of these neighborhoods.

For example, HRI Properties, a pioneer in the adaptive re-use of historic buildings in New Orleans, gave the old Blue Plate Mayonnaise factory, known for producing the first commercially made mayonnaise in the U.S., new life by fixing it up for artists. The classic Art Deco building stood empty when Hurricane Katrina prompted Blue Plate Mayonnaise

to close up shop and move to Knoxville, Tennessee. Today, artists can display their work throughout the building, which even has a business center and soundproofed music rehearsal space.

In some states, arts advocates and community developers have



persuaded agencies to allow the use of federal resources for these projects, arguing that artists are catalysts for economic development. There are projects underway in Seattle, Baltimore and in Long Beach, California, that are targeted for artists who are willing to be transit-dependent — no parking is provided, which reduces costs for developers, who can then charge lower rents. The Long Beach project is a 147-unit senior arts colony in a larger development with three residential buildings, next to a light rail station and enhanced bus stop, and with car-sharing, a bike facility, dog park and community gardens.

“Artist communities re-energize neighborhoods,” Wendy Holmes, senior vice president for Artspace — a Minneapolis nonprofit that develops live/work spaces for artists around the country — says in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. “Even though we’re business people, it’s not always about the bottom line. It’s about community engagement.” Developer Larry Schedler notes, in the same article, that old buildings in old neighborhoods are the perfect place for niche developments such as artist housing. “I think it’s a phenomenon you’ll see more of. There’s a need and a market for developments that bring creative people together.”

THE HIGH COST OF H+T

HOUSING COSTS HAVE GROWN far faster than income over the past 50 years, and the share of households that struggle to pay their rent or mortgage has increased dramatically over the past decade, according to a recent study by Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. The 2012 study found that well over one-third of U.S. households paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing in 2009, while almost 26 percent spent more than half their paychecks, the highest level in half-a-century. Renters, with their generally lower incomes, are more than twice as

likely to spend more than half on housing.

Household debt surged from 65 percent of disposable income in 1980 to 133 percent in 2007, William Galston writes in *The New Republic* in 2011, largely because of the enormous escalation in mortgage indebtedness. As a result, the rental market has been flooded not only with families who lost their homes to foreclosure but also with higher-income

families who are also struggling to make ends meet. As a result, vacancies are down and rents are up. In the Western U.S. — where the shortage of affordable housing is greatest — the National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that there are only 53 units available for every 100 very-low-income families.

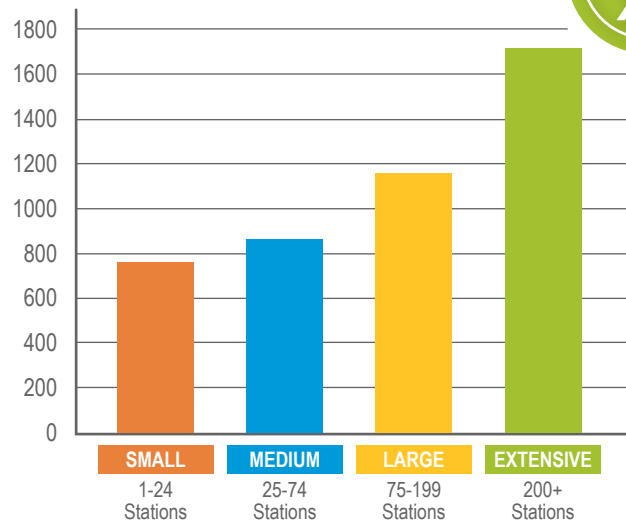
Add to this the fact that rising gas prices have increased household transportation costs, and household budgets are really stretched. Transportation is the second largest household expenditure after housing according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the American Automobile Association (AAA) estimates that the cost

of owning and maintaining a car increased 1.9 percent in 2011 to \$8,946 in 2012. As a result, homebuyers and renters are increasingly factoring in transportation costs when making housing choices.

Cody Helgeson, who moved with his wife from their home in the suburbs of Phoenix to an apartment downtown, tells the *Arizona Republic*, “Now we’ve got it down to one vehicle and we are able to go one whole month on a tank of gas because we walk everywhere. When we lived in [the suburb of] Queen Creek we were budgeting about \$500 a month for gas.” Moving downtown, he notes, also boosted their social life.

Indeed buying a house on the far fringes of a region might seem less expensive until the hidden costs of transportation are figured in, and then what appears to be a deal isn’t — a fact made clear by the “Housing + Transportation Affordability Index,” which expands the idea of “affordability” to include transportation costs in addition to

Transit system size matters



This chart shows the average number of families who live near stations in transit systems of different sizes (the size is defined by number of stations).

Source: CTOD

housing. The “H+T index” was developed by the national nonprofit Center for Neighborhood Technology, which has now created a version that will be used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help renters and homebuyers make more informed housing choices and investment decisions.

“Affordability is much more than just paying the mortgage, it involves other costs like transportation, gas, and utilities,” says Shaun Donovan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “The availability of a national affordability index will provide consumers better information about the true costs of a home by accounting for that housing’s proximity to jobs, schools and other services. Our goal with the creation of this housing and transportation index is to provide American families with a tool that can help them save money and have a better understanding of their expenses and household budget.”

MOBILITY VS. ACCESS

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES are key to reducing the cost of H+T. “Access” is central to the idea of complete communities, and access is predicated on reducing the distance, and the time and money we have to spend on getting where we need to go. In other words, explains Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, “Mobility is how far you can go in a given time. Access is how many useful or valuable things you can do in that time.”

Complete communities, and the opportunity areas upon which they are built, are the places where people can take care of their daily business on foot or on bike, and longer distances can be traveled by bus or rail, which means that households can own fewer cars. Complete communities are also the best places for older Americans, younger Americans



ON THE WAY THERE

A Focus On Two Smart Cities

The goal of the Natural Resources Defense Council “Smarter Cities” project, is to identify “leader cities” that are employing best practices as they rethink and reshape their built environments. Both Jersey City, NJ, and the Midwestern twin cities of Champaign-Urbana, IL are cited among the top 15 national models because of the strategies they have employed to make it easier for residents to walk, bike and take transit. Jersey City has a commuter rail system, while Champaign-Urbana has bus but no rail.

JERSEY CITY — Densely populated Jersey City, across the Hackensack River from lower Manhattan, has the lowest average household VMT or vehicle miles traveled, for any metropolitan region in the U.S. It’s one of only two regions, together with New York City, with an average car ownership rate of only one car per household — only 60 percent of Jersey City residents own or have access to a car.

That’s probably because more than 98 percent of households are within a quarter mile of a bus stop or half a mile from a rail station, a rate higher than anywhere else in the U.S.

This success has to do with the region’s smart growth strategies as well as the daunting cost of traveling by car, which includes the high cost of parking as well as tolls on roads, bridges and tunnels. And there’s a robust transit system of commuter rail, light rail, buses with bike racks, and a ferry — with so many choices it’s much easier to leave the car at home. Now the city is designating bike lanes, and plans walkways and trolley buses to enhance access all along the waterfront, where the city wants to build 19,000 transit-oriented housing units, office and retail.

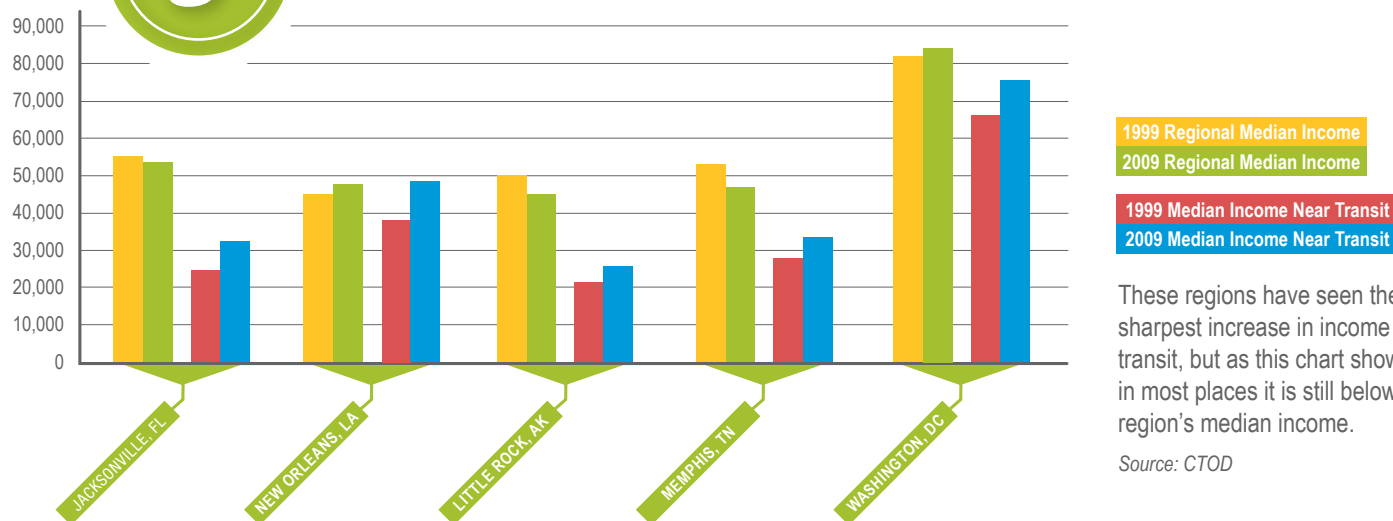
CHAMPAIGN-URBANA — These twin cities have been working together to create a shared transportation plan that prioritizes pedestrians, bicycles and public transit. The University of

Illinois at Champaign-Urbana straddles both cities, with a student population of about 40,000 that mostly lives in Urbana near the campus and walks to class. Bus passes for students are only \$46 a semester for unlimited use, and to encourage all residents to take the bus — since 90 percent live within a quarter mile of a bus route and the average commute is just 15 minutes — the transit agency reduced the cost of annual transit passes for everyone from \$235 to just \$60 a year, and created four routes from downtown to the university that run on 10-minute headways.

To make walking, biking and transit an even more popular choice — for students as well as other residents — the cities are also revamping car-centric roads that have been historically unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles. Among the investments being made are new bike lanes, refuge islands for pedestrians at bus stops, new sidewalks and space for sidewalk cafes, additional bus shelters, and improved lighting.

5

Top 5 regions with the greatest increase in median income near transit



These regions have seen the sharpest increase in income near transit, but as this chart shows, in most places it is still below that region's median income.

Source: CTOD

and the disabled, who can maintain their independence because they don't have to rely on others to get around.

These rising transportation costs are a significant driver of the upswing in demand for housing in downtowns and close-in neighborhoods, and as demand increases more of these neighborhoods will be built and existing neighborhoods will be retrofitted. In Houston, Texas, for example, the construction of a transit line and station in University Place — an urban neighborhood near Rice University with small blocks, walkable streets and a mix of uses — turned the neighborhood into a more complete community by making it easy and convenient for residents to walk and bike in the neighborhood and rely on transit to get to destinations outside.

In suburban Hillsboro, Oregon, a master-planned New Urbanist village was built on a very large tract of undeveloped land near a station on a rail line connecting Portland to its suburbs. The developer built housing, stores and commercial space on small blocks connected by walkable streets, with the result that the people who live there walk, bike and take transit more than the average resident in the region.

Transit access increases the potential of opportunity areas to become complete communities — since the goods and services that people can't access on foot or on bike can be accessed via transit. America is already headed in this direction. Reconnecting America's research shows that 58 percent of all transit stations are located in opportunity areas.

PRICED OUT AND PUSHED OUT

ALONG WITH THE GROWING DEMAND for walkable neighborhoods near transit, though, is the potential for a disturbing consequence: The lower-income people who already live in these places — and who may use transit the most — can get pushed out as prices rise. Gentrification can bring investment to underserved communities and many historic urban core neighborhoods, but cities need the tools and capacity to manage the change so that people of all incomes can live in these places.

The threat of displacement tends to be greatest where the real estate market is active, or where new transit lines may activate an otherwise sluggish market because transit will make commuting to nearby job centers easier and faster — thereby increasing the likelihood that more people will want to move in. CTOD's National TOD database shows that while median income in the U.S. *decreased* by 5 percent during the past decade, income near transit increased 1 percent. See chart above: *Top 5 regions with the greatest increase in median income near transit.*

But the reasons may be different in each region: maybe people with higher incomes are moving in, maybe the people who already live there have begun making more money because there has been investment and more economic activity, or maybe low-income people are being displaced. Monitoring these changes will allow cities to determine whether

displacement is occurring and if policy interventions are necessary.

During the go-go years of the housing boom many affordable units were upgraded for higher-income tenants or, in strong real estate markets, converted to condos. According to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies, for every new affordable apartment built, two are lost to condo conversion, demolition or abandonment. But as more people get pushed further to the fringes they have less access to transit, and they will be living in places where there's less chance that transit will ever be built.

According to a 2011 study by the Brookings Institution, at least 700,000 Americans don't have cars and don't have access to transit either, raising issues of social equity as well as economic concerns.

The most vulnerable families, the report points out, live in the suburbs, and in suburban cities, including Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, St. Louis and Atlanta. Only 69 percent of Atlanta residents have access to transit, for example, compared to Los Angeles and New York, where 99 percent of residents have access to either bus or rail.

The authors of the report point to the rapid suburbanization of poverty, as well as "job sprawl," as the two biggest factors putting carless families at risk. They also point out that the U.S. has built 655,000 roadway lane miles of highways since the 1980s, enabling development farther out and increasing distances between destinations — thereby making it even more difficult to serve people with transit.

Local and national leaders can respond to this crisis by encouraging the adoption of land use policies that promote denser development that is easier to serve with transit, as well as by expanding transit to underserved suburban downtowns. "The cost of putting housing and jobs in the wrong place, relative to transportation, is huge," says HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "Not just in environmental costs, not just because people are spending more on their commutes, but also because of the cost of this growth over the long term."

EXPIRING SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

INVESTORS ARE BUYING UP empty suburban properties in part, as a 2011 *Washington Post* article noted, because of the steadily dropping home ownership rate and the foreclosure crisis — lenders have seized more than a million homes and it is estimated there are another 11 million foreclosures in the pipeline. These investors have started looking for renters not buyers, and they are eyeing the 2 million households with Section 8 vouchers — a government funding program that helps lower-income people find affordable housing.

"It's guaranteed money," David Benham, a property owner who sells

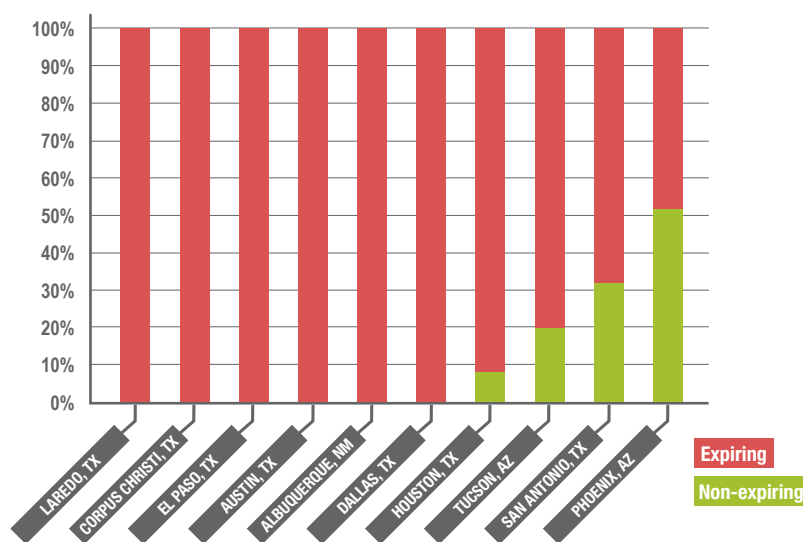
bank foreclosures to investors in 35 states, says in the *Post*. "I love Section 8. I wish every one of my properties was Section 8." The Section 8 program helps expand the supply of housing that is affordable by subsidizing the difference between what lower-income people can pay — 30 to 40 percent of household income — and the rents landlords are charging.

HUD's Section 8 program also provides funding for new construction or the rehabilitation of housing units that will be set-aside as affordable housing for

5 to 30 years, depending on the terms of the contract. Reconnecting America calculates that 40 percent of these units are in opportunity areas. However, the contracts on these Section 8 units are beginning to expire, as are contracts on other kinds of subsidized housing. Many of these "at-risk" affordable units were developed under federal, state and local programs created in the '60s, '70s and early '80s to promote the development of affordable housing by the private sector. The majority of these units were financed and assisted by HUD through below-market interest rates and rental housing subsidies and contracts that typically lasted 40 years.

Once the contracts expire these units can be rented or sold at mar-

Affordable housing at risk in the Southwest



This chart shows the percentage of contracts on federally subsidized housing in opportunity areas that will expire in the next five years.

Source: Reconnecting America

ket-rate prices, thereby significantly reducing the supply of affordable housing. Reconnecting America quantified the risk: Contracts on 58 percent of the federally subsidized units in opportunity areas are “at-risk” within the next five years, because these property owners could decide not to renew their contracts. The risk is greatest in the Southwest — especially in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona — where 80 percent of the contracts on housing in opportunity areas are due to expire by 2016. See chart on previous page: *Affordable housing at risk in the Southwest*.

At the same time, ensuring that housing stays affordable in urban neighborhoods near transit also poses a dilemma: It can be expensive to construct new affordable housing as well as to rehabilitate existing sub-standard affordable housing in neighborhoods where land values are increasing at a rate far above the regional average — which is the case in many metro areas.



ON THE WAY THERE

If You Lived Here You Would Be Home By Now

The popular Walk Score website, where you can calculate the walkability of any address, now also helps you find apartments based on your commute time. Enter the address of your workplace, choose how much time you are willing to spend commuting and whether you want to drive, walk or bike, take the bus or train, and Walk Score finds apartments that optimize your commute.

Walk Score also helps you find an apartment within walking distance of the subway stop or express bus station nearest your office. And the “Walkers’ Paradise” feature allows you to find apartments in the most walkable neighborhoods. The website also notes that:

- The longer your commute, the more likely you are to be overweight, have high cholesterol and suffer from neck and back pain. (Source: *Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index*.)
- Car ownership costs are the second largest household expense, with the average household spending more on their cars than on food and health care. (Source: *Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics*.)
- People who live in walkable neighborhoods are happier, healthier and more likely to volunteer and to entertain friends at home. (Source: *University of New Hampshire*.)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING YIELDS REVENUES

A 2012 STUDY BY THE National Association of Home Builders shows that affordable housing not only helps people in need, it also pumps millions of dollars into the economy and creates hundreds of jobs. The study, by NAHB senior economist Elliot Eisenberg, looked at the impact of building new apartments using low-income housing tax credits in Denver’s 10-county metropolitan statistical area, primarily along transit corridors.

Eisenberg concluded that in the first year this development provided 732 jobs, resulting in \$57.6 million in local income as well as \$5 million in taxes and other revenues for local government. He also found that the “annually recurring impact,” once the new apartments are occupied and residents are paying taxes, would be \$16.7 in local income, \$2.3 million in taxes and revenues for government, and 192 local jobs — impacts that are the result of the new apartments being occupied and residents paying taxes and otherwise participating in the local economy year after year.

Eisenberg admits that even he was surprised by the size of the total economic impact, which he estimated to be about \$200 million over 10 years. He told a meeting of the Denver Home Builders Association that “This type of housing not only provides enormous benefits to residents but it is an ongoing economic stimulus in terms of jobs and local income for the surrounding community as well. Many people think these renters don’t contribute to the economy. After all, they don’t have much money, or they wouldn’t be living in tax-credit properties. The flip side is they spend almost every dollar they earn . . . on food and services, health care, educating their kids and so on. For the city that creates a tremendous source of tax revenues. And all their money is spent locally.”

CITIES STILL SHORT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

EVEN BEFORE THE GREAT RECESSION, cities were behind the eight ball when it came to building affordable housing. Now, at the moment that so many contracts on subsidized housing units are expiring, the recession has further reduced their resources, and Congress has cut back on federal affordable housing programs as well. The largest source of funding for affordable housing has been the “low-income housing tax credit” (LIHTC), which provides dollar-for-dollar reductions in investors’ federal income tax as an incentive to get private sector investment in affordable housing, which must remain affordable for 30 years – a program signed into

law by President Ronald Reagan as part of the 1986 Tax Reform Act.

All but 16 states have added transit proximity to their scoring criteria when they rank the projects that have applied for tax credits — acknowledging that these locations also lower transportation costs.

The problem in this economy, according to a 2009 study by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing, is that as a result of the credit market meltdown, the corporate investors on whom the program relied — primarily large national banks and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac — have swung from profitability to loss, with the result that they can no longer use tax credits. "As a result, demand has plummeted and the price of LIHTCs has fallen," write the study's authors, "creating funding gaps in projects that had received tax credit allocations in 2007 and 2008 but had not yet sold them. Thousands of projects and tens of thousands of units that would have otherwise been bought or rehabilitated stalled."

Cities are also trying to entice developers to build affordable housing by providing a variety of other incentives such as property tax abatements, fee waivers, density bonuses and parking reductions. Many cities have considered "inclusionary zoning," which requires developers to set aside a percentage of units as affordable housing in otherwise market-rate projects — a strategy pioneered by Montgomery County, Maryland, the sixth wealthiest county in the U.S.

Montgomery County has built more than 10,000 affordable housing units mixed in with market-rate projects since 1974. But critics of inclusionary zoning contend that it is an "indirect tax on developers." Massachusetts' Chapter 40B, which requires a set-aside of affordable units in all apartment and condo projects in that state, only narrowly survived a ballot initiative to repeal it in 2010.

In the absence of an inclusionary housing policy, affordable housing usually ends up getting negotiated on a project-by-project basis, which often leads to proposed projects becoming a protracted battle between residents, developers and other local interests.

Sometimes, however, the results are good: The Development Commission in Portland, Oregon, used a developer agreement to convince the major landowner in the popular downtown-adjacent Pearl District to build affordable housing in return for public improvements that increased the value of his property. In return for these public investments, the landowner built 7,500 housing units for families with a mix of incomes that mirrored the city's population as a whole: 33 percent upper income, 20 percent middle income, 20 percent moderate income, 13 percent low income, and 14 percent very low income.

Zoning codes are also being rewritten to promote diverse housing choices and prices that suit the needs and budgets of singles, seniors, families with children, couples without children, and large extended families. California, for example, requires that local jurisdictions grant density bonuses of 20 to 35 percent for projects that include a percentage of affordable units and — depending on the level of affordability — devel-

opers are also offered parking reductions, which reduces the cost of development and increases the profitability.

AFFORDABLE TOD FUNDS AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

THE SEVERITY OF THE affordable housing shortage has also prompted government agencies to partner with charitable foundations, private investors and community developers to create financial resources that can be used to produce and preserve affordable housing near transit and provide other important amenities. Funds have been created in the San Francisco Bay Area, the City of Denver and in Washington, D.C, and funds or other types of financial tools are being considered in the Twin Cities, Phoenix, Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Atlanta and Los Angeles.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the \$50 million Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing Fund (TOAH Fund) was created to provide flexible



financing that allows non-profit and for-profit developers to purchase and/or develop property near public transportation throughout the nine-county region. The Great Communities Collaborative — a group of regional and national nonprofits and philanthropic organizations that includes Reconnecting America — sponsored the work that went into creating the fund with the goal of promoting the development of permanently affordable housing, including supportive housing (housing and services), as well as critical neighborhood services and amenities including childcare, social services, fresh food markets and retail.

The revolving loan fund is anticipated to allow developers to build on 20 to 30 acres of land and construct up to 4,000 units of affordable housing. It was jumpstarted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the metropolitan planning organization for the nine-county region, with a \$10 million investment. Other TOAH investors include Morgan Stanley and Citi Community Capital, the Ford Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation and Living Cities, a collaborative of national

fundes; and capital from a consortium of six community development finance institutions (CDFIs). One of the six CDFI consortium members — the Low Income Investment Fund — is the fund manager.

Continuing concerns about affordability — and the recognition that it is best to build this affordable housing in communities that are “complete” — are also prompting people to join forces by creating “equity collaboratives” that focus on the production and the preservation of affordable housing and on providing lower-income people with greater access to economic opportunity in regions that have or are building transit systems. The Great Communities Collaborative in the Bay Area was one of the first, and other collaboratives have started up in the Twin Cities, Denver, New York, Seattle and Los Angeles.

Denver’s newly formed “Mile High Connects” equity collaborative is being supported by the Ford Foundation along with several local foundations and local banks to make the case for building affordable housing near the new \$6.7 billion transit system. The Central Corridor Funders



ON THE WAY THERE

Sci-Fi Outpost: Building An Opportunity Area In A Hostile Environment

An astonishing development has arisen in the sea of big box retail and empty parking lots eight miles north of downtown Seattle, described thusly by blogger Dan Bertolet: “Cruising by Northgate Mall on I-5, the nearly completed Thornton Place evokes images of sci-fi outposts rising from the barren landscape of distant planets. In reality, Thornton Place is a daring pioneer in a built environment that is likewise hostile to human life. The conversion of nine acres of asphalt into the development is a phenomenal accomplishment.”

The development includes 200 condos and 300 apartments, 20 percent of which are priced below the market and 143 of which provide

assisted living for seniors, as well as 50,000 square feet of retail, a 14-screen cinema and great urban public space that serves as an ambitious counterpoint to an alluring stream restoration and stormwater treatment project. This effort brought the long-buried Thornton Creek back to life to treat urban stormwater runoff using a necklace of channels, pools and terraces that mimics the landscape of a natural creek, with lush native plantings, overlooks and paths.

Thornton Place is full of sustainability bells and whistles: It has its own district heating system, energy efficient and resource-conserving LEED-certified buildings, preferred parking for alternative-fueled vehicles, and it is

near a major bus transfer station and a planned light rail line. Meantime, the development also:

- Increases open space by 50 percent.
- Provides pedestrian links to adjacent neighborhoods that shorten walking distances by 50 percent.
- Reduces impervious surfaces by 78 percent.
- Stormwater treatment project removes 40-80 percent of suspended solids from 91 percent of the average annual volume of stormwater.
- 85 percent of the project’s plant palette is native species.
- Created a new habitat that was quickly colonized by native plants and birds that migrated to the site.

Collaborative in the Twin Cities is working on a range of strategies to get the most out of the light rail line now under construction between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, including ensuring that small businesses along the line aren't hit hard by the transit construction.

The "community compact" negotiated by the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative over a \$1.6 billion light rail project has become a national model for bringing communities together to articulate what — in addition to affordable housing — residents want from their public investment in transportation. This includes jobs and job training, community revitalization and economic development, progressive environmental initiatives, and protection against involuntary displacement. The collaborative is buying and stabilizing vacant properties in "livable communities where people can find jobs, go to school, and live safe, healthy lives."

A SPUTNIK MOMENT

THE U.S. POPULATION WILL GROW — the U.S. Census Bureau expects it to climb from 308 million in 2010 to 341 million in 2020 — and so will the housing market. But an estimated 90 percent of the population increase will be households without children, and 47 percent of those households will be aging Baby Boomers who are quickly becoming senior citizens. According to the Census Bureau, 20 percent of Americans will be 65 or older by 2030.

Rental housing, townhomes, condos, live-work spaces and lofts are all housing types that will appeal to these renters and homebuyers, especially if the housing is located in neighborhoods that are "friendly" to older Americans and to families with children. An Internet search for "child-friendly neighborhoods," for example, makes it clear that a large number of people are searching for them.

Directing that development into complete communities and opportunity areas near transit could be one "sweet spot" for development. See list on page 21: *Top 5 regions that are growing in opportunity areas.*

Even in regions where the population is decreasing it makes the most sense to focus resources in these places. In Detroit, for example, five companies have pledged \$4 million over five years to convince their 16,000 employees to live downtown in the hopes of creating a 24-hour community that will liven things up — including the real estate market.



Spotlight On Laredo, Texas

How often does Laredo make a Top 5 list? When it comes to the share of households living in opportunity areas, Laredo, Texas, ranks fifth in the nation after New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago. This is because Laredo has long adhered to the historic "Law of the Indies" — a body of laws used in Spanish colonies and thus throughout the Southwestern U.S. to guide the development of communities and favoring a development pattern with small blocks surrounding a central square.

These employees are eligible for a forgivable \$20,000 loan toward purchase of a primary residence, and new renters receive a \$2,500 allowance for an apartment, followed by another \$1,000 the second year. Current renters get \$1,000 to renew their leases, and homeowners receive matching funds of up to \$5,000 to improve their homes' exteriors.

Urban Land Institute CEO Patrick Phillips told the *San Diego Union-Tribune* in 2011 that he believes the city's close-in suburbs are going to be the sweet spot for redevelopment because they are close to transit, culture, entertainment, parks and other infrastructure. "They have a distinct urban feel but don't have the urban grit," he said. "They are walkable, architecturally interesting — and they are employment centers."

Phillips believes the housing market bust could be the development industry's "Sputnik moment" — a time when re-thinking how and where we build could spark a wave of innovation and investment that could in turn fix both the housing market and the American economy.

BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS, SAME NEIGHBORS

THE BIGGEST QUESTION, HOWEVER, remains unanswered: How do we get the right mix of affordable and market-rate housing, and how do we build more housing and transit and other neighborhood improvements but still leave in place the unique character and attributes of the neighborhood, and ensure that the people who already live there don't get pushed out?

A Reconnecting America study for the Los Angeles Housing Department found that 75 percent of Los Angeles residents who commute to work on public transportation make less than \$25,000 a year. But Los Angeles has begun an ambitious transit expansion that will put the neighborhoods where these lower-income residents live within an easy 15-minute transit ride of hundreds of thousands of jobs, and even before transit construction began there has been an

uptick in property values in these neighborhoods.

The redevelopment effort around three subway stations in Hollywood provides a complicated picture: Hollywood had been on the skids for decades before the stations opened, but in the dozen years following the incomes of households near stations and the number of cars owned by these households increased — and property tax revenues for the city increased six-fold.

Hollywood has staged a major comeback and business is booming, even in the recession, but are the new residents driving their cars, walking or biking, or taking transit? What happened to the lower-income people with fewer cars who were living there before? And what are the policies that work best to manage this change in a way that benefits everyone and ensures high transit ridership?



SHOUT-OUTS

Downtown Revitalizations And Smart Growth Incentives

■ Six major land owners in suburban White Flint, Maryland, have agreed to finance a “21st century boulevard” with wide sidewalks, bike lanes, six rows of trees and lanes dedicated for transit in return for being allowed to build at higher densities near the Metro Red Line station.

■ The planned Atlanta Beltline, a 33-mile circular light rail line on an abandoned rail corridor connecting 45 downtown and Midtown neighborhoods, could become this country's most ambitious TOD project. The rail line and greenway with bike and pedestrian paths is expected to activate the real estate market around an estimated 3,000 acres of underutilized properties, and connect to the MARTA heavy rail line.

■ Development in downtown Las Vegas, especially rental housing, is moving forward in spite of the recession, with businesses such as Zappos — which just moved its corporate headquarters downtown — providing money

to repave streets, widen sidewalks and other improvements. Local government is doing a lot to incentivize this growth with public investment, and is working closely with developers.

■ Downtown LaCrosse, Wisconsin emptied out when a new mall was built on the outskirts in the late 1970s. But the city has been offering low-interest loans to developers to build new buildings and renovate historic ones, with the results that people and businesses are moving back downtown — all during the Great Recession.

■ Santa Fe, New Mexico, declined offers to build a large-scale mixed-use project that would have taken down historic buildings on a 50-acre site adjacent to a station built in the late 1800s and now served by commuter rail. The city opted instead to lease anchor sites at below-market rents to an arts-based teen center, contemporary arts organization, Latino cultural center and a farmers market, and adapting the historic

structures for housing, retail and office. The project has become a catalyst for surrounding economic development.

■ Washington, D.C., already well-served by its rail system, plans to build a 37-mile-long streetcar system that would put 50 percent of the city's residences within walking distance of rail transit — up from 16 percent in 2011.

■ Tulsa, Oklahoma, is offering \$3 million in incentives for developers to build downtown housing with the goal of bringing back Tulsa's glory days when the streets were bustling with people and excitement.

■ In Phoenix local and national funders have created a \$10 million Sustainable Communities Development Fund (the goal is to increase it to \$50 million) to finance TOD, with an emphasis on affordable housing. Money can also be used to build grocery stores, childcare and other amenities.

For example, what is the right mix of incentives and exactions that can convince developers and investors to build near transit, but that also captures some of the land and property value that will be created, and uses that value to help subsidize affordable housing and other investments that improve neighborhoods?

A nonprofit organization in Los Angeles named SAJE (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy), which has positioned itself to address “the collision course that redevelopment and gentrification have set in motion in downtown Los Angeles” — where many of those transit riders who make less than \$25,000 live — captured the essence of this balancing act in the title of a publication: “Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors.”

As the demand for housing near transit increases, it’s important that lower-income people who are the most frequent users of transit can continue living where they will get the benefit of lower cost housing and transportation costs. Nationally, a larger percentage of lower-income households live near stations and in opportunity areas: 50 percent of all households in station areas are low-income, and 53 percent of all households in opportunity areas are low-income. As a point of comparison, nationally only 40 percent of households are lower-income.

In the online magazine *Grist*, Claire Thompson speculates on one solution to the threat of gentrification in her own suburban Seattle neighborhood: “One of the best ways would be for the neighborhood’s newcomers to invest their resources and energy in its existing infrastructures instead of totally taking and making them over — newcomers could send their kids to local public schools, which are starved for parental involvement. They could patronize the Ethiopian restaurant and Vietnamese nail salon, and the Mexican taco trucks — as well as the new foodie cafes. They could ride public transportation alongside their neighbors, to send the message that they want to be a part of the community that’s already there.”

In fact, communities are always in flux. The key to smart planning is how we manage the changes so that “the community’s that’s already there” continues to be a vital part of the ever-evolving neighborhood. The Top 10 lists on the following pages highlight some regions that are doing well by our Living metrics, and are getting closer to becoming complete communities. The full list of metrics for 366 regions can be found on our website: reconnectingamerica.org/arewethereyet



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Households Living
Near Fixed-Guideway Transit

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	44.55%
2	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	27.56%
3	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	27.12%
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	25.01%
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	24.22%
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	15.19%
7	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	10.95%
8	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	8.03%
9	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	5.04%
10	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	4.52%
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	20.37%
2	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	13.56%
3	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	9.42%
4	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	8.19%
5	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	7.89%
6	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	7.38%
7	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	7.03%
8	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	6.75%
9	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	4.98%
10	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	3.60%
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	13.04%
2	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	7.27%
3	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	6.50%
4	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	5.53%
5	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	5.41%
6	Stockton, CA MSA	3.72%
7	Worcester, MA MSA	3.53%
8	Lancaster, PA MSA	3.48%
9	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	3.43%
10	Albuquerque, NM MSA	2.58%
1	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	11.54%
2	Santa Fe, NM MSA	10.70%
3	Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA MSA	9.90%
4	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	9.59%
5	Michigan City-La Porte, IN MSA	8.41%
6	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	6.44%
7	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	5.68%
8	Longview, TX MSA	4.75%
9	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	4.14%
10	Bellingham, WA MSA	4.08%

Source: CTOD

Percent Of Households Living
In Opportunity Areas

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	63.5%
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	54.7%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	43.8%
4	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	38.8%
5	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	33.7%
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	32.3%
7	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	27.3%
8	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	22.6%
9	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	19.1%
10	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	18.3%
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	31.9%
2	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	29.5%
3	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	27.5%
4	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	27.2%
5	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	22.5%
6	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	22.0%
7	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	20.2%
8	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	19.0%
9	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	18.8%
10	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	15.5%
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	32.9%
2	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	24.9%
3	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	21.5%
4	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA MSA	20.4%
5	Stockton, CA MSA	14.8%
6	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	14.4%
7	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	14.3%
8	Elmira, NY MSA	13.9%
9	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	13.7%
10	Syracuse, NY MSA	13.0%
1	Laredo, TX MSA	36.4%
2	Altoona, PA MSA	29.8%
3	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	25.6%
4	Salinas, CA MSA	25.2%
5	Erie, PA MSA	23.5%
6	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	22.0%
7	Lebanon, PA MSA	21.0%
8	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	20.6%
9	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA MSA	19.6%
10	Spokane, WA MSA	19.1%

Source: Reconnecting America



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent of Households Near Fixed-Guideway
Transit That Are Low Income

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA	54%
2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	54%
3	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-W MSA	53%
4	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	52%
5	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	52%
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	51%
7	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	49%
8	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	49%
9	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	48%
10	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI MSA	47%
1	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade--Roseville, CA MSA	53%
2	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	52%
3	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC MSA	52%
4	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	51%
5	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	51%
6	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	50%
7	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	50%
8	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	50%
9	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	49%
10	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	45%
1	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	61%
2	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	58%
3	Albuquerque, NM MSA	53%
4	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	51%
5	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	49%
6	Lancaster, PA MSA	48%
7	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	44%
8	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	43%
9	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	41%
10	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	37%
1	Longview, WA MSA	59%
2	Michigan City-La Porte, IN MSA	59%
3	Hagerstown-Martinsburg, MD-WV MSA	56%
4	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	55%
5	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	55%
6	Glens Falls, NY MSA	53%
7	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	51%
8	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	50%
9	San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles, CA MSA	50%
10	Bellingham, WA MSA	42%

Source: CTOD

Percent Of Households In Opportunity Areas
That Are Low Income

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	61%
2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA	61%
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	57%
4	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	57%
5	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	56%
6	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	55%
7	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA	55%
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	54%
9	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	54%
10	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	54%
1	Birmingham-Hoover, AL MSA	62%
2	Jacksonville, FL MSA	62%
3	Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA	61%
4	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN MSA	61%
5	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	61%
6	Columbus, OH MSA	60%
7	Austin-Round Rock, TX MSA	59%
8	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	59%
9	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	59%
10	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	59%
1	Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	63%
2	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA	63%
3	Wichita, KS MSA	62%
4	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	62%
5	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	61%
6	Bakersfield, CA MSA	61%
7	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	61%
8	Dayton, OH MSA	60%
9	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA MSA	60%
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	60%
1	Canton-Massillon, OH MSA	62%
2	Bloomington-Normal, IL MSA	62%
3	Ithaca, NY MSA	62%
4	Fargo, ND-MN MSA	62%
5	Port St. Lucie, FL MSA	62%
6	Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH MSA	62%
7	Peoria, IL MSA	62%
8	Pueblo, CO MSA	62%
9	Morgantown, WV MSA	61%
10	Anderson, IN MSA	61%

Source: Reconnecting America



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Section 8/202 Units Near Fixed-Guideway Transit

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	60.2%
2	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	47.9%
3	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	46.2%
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	42.0%
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	41.7%
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	28.7%
7	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	22.9%
8	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	22.6%
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	21.3%
10	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	13.6%
1	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	39.8%
2	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	34.9%
3	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	34.5%
4	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	27.8%
5	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	24.8%
6	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	18.8%
7	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	18.8%
8	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	15.9%
9	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	15.3%
10	Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA	11.1%
1	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	29.7%
2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	28.9%
3	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	17.9%
4	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	10.8%
5	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA	10.1%
6	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	6.6%
7	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	6.5%
8	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	5.7%
9	Stockton, CA MSA	4.9%
10	Lancaster, PA MSA	3.2%
1	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	54.9%
2	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	40.7%
3	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	34.7%
4	Norwich-New London, CT MSA	23.3%
5	Hagerstown-Martinsburg, MD-WV MSA	16.5%
6	Santa Fe, NM MSA	10.7%
7	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	4.6%
8	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	3.5%
9	San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles, CA MSA	2.8%
10	Salem, OR MSA	2.8%

Source: Reconnecting America

Percent Of Section 8/202 Units In Opportunity Areas

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	85.1%
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	78.7%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	67.9%
4	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	63.9%
5	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	61.5%
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	53.7%
7	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	46.3%
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	44.2%
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	41.7%
10	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	40.6%
1	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	56.4%
2	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	52.1%
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	49.9%
4	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	48.6%
5	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	47.3%
6	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	46.1%
7	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	45.0%
8	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	43.9%
9	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	42.3%
10	Rochester, MN MSA	39.7%
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	65.9%
2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	57.6%
3	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	57.3%
4	Lancaster, PA MSA	49.2%
5	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	45.2%
6	Stockton, CA MSA	41.9%
7	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	40.6%
8	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	36.5%
9	Worcester, MA MSA	35.1%
10	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	32.9%
1	Pocatello, ID MSA	75.9%
2	Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL MSA	75.5%
3	Springfield, IL MSA	73.1%
4	Salinas, CA MSA	68.7%
5	Laredo, TX MSA	64.6%
6	Williamsport, PA MSA	64.1%
7	Madera-Chowchilla, CA MSA	62.8%
8	Missoula, MT MSA	62.4%
9	Mankato-North Mankato, MN MSA	60.9%
10	Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA	60.8%

Source: Reconnecting America



TOP TEN

Growth In Opportunity Areas Compared To Region (higher shows more growth in opportunity areas)

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	1.06
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	0.99
3	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	0.99
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	0.99
5	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	0.98
6	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	0.97
7	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	0.96
8	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	0.95
9	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	0.95
10	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	0.95
1	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MS	1.14
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	1.00
3	Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA	0.99
4	Birmingham-Hoover, AL MSA	0.99
5	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	0.99
6	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	0.98
7	Raleigh-Cary, NC MSA	0.97
8	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	0.96
9	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	0.96
10	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	0.95
1	Chattanooga, TN-GA MSA	1.08
2	Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	1.04
3	Honolulu, HI MSA	1.02
4	Knoxville, TN MSA	1.01
5	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	0.99
6	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	0.97
7	Dayton, OH MSA	0.97
8	Toledo, OH MSA	0.96
9	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	0.95
10	Springfield, MA MSA	0.94
1	Lafayette, LA MSA	1.53
2	Hattiesburg, MS MSA	1.31
3	Longview, TX MSA	1.23
4	Bloomington-Normal, IL MSA	1.20
5	Danville, IL MSA	1.17
6	Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton, NJ MSA	1.10
7	Altoona, PA MSA	1.07
8	Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL MSA	1.06
9	Hot Springs, AR MSA	1.06
10	Eau Claire, WI MSA	1.04

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Source: Reconnecting America



Working

A NEW 9 TO 5

JUST AS AMERICANS ARE changing their ideas about what makes a house a home, there's a new "9 to 5" with the emergence of "knowledge-based economies" and an "information society" that capitalizes on the generation and distribution of new ideas, technology and other creative content to provide a competitive advantage. The main players in this new economic order are the "creative class" and a growing service sector that works at all hours. As the industrial age has drawn to a close the global economy has come to rely less on proximity to natural resources such as timber, coal and oil, and cities and their suburbs are assuming a heightened role as a result.

"For more than 30 years, the American economy has been in the midst of a sea change, shifting from industry to services and information, and integrating itself far more tightly into a single, global market for goods, labor and capital," writes Don Peck in a 2011 article in *The Atlantic* entitled "Can the Middle Class Be Saved?" "To some degree, this transformation has felt disruptive all along. But the pace of the change has quickened since the turn of the millennium, and even more so since the crash."

Well over half the world's population now lives in cities, according to a 2012 study for Citigroup by *The Economist* magazine's Economist Intelligence Unit which defines cities as metropolitan areas that include both cities and their suburbs (we will use the term "region" when

discussing the report). The authors say that for most countries today, economic success hinges on the performance of these metropolitan regions, and that as mass urbanization continues across the world, they will wield greater and greater influence.

The study ranks regions from around the world according to their ability to be competitive — to attract capital, businesses, talent and visitors — and found that while the business and regulatory environment is important, the "quality of human capital" and the quality of life helped the highest-ranking regions sustain a high economic growth rate and harmonious business and social environment.

New York City placed first in the rankings. "I've always believed that talent attracts capital more effectively and consistently than capital attracts talent," New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg says in the Economist Intelligence Unit report.

The study found a clear correlation between human capital and overall competitiveness, and talent was cited as a key difference between many regions in developed and emerging economies, with the former focusing on skills development and the latter on low-cost labor. "Many firms fight to attract highly educated and skilled workers, and as such many choose new [regions] for growth on the basis of the potential talent pool located there," note the study's authors. "An ongoing shift toward a more knowledge-oriented economy is exacerbating this process."

The study also found that while regions of all sizes can be competitive, density is a factor, with bigger regions offering a larger labor pool, higher demand and economies of scale. However, the report's authors note, these regions must be planned correctly — or else “congestion and other issues can actively impede their competitiveness” — as well as provide the kind of housing, transportation, lifestyle choices and quality of life that the “talent” they are competing for wants.

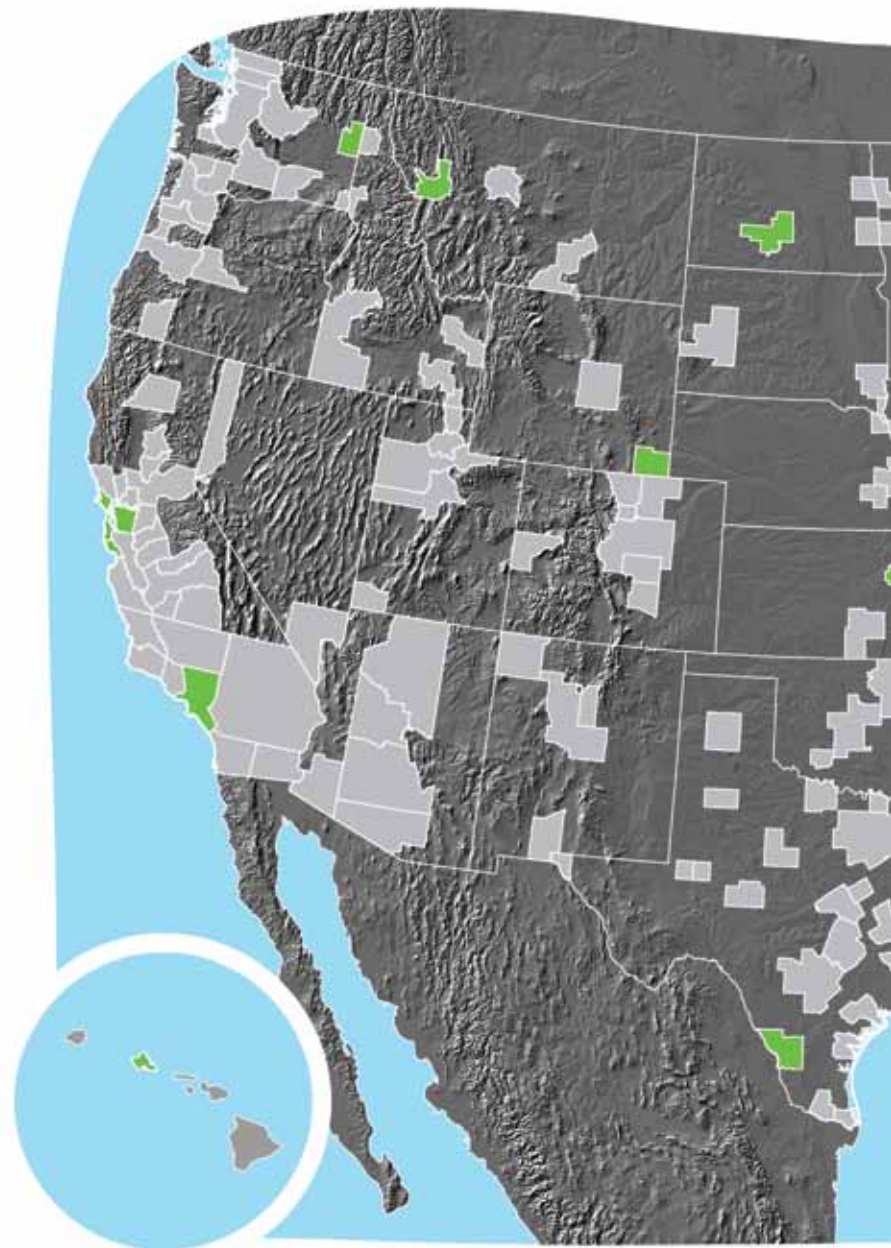
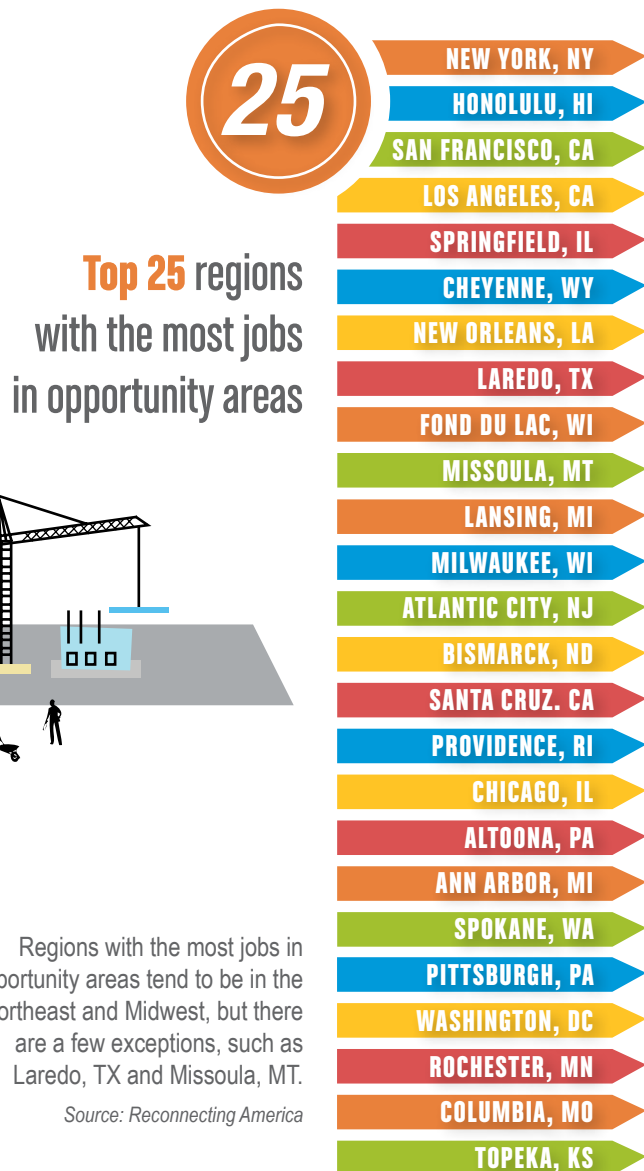
This shift toward a knowledge-based economy, however, is leaving some Americans behind: The production and manufacturing jobs that were once the backbone of the American middle class — which according to a 2012 Pew Research Center Study has shrunk from 61 percent of the adult population in 1971 to just 51 percent today — have dis-

appeared or moved offshore. The middle class is defined as those with annual household incomes in 2010 between \$39,000 and \$118,000 for a family of three.

“The notion that we are a society with a large middle class, with lots of economic and social mobility and a belief that each generation does better than the next — these are among the core tenets of what it means to be an American,” Paul Taylor of the Pew Research Center told the *Los Angeles Times*. “But that’s not necessarily the case any more.”

STAYING COMPETITIVE

IN ORDER TO ADDRESS the growing income disparity, and stay competitive in this 21st century reorganization of markets, labor and resources,



the American landscape is likely to change at least as much as it did in the years following World War II. Then the U.S. built a national highway system that opened up new markets and propelled the country into decades of prosperity. Now the same factors that are changing the housing market — rising gas prices, the recession, the high rate of housing foreclosures in suburban locations, the loss of construction and real estate industry jobs that had emerged during the housing boom — are changing the commercial real estate market too.

While jobs in virtually all industries have moved out to the suburbs over the last several decades, there is anecdotal evidence that this trend is reversing as corporations compete with each other to attract and retain talent. At the same time, there's increasing interest in retrofitting

the suburbs so that they remain strong during this time of changing consumer demands, demographic shifts and market forces.

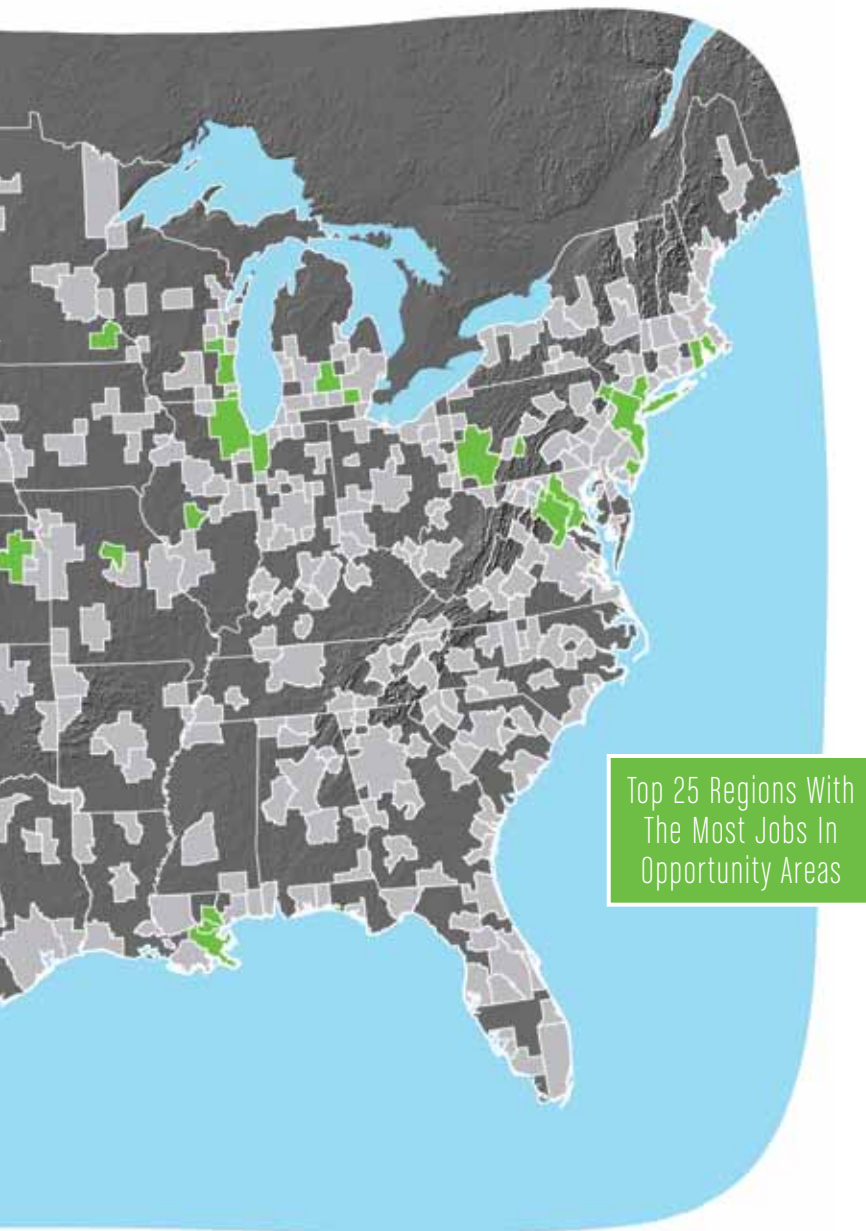
This is a hugely important task because two-thirds of working-age residents live in the suburbs, as well as the majority of low-income households, according to the Brookings Institution's 2011 "Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America" report. Moreover, the suburbs are home to twice as much office space as central business districts, according to a 2010 story in the *Wall Street Journal* that cites statistics from the real estate data firm Reis, Inc. Ensuring that these places continue to attract residents and workers and remain financially stable will help ensure that the U.S. as a whole remains globally competitive.

Opportunity areas — neighborhoods or parts of neighborhoods with smaller blocks and moderate density housing and/or jobs — can and should play a significant role in this reorganization. Opportunity areas in both urban and suburban locations can provide the foundation for high transit ridership and streets filled with pedestrians and people on bikes. This is good for business and helps support a thriving economy.

Opportunity areas offer density and an intensity of activity that is the kind of environment that has been shown to attract "talent." The Memphis Smart City Consulting blog put it this way in a 2010 post: "Talent remains the top priority for Memphis . . . downtown redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization or economic growth [can] keep us from the hardest work [which is] to create, attract and retain talent. It's easy to build big projects. It's not as easy to build the creative ecosystem, the culture of innovation and the connectivity that joins creatives into a force for a stronger future."

According to Reconnecting America's research, 25 percent of all jobs in the U.S. are located in opportunity areas, while only 10 percent of all jobs are located within walking distance of fixed-guideway transit — suggesting we could be doing a much better job of siting new transit lines to connect people to jobs. See map at left. *Top 25 Regions with jobs in opportunity areas.*

However, planned transit projects would connect another 3.5 million people, a 26 percent increase, to jobs across the U.S. These fixed-guideway transit projects — rail or bus rapid transit lines on a dedicated right-of-way set apart from traffic — connect downtowns with major job centers and residential neighborhoods. Reconnecting America's research only considered fixed-guideway transit but people are connected to many more jobs when you factor in high-frequency bus.



THE CREATIVE CLASS

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE in this country of the changing preferences of the younger generation of workers called the “Millennials” or “Gen Y” — the children of Baby Boomers born between 1980 and 1995 — who show a preference for living and working in dynamic urban settings. Many Millennials qualify as members of the “creative class,” the main players in the knowledge-based economy. See map below: *Top 10 regions with the most highly educated 18- to 34-year-olds.*

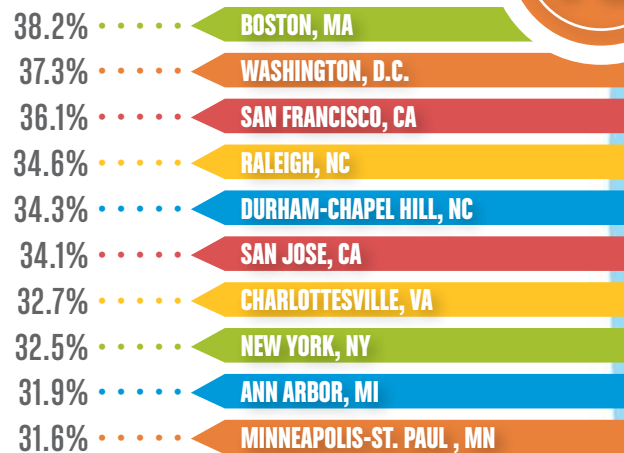
Creative class workers are scientists, engineers, artists, musicians, university professors and other educators, architects, designers, and

professionals whose economic function is, according to Richard Florida — who coined the term in his 2001 book *The Rise of the Creative Class* — to think up new approaches to problems. Caroline Dowd-Higgins, a career and professional development expert, writes that among Gen Y workers, “owner” is the fifth most popular job title because this is an entrepreneurial generation. “Even though most of their companies won’t succeed,” she writes on Huffington Post. “They are demonstrating an unprecedented entrepreneurial spirit.”

The national nonprofit CEOs for Cities attributes 58 percent of a

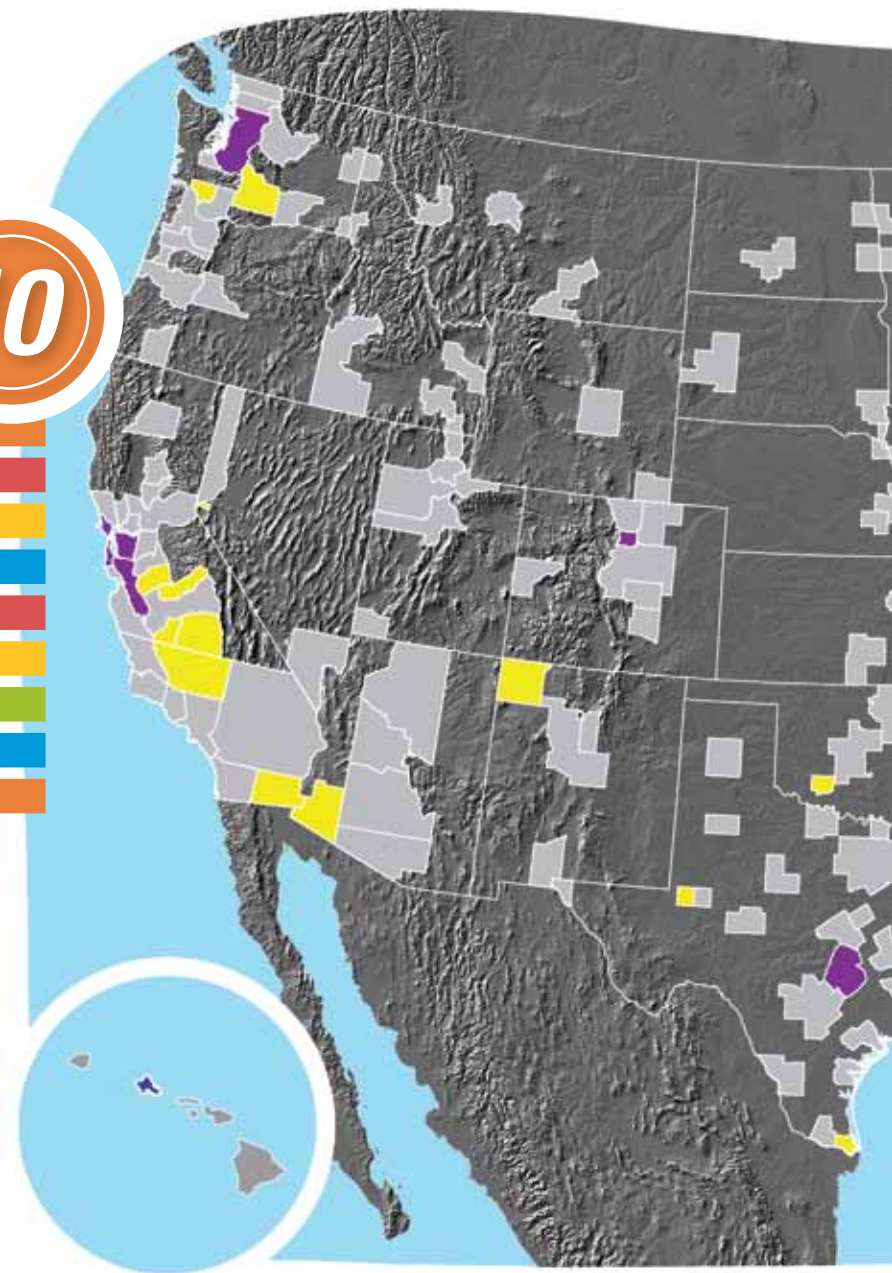
Top 10 regions with the most highly educated 18- to 34-year-olds

10



Source: U.S. Census

Regions with the least highly educated 18- to 34-year-olds are scattered across the South and Southwest, while the most highly educated are concentrated in the North and Northeast.

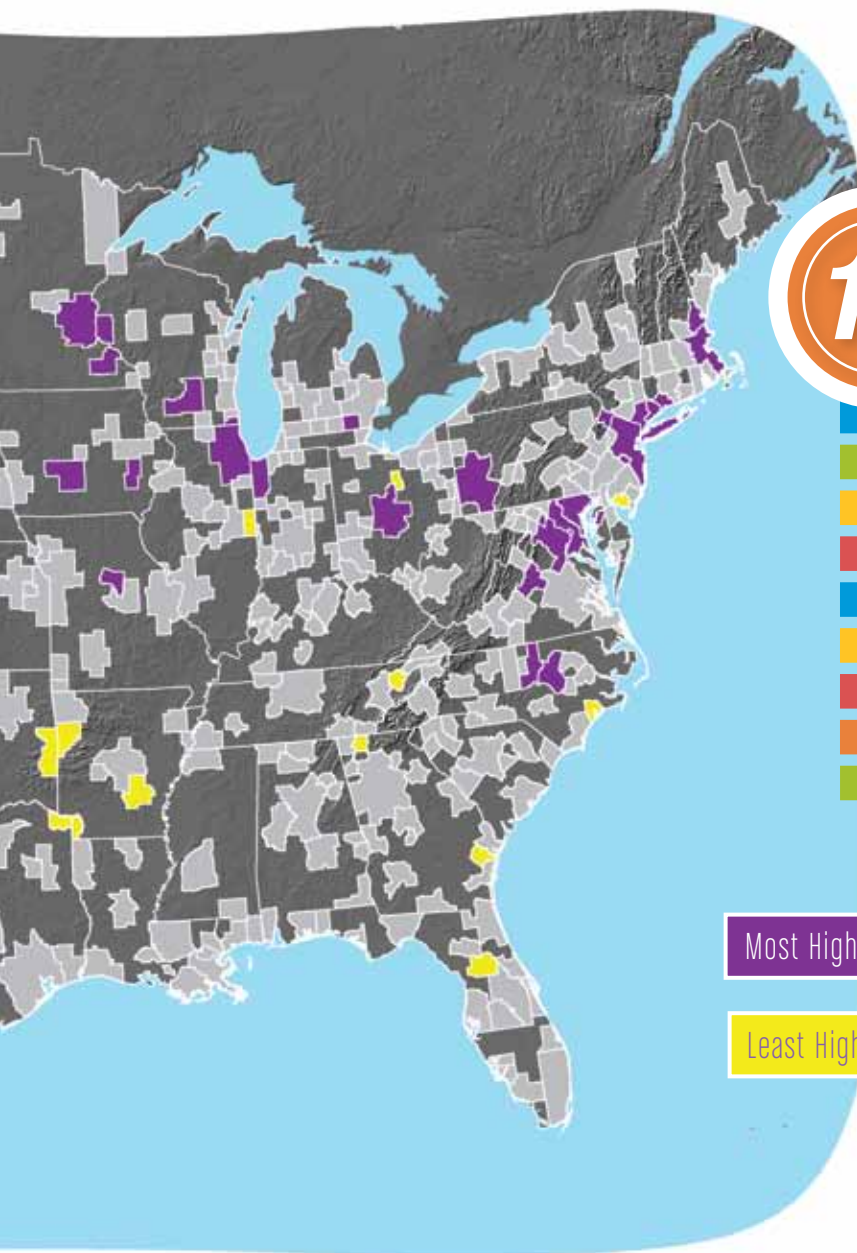


city's success, as measured by per capita income, to the percentage of the adult population with a college degree. In 2011, after updating its 2005 "The Young and Restless in a Knowledge Economy" study with new census data, the organization reported that since 2000 the number of college-educated 25-to-34-year-olds increased by 26 percent in the close-in neighborhoods of the nation's large cities, twice as much as in further-out neighborhoods.

In part because of the nature of creative work and the conditions required for a "culture of innovation," this younger generation

of workers prefers lifestyles that offer myriad opportunities for social interaction and the exchange of ideas. This generation doesn't want to commute by car — in fact many Millennials don't own cars — though they are likely to own the latest technology to help them communicate and engage with the world, whether corporally or virtually, socially or for business.

A 2011 story in *Fortune* magazine adds that this generation is also weighing corporate values when making decisions about where they will work – and "going green" is quickly climbing the list of



10

Top 10 regions with the least highly educated 18- to 34-year-olds

HANFORD, CA	5.6%
MADERA, CA	6.0%
JACKSONVILLE, NC	6.1%
YUMA, AZ	6.7%
VISALIA, CA	7.0%
MERCED, CA	7.3%
FARMINGTON, NM	7.8%
ODESSA, TX	8.1%
HINESVILLE, GA	8.1%
BAKERSFIELD, CA	8.5%

Source: U.S.Census

Most Highly Educated

Least Highly Educated

values they care about. The article quotes Wayne Balta, IBM's VP of corporate environmental affairs, who says these younger workers may be using a company's sustainability record as a proxy for other positive qualities: "They've figured out that companies that are pro-



ON THE WAY THERE

Tysons Corner In Fairfax County, VA

TYSONS CORNER IS Virginia's mightiest jobs hub, a car-dominated five-square-mile tangle of 6,000 businesses, 14 hotels, two shopping malls and a dozen auto dealers that is criss-crossed by four wide highways and has more parking spaces — 167,000 — than the number of people who live and work there. The traffic congestion is legendary — caused in part by the fact that five times as many workers drive in (105,000) than actually live there (18,000). And while Tysons serves as suburban Fairfax County's downtown, it doesn't seem like a downtown, with few grocery stores, no churches, and just a smattering of aging high-rise apartment buildings and condos.

Tysons is expected to continue to grow, given its proximity to Washington, D.C., but property owners worry about how that can happen given the traffic and the fact that there are no options to driving, even to a nearby restaurant. "Growth is good. Growth is inevitable. Growth is coming," Doug Carter, an architect who has been working with property owners, says in the *Washington Post*. "But we're going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg for the entire Washington, D.C. area unless we do something constructive."

The decision to build the Silver Line extension of Metrorail through Tysons has galvanized a plan to turn it into something like nearby Arlington, which has over several decades been transformed from a declining suburban commercial corridor into one of Washington, D.C.'s most highly desirable neighborhoods. Dense development around five closely spaced Metrorail stations has succeeded in generating enormous investment and tax revenues, in the meantime minimizing the increase in traffic — most residents walk to rail stations and take transit to jobs in downtown Washington, D.C. — and preserving the quiet single family neighborhoods on the periphery.

The plan is to turn Tysons into an urban center by clustering office, retail and residential development around the four new Metrorail stations, with tree-lined walkable streets, sidewalk cafes, a performing arts center, parks and plazas, an urban elementary school, athletic fields and other uses that will turn Tysons into a 24/7 city where people can work, play and live.

gressive and innovating in this area are themselves more innovative [overall]," says Balta. Adds Jason Jeffay, senior VP at a consulting firm named Mercer, "Millennials also understand that social responsibility can affect a company's financials."

Florida has deemed the presence of the creative class to be the biggest predictor of a region's economic success — because while these workers makes up 30 percent of the U.S. workforce, according to Florida, they account for nearly 50 percent of wages. Other pundits agree the creative class is hugely important to a region's prosperity not only because they are the future but also because the American workforce won't continue to expand in the way that it has in the past.

For the past half century the American economy was buoyed by an increasing number of Baby Boomers, college graduates and by the entrance of women into the labor force. But this dynamic is changing. According to the CEOs for Cities report, the number of college graduates has reached a plateau, there are now as many women employed as men and Baby Boomers are reaching the age of retirement en masse.

During the last 50 years the strength of America's middle class and workforce was supported by robust public investment in education and job training as well as in infrastructure that connected people with affordable housing, jobs and markets. The comparison with conditions for the up-and-coming generation couldn't be in sharper contrast: A 2011 study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that over the last decade child poverty in the U.S. surged 38 percent. The U.S. Census shows that one in four children under the age of 6 currently lives in poverty.

Casey Foundation CEO Patrick McCarthy told the Huffington Post that children who experience even a bout of poverty are less likely to graduate from high school, are more likely to become very young parents, have more difficulties learning and earn less money than their non-poor peers as adults. "Child poverty is in some ways a leading indicator of how the country is going to be doing down the road," McCarthy says.

THE MOVE BACK TO THE CITY

WHILE THE CREATIVE CLASS is causing seismic shifts in the urban landscape — bringing investment, entrepreneurship and creative class jobs into downtowns and urban neighborhoods — shifts are also underway in the suburbs. For every decade since the 1920s the

suburbs have grown faster than their city centers but this summer census data showed that between 2010 and 2011 city centers grew faster than suburbs in 27 of the nation's 51 largest metropolitan areas. From 2000 to 2010, in contrast, only five metro areas saw their cores grow faster than their surrounding suburbs.

There is also anecdotal evidence of a similar shift in commercial real estate. The *Wall Street Journal*, for example, noted in 2012 that the big box chains Lowe's and Best Buy are saddled with poorly performing stores "whose problems may have less to do with how they are run but more where they are located . . . Through much of the decade, expansion-minded retailers followed a strategy of chasing rooftops. As home-builders plunked down houses farther and farther away from urban centers, retail real-estate developers followed with new shopping centers. But the recession and housing bust put an end to that."

The *Journal* notes that with population growth in the suburbs at a standstill, store customers never showed up and higher-income households — the customers most valued by retailers — are gravitating closer to the urban core. "It's a demographic shift that could potentially be as disruptive for retailers as the previous push to the suburbs, which eventually did in the likes of Montgomery Ward," the *Journal* article concludes.

Crain's Chicago Business was blunt in a special issue in 2011 entitled "Corporate Campuses in Twilight," declaring: "Like the disco ball, the regional shopping mall and the McMansion, the suburban corporate headquarters campus is losing its charm . . . Remote, sprawling and splendidly isolated, these headquarters epitomized corporate America in the last quarter of the 20th century."

The article focuses on Chicago, which saw a tripling of private-sector employment in the suburban "collar counties" in the '70s and '80s, but which is now seeing companies such as Allstate, Motorola, AT&T, GE Capital and even Sears reconsidering their suburban locations. *Crain's* quotes Joe Mansueto, chairman and CEO of Morningstar, an investment research and analysis firm based in downtown Chicago: "The whole corporate campus seems a little dated," he says, adding that downtown locations help keep companies competitive because their employees are aware of cultural and technological trends.

The *Crain's* article also concludes that if these trends continue transportation planners need to focus less on building suburban highways and more on moving people in and around central city busi-

ness districts. "Your transportation investments ought to be driven by your desire to grow the economy, not to spread investment across the state like peanut butter, which is what we do now," says Frank Beal, executive director of Metropolis Principles, a nonprofit group of business and civic leaders. "The global economy is changing in ways that demand higher densities that can only be serviced with transit."

It is hard to imagine what some of the larger downtowns in the



SHOUT-OUTS

Transit Agencies Providing Owl Services

Below are shout-outs to some of the agencies that have been able to go the extra mile to serve non-rush-hour commuters, who include food servers and retail clerks, attendants who work in hospitals and nursing homes, and cleaning crews. The Federal Transit Administration has provided funding through its Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program for transit service at night, on weekends and along less-traveled routes, and to help families get their children to childcare. But the JARC program was eliminated in the 2012 federal transportation reauthorization, creating an uncertain future for many of these services.

- San Antonio's VIA Metropolitan Transit service from 4 a.m. to 1 a.m.
- Portland's Swan Island Shuttle after-hours service to FedEx and UPS.
- NYC's Request A Stop allows late-night riders to get out anywhere along a bus route from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.
- Laughlin, Nevada's 24-hour shuttle service for casino employees.
- Chicago's 24/7 Night Owl service, with an owl logo on bus maps.
- Bay Area All Nighter shuttle service to BART and Caltrain stations.
- Essex County, New Jersey's demand-responsive night owl service to Newark Penn Station and surrounding neighborhoods from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.
- Indianapolis late-night IndyGo bus service from low-income neighborhoods to industrial areas and the airport.
- Monroe, Louisiana's Night Rider service for late-night workers at retail outlets.
- The Niagara Frontier Transit Authority's after-midnight service between Buffalo and its suburbs.
- The Research Triangle Park in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill region's "emergency ride home" program.

U.S. would look like if everyone had to drive to get there. For example, more than 125,000 workers commute into downtown Pittsburgh every day, according to the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, and if every one of them drove alone, the entire 50-acre downtown would be a parking lot. Fortunately, more than half commute on foot, by bike or on transit, providing the downtown with a vibrant, animated streetlife — which is good for business.

A number of news stories have also suggested that downtown office space is rebounding from the recession more quickly than suburban business parks. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that at the end of the third quarter in 2010 the national office vacancy rate was 19 percent in the suburbs, compared to 14.9 percent in downtowns.

In suburban Los Angeles and Orange counties, for example, more than 5 percent of the total office space inventory was vacated between January 2009 and September 2010 — while downtown Los Angeles, in contrast, lost just 1.8 percent.

The *Journal* also found that the property values of downtown office space increased 40 percent since the low point in 2009, whereas the value of suburban office space fell 4 percent. The article suggested that this was because downtown space was perceived as a lower risk and more likely to retain its value over time.

In 2012 the *New York Times* cited a study on aging office parks, called “What’s Old Is New Again,” that predicts by 2025 more than 6.3 billion square feet of vacant office space will exist in the U.S., at the same time that demand will grow for multifamily rental housing. Much as Arthur Nelson suggests in the Living chapter that McMansions and single-family homes be turned into multifamily housing, this study suggests that office parks could be rezoned for this purpose. The study also

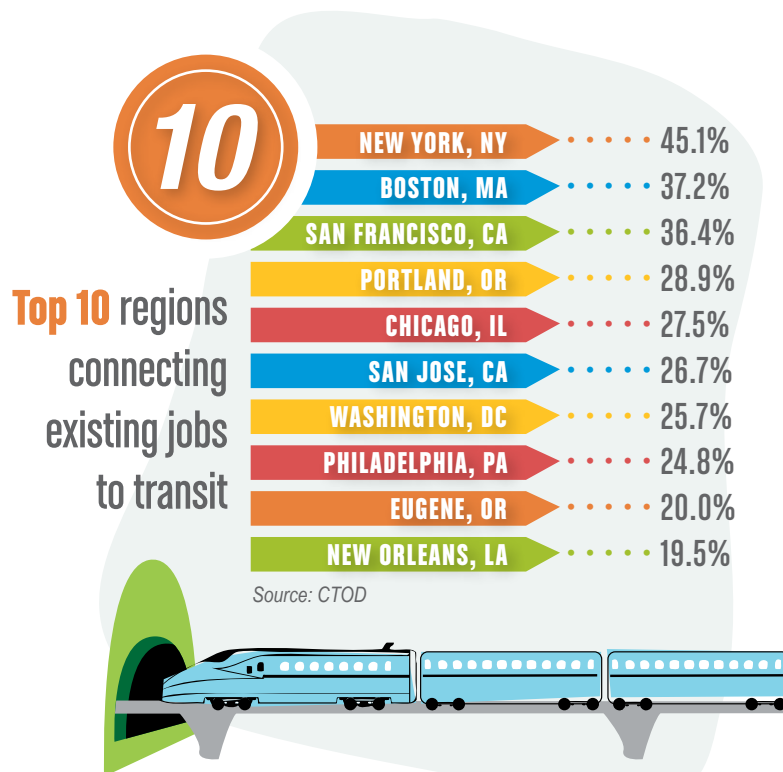
notes that the most successful office park retrofits are those with access to rail lines or major highways that also provide access to transit.

REFURBISHING THE SUBURBS

SUBURBAN EMPLOYERS SAY it can be difficult to recruit employees, a situation that sparked national interest last year when an email from a Michigan patent attorney appeared on blogs across the U.S. With a subject line reading “Why our growing firm may have to leave Michigan,” Andrew Basile Jr., CEO of Young, Basile, Hanlon & MacFarlane, PC, writes: “Our recruiters are very blunt. They say it is almost impossible to recruit to Michigan without paying big premiums above competitive salaries on the coasts. People — particularly affluent and educated people — just don’t want to live here.”

“Things are spread too far apart,” he notes, with “thousands of miles of streets and dingy strip malls” and “poor quality of place.” He adds, “You have to drive everywhere. There’s no mass transit. There’s no open space. It’s impossible to get around on a bike without taking your life into your hands. Most people lead sedentary lifestyles.” And while his company would like to stay in Michigan, he says: “We have a problem. It’s not taxes or regulations. . . We spend more on copiers and toners than we do on state taxes. Our problem is access to talent.”

Richard Florida notes in a 2010 *Wall Street Journal* article that “the suburbs that have continued to prosper during the downturn are those that share many attributes with the best urban neighborhoods: walkability, vibrant street life, density and diversity. The clustering of people and firms is a basic engine of modern economic life. When interesting people encounter each other, they spark new ideas and accelerate the formation of new enterprises. Renewing the suburbs will require retrofitting them for these new ways of living and working.”



That means quality transit, sidewalks, bike lanes and housing for people with a mix of incomes, jobs and retail located close enough together that you can get from one to the other on foot or by bike.

Regions across the U.S. have begun suburban retrofits that show enormous promise, including a handful of suburbs in Atlanta; Phoenix; Prince George’s County, MD; Minneapolis; Lakewood, CO; Tyson’s Corner, VA. In some suburbs and outlying areas shopping malls and strip malls have been converted into “lifestyle centers.” Roofs have been taken off, and they’ve been redesigned as small towns, with sidewalks, curbs, streetlamps and benches, and are walkable by design.

Successfully retrofitting the suburbs is important for many reasons, not the least of which is that the suburbs are where more than half of all lower- and middle-skilled jobs — those requiring less than a four-year college degree — are located, according to the Brookings Institution’s “Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America” study in 2011. Ensuring that lower- and middle-skilled workers can afford to commute to these jobs, and that these are jobs that make the commute worthwhile, is critical if prosperity in this country is to be shared.

But as Aaron Renn notes on his Urbanophile blog, “Suburban revitalization will prove to be a much more challenging task than urban redevelopment . . . This gives us two great challenges: How to redevelop yesterday’s struggling suburbs, and how to make sure that new suburbs are built on a more sustainable base.”

JOB SPRAWL

JOB SPRAWL HAS BEEN especially bad news for low-skilled underemployed or unemployed workers because it creates a “spatial mismatch” between where they live and where jobs are located. A number of studies have found that while minority and lower-skilled workers still tend to live in

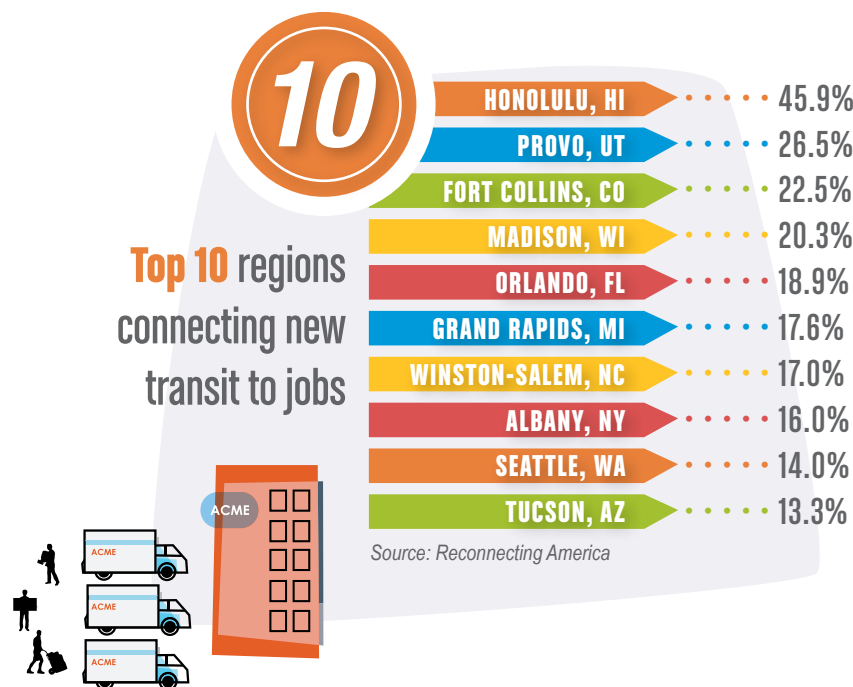
core urban neighborhoods in disproportionately high numbers, lower-skilled jobs are often located in outlying suburban areas that tend to be more white. A 1997 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development study found, for example, that 87 percent of lower-skilled service jobs were being created in suburban areas.

“People sprawl has long been known for its effect on the environment, infrastructure, tax base, quality of life and more,” Brookings Institution an-

alyst Elizabeth Kneebone writes in a 2009 report on job decentralization. “Now we must recognize what ‘job sprawl’ means for the economic health of the nation. The spatial distribution of jobs has implications for a range of policy issues — from housing to transportation to economic development — and should be taken into account as metro areas work to achieve more productive, inclusive and sustainable growth and, in the near term, economic recovery.”

The big problem with the decentralization of employment, as with the decentralization of housing, is that it’s hard to get to far-flung jobs without a car, and it’s expensive to build transit to get people to faraway locations. It’s no surprise that New York, Boston and San Francisco lead the nation in the number of jobs that can be accessed by transit, since they all have extensive transit systems and — perhaps because of this — jobs have remained concentrated in downtowns and urban neighborhoods. Some smaller cities — including Portland and Eugene in Oregon as well as New Orleans — also perform well when ranked according to the number of jobs near transit, proving that smaller regions with smaller transit networks can also succeed. See list on opposite page: *Top 10 regions connecting jobs to transit* and list below: *Top 10 regions connecting new transit to jobs*.

Bigger systems are better, however. The average station along an extensive system has more than three times as many jobs within walking distance as a station in a smaller system, according to Reconnecting America’s research. This is because larger systems connect more job





ON THE WAY THERE

Crossroads Of Opportunity

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE used to be one of America's principle freight hubs with a density of freight and passenger rail lines that made it one of the most well-connected and prosperous regions in the U.S. Moreover, it was a place where industrial workers were able to live and shop within walking distance of the plants where they worked — residential and industrial neighborhoods were able to co-exist because driving wasn't required by either car or by truck since both people and freight traveled by rail.

The south suburbs fell on hard times when shipping by truck gained favor over freight rail. But there's a redevelopment effort underway, an initiative of the nonprofit Center for Neighborhood Technology and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, that's grown to include 42 cities that are reinvesting in their historic assets: dense, mixed-use neighborhoods near stations; underutilized land available for development; a ready manufacturing workforce of both skilled and unskilled laborers; clusters of manufacturing and logistics businesses; and still-frequent freight and commuter rail service.

The idea is to organize a regional economic cluster anchored by intermodal freight terminals, green manufacturing and supportive businesses to provide jobs and prosperity for those who live nearby. The project has become a test case to see if linking transit-oriented development around commuter rail and "cargo-oriented" development around freight rail could be an effective and sustainable redevelopment strategy. By coordinating development around rail it will once again become possible to create communities where workers can minimize the money and time they would otherwise spend commuting, in the meantime helping to create local jobs and a thriving local economy, as well as a robust housing market.

The "Green Time Zone" project is now expanding this initiative with the goal of creating a supportive cluster of green manufacturers and businesses interested in reducing the pollution caused by freight movement. Cargo-oriented development can help drive demand for their green products because the enhanced logistics of the freight increases reliability and reduces costs, meantime creating jobs where they are needed most. While many people still associate south Cook County with the slow death of American industry this project suggests the enormous promise of a green "Made in America" label that could make the south suburbs the new crossroads of opportunity.

centers to more residential neighborhoods, making it possible to build at higher densities without having to provide acres of parking. This means that more employers can locate near transit and more people can find jobs near transit — a virtuous cycle.

But there's another downside to job sprawl, explains Greg LeRoy of the nonprofit Good Jobs First, who says that as jobs thin out geographically, the quality tends to diminish. Without a geographically dense labor market and the higher levels of unionization found in the urban core, he adds, suburban employers tend to pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits.

Working families that do buy cars in order to adapt to suburban living are taking on an expensive burden. "This creates a discriminatory labor market when new jobs locate in suburban areas not accessible by transit. For working families with or without a car, sprawl amounts to a tax on their standard of living. It suppresses their incomes and raises their bills," says LeRoy. "Enabling everyone to reach good jobs via public transportation means more money for family savings, health care, home equity, and college educations."

SOME JOBS ARE LESS TRANSIT-ORIENTED

RESEARCH BY CTOD in 2008 found that people who commute by transit tend to work in the professional, technical or financial services sectors, or in insurance, government, or quasi-public agencies such as utilities — because these are jobs that are typically clustered together. Other industries that generate considerable ridership are hotels and some types of clothing stores. Not coincidentally this mix of businesses closely resembles what is typically found in transit-rich downtowns.

It's not quite so easy for lower- and middle-skilled workers to commute by transit, however, either because they work at all hours — while transit service is most frequent during regular business hours — or because they work in manufacturing, warehousing or big box retail, which can't be built at the densities and concentrations that are required to make it financially feasible to build transit to serve them.

Many people work into the evening and during the weekend, but this is especially true of lower-paid workers, including cleaning crews, security guards, restaurant workers, as well as people who work in the

health care and service industries. These employees are the least likely to own cars and may be transit-dependent, and they sometimes work very late into the night, when it can feel unsafe to wait at a lonely bus stop with infrequent service.

It isn't enough to create jobs if workers can't even get to them, either because of where they're located or the hours they require. The disconnect between jobs and transit service is discussed in a 2011 report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), which observes that in California cities more jobs have been created in areas not served by transit, and that in some instances jobs have also moved away from transit stations.

The report also notes that transit generates higher ridership when it connects people to jobs rather than to housing and apartments. This is why successful transit systems such as BART — which is reaching its capacity to carry workers into San Francisco's financial district during morning rush hours — are looking for ways to better serve “reverse commuters” who can ride the trains back out of the city to suburban job centers. Higher employment density is also associated with higher ridership, and it is easier to connect transit to jobs with high employment density.

PAINLESS COMMUTES

SOME PLACES JUST DON'T have the density of jobs and residents and intensity of activity that justifies an investment in rail transit. Many of these communities are investing in bus and shuttle service as well as in programs that make it easier and more pleasant to carpool, walk and bike to jobs in an urban or suburban downtown, and to get healthier while doing it. Des Moines, for example, which has a population 400,000, has been investing nearly \$2 million a year to make the downtown more walkable and create a network of bike lanes and trails.

Google — which offers job perks that are the envy of Silicon Valley, including chef-prepared food at all hours — is trying to make commutes as painless as possible by ferrying its pampered workers on shuttles that run on biodiesel, with leather seats, wi-fi, and even room for dogs. The Google shuttle carries a quarter of the company's workforce, making 130 trips a day to 40 pick-up and drop-off points

in the six-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Google employees epitomize the creative class, who are attracted to the vitality of urban centers and unlikely to move to the suburban locations where many large employers continue to build their campuses. Google has recognized this trend, and is building new offices in New York City. This shuttle service is a generous fringe benefit that is now being offered by other employers, including Yahoo, eBay and Genentech to help attract and retain the best and the brightest employees.

Bishop Ranch, a suburban office park outside of San Francisco, has succeeded in getting 33 percent of its 30,000 workers to take transit by buying its own fleet of buses and working with the city and county transit agencies to subsidize bus passes for workers and bus routes that serve the



SHOUT-OUTS

College Campuses That Place Best in Show in Transit

Colleges and universities are some of the biggest employers, and also provide perks for faculty, staff and students. With a single parking space costing upwards of \$40,000 on campuses where the land value is high, parking structures divert significant resources away from education.

- Marquette University, Milwaukee, provides free bus passes and a student-run intercampus shuttle.
- Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, operates a free campus shuttle with hourly service to a local supermarket and into downtown.
- Boston University has eight rail stations and offers discounted semester-long “T” transit passes as well as late night shuttle service.
- The University of Texas in Austin has the largest university shuttle system in the U.S. with 14 routes and 7.5 million annual passengers annually, with service off-campus to jobs and housing centers.
- Colleges and universities in and around Denver, many of which have negotiated with the transit agency for free student transit passes.
- The University of Montana linked its transit service with the City of Missoula's to make it easier for 15,000 students, faculty and staff to leave their cars at home — the university has only 4,500 parking spaces.



Spotlight On Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas

The Dallas-Fort Worth region is among the worst regions for transit-dependent commuters, with only 2.3% of jobs located within a 45 minute transit commute.

The share of people biking, walking, or taking transit to work is lower than comparable regions. At the same time, the region has a large share of young, well-educated residents, provides many households with access to a park, and is 16th in the US in the number fixed-guideway stations in the region. Clearly Dallas-Fort Worth has some improvements to be made, but as it continues to make investments that link people to jobs and amenities, it's on its way there.

campus. The program's success is enhanced by a transit coordinator who "works the gig more like an Avon lady," according to a 2011 story in *The Atlantic*, hand-delivering bus passes to offices in the park so she can get cozy with receptionists who then refer frustrated commuters.

Marci McGuire, the park's transit coordinator, can tell stories about workers who have saved in excess of \$10,000 a year on car payments, maintenance, gas and tolls, but she finds transit's stress-reducing and health-promoting aspects an even easier sell. Having herself lost 40 pounds sprinting to make transit connections, she encourages employees to get off the bus a stop or two early and walk home — so they can avoid having to spend time on the treadmill.

NOT EVERYBODY WORKS FOR GOOGLE

BUT NOT EVERYBODY WORKS for Google or has the option of using transit. Even though transit ridership has been at record highs — transit

use has increased 38 percent since 1995 — transit agencies across the country are facing unprecedented fiscal crises in this recession, and they are laying off workers, cutting back service and raising fares at the worst possible time. The transit riders who are being left stranded tend to be older, African-American or Latino.

"As employers and commuters everywhere know only too well, public transportation is an essential service that is critical to our economy," says James Corless, director of Transportation for America, a project of Reconnecting America and Smart Growth America. Corless says only 18 cents of every transportation dollar supports public transit and that, while the federal government requires a 25 percent match for every dollar of funding it provides for highways, it requires a dollar-for-dollar match for new transit projects.

Transportation for America is one of hundreds of national and community-based organizations, business leaders and others who contend that the nation needs a massive investment to repair crumbling transportation infrastructure — which would create jobs as well as make regional economies more sustainable, helping to make the U.S. more economically competitive.

A good job is not solely defined by the wages it pays but it also must be stable, and provide benefits as well as opportunities for advancement. For less-skilled workers, it's also important that there's a low barrier to entry. Middle-skill jobs usually require long-term on-the-job training. Harry Holzer, a leading expert on workforce training, says middle skill jobs make up nearly half of all jobs in the U.S. economy, and that some of these jobs — for nurses, health technicians and construction workers, for example — are growing rapidly.

The challenge is ensuring that lower-skilled workers can qualify for these jobs and take advantage of the higher wages and greater job stability, which means they must be able to get to training and education programs, which are often not accessible by transit.

Some jurisdictions, however, are working to ensure there are transit connections: The Northwest Arkansas Community College partnered with Ozark Regional Transit to improve mobility for students, faculty and staff — and the general public — with three new routes providing access to college and training facilities. And when Durham Technical Community College in Durham, North Carolina, moved to a new site, it enhanced transit connections so as to minimize the

impact on low-income students.

“Jobs in the transportation sector — including construction, maintenance and operations — provide middle-class career paths for all workers,” says PolicyLink CEO Angela Glover Blackwell. “By providing training and apprenticeships, access to capital, new networks and partnerships, and by enlisting emerging businesses that are owned by women and people of color, we can strengthen and expand the small businesses that are critical to the goal of creating and sustaining good jobs throughout the nation.”

The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) has negotiated “local-hire” agreements that increase access to construction careers for local residents. Moreover, because these are union jobs with apprenticeship programs that provide training, especially in safety — which many nonunion jobs do not — these policies create a skilled workforce that completes projects safely and on time, which is a win-win for both workers and taxpayers.

Madeline Janis, LAANE’s national policy director, notes these good

jobs help stimulate the local economy by ensuring that local residents and businesses see the benefits of public spending. “By setting job standards and creating career paths, we are guaranteeing that public funds are not being used to create low-wage jobs with meager benefits that put a strain on taxpayers,” she says. “These workers will spend their earnings at local businesses, creating additional jobs. This economic activity will also contribute to our local tax revenues, which are in turn used to build these public projects.”

Complete communities are integral to the new economy, and cities and suburbs need to develop their opportunity areas into complete communities to help attract new talent. Moreover, we need to pay attention to the ongoing reorganization of job markets so we can provide people of all skill levels with the transportation choices they need to access opportunity. This is what will make regions more competitive nationally and globally. The Top 10 lists on the following pages highlight some of the regions that are doing well according to our Working metrics, which means they are getting closer to building complete communities.



SHOUT-OUTS

Best Workplaces For Commuters

Many employers across the country recognize the importance of easing worker stress: for example, the CEO of Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., in Rosemont, Illinois pays employees 75 cents a mile to commute by bike. Christopher Burke built lockers and showers, gives away bike equipment, and at the end of the year buys new bikes for the male and female employees who’ve ridden the most. Five years into the program 22 percent of staff is commuting by bike. The National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida keeps track of “Best Workplaces for Commuters,” and they include:

- Cambridge Systematics in Cambridge, MA, reimburses money spent on transit passes; provides an on-site cafeteria, fitness center,

showers and bike storage; and a location proximate to bike trails, a major commuter station, local grocers, shops, banks and restaurants.

- The Grand Hyatt in Manhattan offers employees the federal government’s “pre-tax transit benefit” program, allowing commuters to save up to 40 percent on commuting costs by purchasing tickets before taxes.

- IDF International provides a monthly subsidy for transit as well as the pre-tax benefit, flexible work schedules, laptops, and the choice to telework and telecommute.

- Consumer Reports in NYC offers free van service to three rail stations, a carpooling program and database on the company’s intranet, guaranteed rides home, the opportunity to work from home, and bike racks, lockers and showers.

- Fairfax County Government in Virginia helps employers implement “green commuter programs,” by assisting with commute surveys, computerized ride-matching, rideshare coordination with nearby companies, and will help implement the pre-tax benefit by providing a 50 percent match per employee.

- University of California at Irvine’s Zotwheels self-service bikesharing program has automated stations at four key locations, and North Carolina State University’s WolfWheels bike loan program allows anyone with a campus ID to rent bikes for a day, week or all semester.

- North Carolina University for Greensboro Transit Authority’s HEAT (Higher Education Area Transit) service — ridership doubled in one year.

10

TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Jobs Near Existing Fixed-Guideway Transit

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1.	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	45.1%
2.	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	37.2%
3.	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	36.4%
4.	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	27.5%
5.	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	25.7%
6.	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	24.8%
7.	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	19.0%
8.	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	17.9%
9.	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	14.1%
10.	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	13.5%
1.	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	28.9%
2.	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	26.7%
3.	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	19.5%
4.	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	19.5%
5.	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	17.9%
6.	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	17.6%
7.	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	17.0%
8.	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	16.4%
9.	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	14.1%
10.	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	12.4%
1.	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	16.7%
2.	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	14.1%
3.	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	10.6%
4.	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA	8.6%
5.	Albuquerque, NM MSA	5.4%
6.	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	5.3%
7.	Worcester, MA MSA	5.1%
8.	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	3.0%
9.	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	2.7%
10.	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	2.6%
1.	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	20.0%
2.	Santa Fe, NM MSA	17.7%
3.	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	11.5%
4.	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	9.4%
5.	Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA MSA	9.0%
6.	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	8.8%
7.	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	5.6%
8.	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	5.4%
9.	San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles, CA MSA	4.1%
10.	Norwich-New London, CT MSA	3.1%

Source: CTOD

Percent Of Jobs Near Planned Fixed-Guideway Transit

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1.	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WAMSA	14.0%
2.	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	11.6%
3.	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	9.1%
4.	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CAMSA	7.6%
5.	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	7.4%
6.	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CAMSA	6.4%
7.	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CAMSA	5.5%
8.	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GAMSA	3.7%
9.	Miami-FortLauderdale-Pompano Beach, FLMSA	3.7%
10.	Dallas-FortWorth-Arlington, TXMSA	3.7%
1.	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FLMSA	18.9%
2.	Las Vegas-Paradise, NVMSA	10.4%
3.	Milwaukee-Waukesha-WestAllis, WIMSA	10.3%
4.	Hartford-WestHartford-EastHartford, CTMSA	9.8%
5.	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SCMSA	8.9%
6.	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, COMSA	8.7%
7.	Salt Lake City, UTMSA	8.6%
8.	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-INMSA	8.1%
9.	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WAMSA	3.5%
10.	Baltimore-Towson, MDMSA	3.1%
1.	Honolulu, HIMSA	45.9%
2.	Provo-Orem, UTMSA	26.5%
3.	Madison, WIMSA	20.3%
4.	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MIMSA	17.6%
5.	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NYMSA	16.0%
6.	Tucson, AZMSA	13.3%
7.	Albuquerque, NMMSA	7.2%
8.	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PAMSA	3.2%
9.	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CTMSA	2.3%
10.	Lancaster, PAMSA	1.4%
1.	Fort Collins-Loveland, COMSA	22.5%
2.	Winston-Salem, NCMSA	17.0%
3.	Eugene-Springfield, ORMSA	11.5%
4.	Boulder, COMSA	11.0%
5.	Santa Rosa-Petaluma, CAMSA	10.7%
6.	Athens-Clarke County, GAMSA	6.8%
7.	Salinas, CAMSA	6.3%
8.	Reading, PAMSA	3.5%
9.	Santa Fe, NMMSA	1.9%
10.	Ann Arbor, MIMSA	1.5%

Source: Reconnecting America

10

TOP TEN

Percent Of Jobs Accessible By Transit (within a 45 minute commute)

Percent Of Jobs In Opportunity Areas

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	12.6%
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	10.5%
3	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	9.8%
4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	8.8%
5	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	6.7%
6	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	6.5%
7	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	6.5%
8	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	6.3%
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	5.2%
10	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	4.6%
1	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	13.8%
2	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	11.1%
3	Rochester, MN MSA	10.4%
4	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	10.3%
5	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	9.9%
6	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	9.3%
7	Richmond, VA MSA	8.5%
8	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	8.2%
9	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	8.1%
10	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	7.9%
1	Madison, WI MSA	22.2%
2	Honolulu, HI MSA	18.7%
3	Tucson, AZ MSA	15.8%
4	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	14.3%
5	Fresno, CA MSA	14.2%
6	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	13.8%
7	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI MSA	13.0%
8	Syracuse, NY MSA	12.3%
9	Albuquerque, NM MSA	11.8%
	Modesto, CA MSA	11.2%

N/A

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	58.5%
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	51.8%
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	48.2%
4	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	34.5%
5	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	33.2%
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	32.3%
7	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	30.8%
8	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	30.0%
9	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	28.7%
10	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	24.7%
1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	43.2%
2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	36.1%
3	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	34.9%
4	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	33.7%
5	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	29.9%
6	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	28.2%
7	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	25.5%
8	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	24.2%
9	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	23.8%
10	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	23.6%
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	56.8%
2	Elmira, NY MSA	28.9%
3	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	26.8%
4	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	26.6%
5	Syracuse, NY MSA	26.4%
6	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	24.8%
7	Madison, WI MSA	24.7%
8	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	24.2%
9	Stockton, CA MSA	23.8%
10	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC MSA	22.2%
1	Springfield, IL MSA	48.0%
2	Cheyenne, WY MSA	46.2%
3	Laredo, TX MSA	42.4%
4	Fond du Lac, WI MSA	39.5%
5	Missoula, MT MSA	38.7%
6	Lansing-East Lansing, MI MSA	36.9%
7	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MS	35.4%
8	Bismarck, ND MSA	35.4%
9	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA MSA	35.1%
10	Altoona, PA MSA	34.4%

Source: The Brookings Institution

Source: Reconnecting America

10

TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Weighted Employment Density (higher is more dense)

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	54,374
2	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	24,760
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	23,778
4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	18,928
5	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	18,873
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	13,148
7	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	11,881
8	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	8,297
9	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	6,257
10	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	5,976
1	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	10,051
2	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	9,241
3	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	9,124
4	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	8,670
5	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	6,994
6	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	6,978
7	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	6,917
8	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA	6,775
9	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	5,871
10	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	5,485
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	18,504
2	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	7,132
3	Columbia, SC MSA	5,793
4	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	4,802
5	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	4,665
6	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	4,452
7	Tulsa, OK MSA	3,880
8	Syracuse, NY MSA	3,859
9	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	3,701
10	Madison, WI MSA	3,440
1	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	9,962
2	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	8,076
3	Iowa City, IA MSA	6,187
4	Lansing-East Lansing, MI MSA	5,321
5	Springfield, OH MSA	5,084
6	Charleston, WV MSA	4,647
7	Winston-Salem, NC MSA	4,535
8	Rochester, NY MSA	4,182
9	Santa Fe, NM MSA	4,152
10	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	4,131

Source: Public Policy Institute Of California

Percent Of 18- To 34-Year-Olds With A College Degree

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	38.25%
2	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	37.34%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	36.07%
4	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	32.50%
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	31.64%
6	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	29.07%
7	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	28.09%
8	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	28.00%
9	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	26.19%
10	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	23.82%
1	Raleigh-Cary, NC MSA	34.56%
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	34.10%
3	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	29.21%
4	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	28.93%
5	Columbus, IN MSA	28.70%
6	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	28.37%
7	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	27.80%
8	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	27.74%
9	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	26.83%
10	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	26.35%
1	Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	34.25%
2	Madison, WI MSA	30.89%
3	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	30.68%
4	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	30.31%
5	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	28.63%
6	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	26.34%
7	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	26.26%
8	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC MSA	26.15%
9	Worcester, MA MSA	25.84%
10	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	24.77%
1	Charlottesville, VA MSA	32.73%
2	Ann Arbor, MI MSA	31.91%
3	Boulder, CO MSA	31.38%
4	Rochester, NY MSA	30.61%
5	Iowa City, IA MSA	29.49%
6	Columbia, MO MSA	28.56%
7	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	28.26%
8	Manchester-Nashua, NH MSA	27.96%
9	Ithaca, NY MSA	27.58%
10	Burlington-South Burlington, VT MSA	27.46%

Source: Reconnecting America

10

TOP TEN

Percent Of Low And Moderate Income Jobs Accessible On Transit (within a 90 minute commute)

Regions Over 3 Million

Regions 1 to 3 Million

Regions 500,000 to 1 Million

Regions Under 500,000

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	45.7
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	44.1
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	43.2
4	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	38.6
5	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	37.0
6	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	36.6
7	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	36.3
8	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ MSA	35.3
9	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	33.6
10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	32.3
1	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	69.4
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	64.8
3	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	60.6
4	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	57.0
5	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	55.4
6	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	46.9
7	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX MSA	46.5
8	Rochester, MN MSA	44.7
9	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	42.4
10	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	41.4
1	Tucson, AZ MSA	68.0
2	Honolulu, HI MSA	67.9
3	Madison, WI MSA	64.5
4	Fresno, CA MSA	63.7
5	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	59.9
6	Albuquerque, NM MSA	59.0
7	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	50.2
8	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI MSA	49.3
9	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	48.6
10	Wichita Falls, TX MSA	46.5

N/A

Source: The Brookings Institution



Moving

GETTING OUT OF GEAR

TRENDS UNDERWAY IN the housing and jobs market portend a need for more transportation choices to help people get where they need to go as well as to enhance this country's economic competitiveness. Market trends confirm the shift in demand away from single-use, single-family neighborhoods, corporate campuses and shopping centers connected by highways, and toward compact mixed-use neighborhoods where streets are not the sole province of fast-moving cars but are shared with pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. Providing more transportation choices is critical to supporting this 21st century lifestyle and it seems to be what both younger and older generations want.

For the younger generation, traffic congestion, \$5 a gallon gas prices, and the popularity of smartphones and social media have made driving far less appealing than it was to their parents. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, half of all 16-year-olds obtained a drivers license in 1978 while only 30 percent of 16-year-olds got a license in 2008. A 2012 University of Michigan study found the number of 18-year-olds with licenses declined from 80 percent in 1983 to 65 percent in 2008.

From 2001 to 2009 the average annual number of miles driven by young people dropped 23 percent, according to a 2012 study by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group and the Frontier Foundation. The study authors note that gas prices, new driver licensing laws, technology that supports

alternative transportation, and changes in values and preferences are all triggering this decline — and suggest the change may be long-lasting.

“Federal and local governments have historically made massive investments in new highway capacity on the assumption that driving will continue to increase at a rapid and steady pace. The changing transportation preferences of young people — and Americans overall — throw those assumptions into doubt,” write the report's authors. They note that the recession has probably played a role, but that the trend occurred even among young people who were employed and/or doing well financially. They conclude, “The time has come for transportation policy to reflect the needs and desires of today's Americans — not the worn-out conventional wisdom from days gone by.”

Another study, by Gartner Research in 2011, found that when a group of 18-to-24-year-olds was asked to choose between having Internet access or a car, nearly half said they would choose Internet access. The researchers concluded that smartphones and computers offer the same ability to connect socially with friends as a car — but require less time and money.

“The iPhone is the Ford Mustang of today,” says study author Thilo Koslowski. “Back in the '50s and '60s, everyone was keen on getting their drivers license because it was liberating. Now freedom lies in accessing

data online, and people are meeting up on social media sites. Mobile devices, gadgets and the Internet are the must-have lifestyle products that convey status — instead of the car.”

This shift in the preferences of younger Americans may also have to do with demographics. The majority of Americans under the age of 18 are non-white, and many are second- or third-generation Latino and Asian Americans. University of Southern California professor Manuel Pastor told the audience at the 2011 Rail~Volution conference that America’s rapidly changing ethnic makeup is upending conventional models of how we live, work, move and play. And the data shows that minority Americans — younger Latinos in particular — are more comfortable taking transit, and have a greater interest in living in urban areas.

OLDER AMERICANS

THE SITUATION OF OLDER Americans is more difficult since most want to “age in place,” according to AARP, which means they want to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. The problem is that many of the communities in which they live do not provide alternatives to the car: three AARP surveys of older adults in 2010 found that almost 40 percent of the respondents did not have adequate sidewalks near their homes; 60 percent do not live within a 10-minute walk of public transportation; and 38 percent said their public transportation choices were not reliable.

The sheer size of the aging Baby Boomer population — 20 percent of Americans will be over the age of 65 by 2030, according to the U.S. Census — suggests that providing aging Americans with alternatives

to driving will become a high priority. AARP says that one in five Americans aged 65 or older does not drive, and Americans over the age of 70 have an increased risk of accidents.

“For anyone living in an auto-reliant community, choosing not to drive can be associated with a dramatic lifestyle change and can produce feelings of dependence and isolation,” writes Emily Salomon

of the Center for Housing Policy, which partnered with AARP on a 2010 report called “Linking Transportation and Housing Solutions for Older Adults.” “Nondrivers are often faced with limited alternatives. Many communities have poor pedestrian infrastructure, making walking an unsafe means of getting around.”

In fact, driving — typically measured as “vehicle miles traveled” or VMT — is in decline across the U.S. as it has been in many developed countries around the world. VMT peaked in most developed countries by the year 2000, says Todd Litman of the Victoria Transportation Institute; in the U.S. it peaked in 2007 and then started to decline. Litman attributes the decline to the aging population, rising fuel prices, improvements to other modes of travel, increased interest in city living, and increased health and environmental concerns, and says the implications are obvious:

It no longer makes sense to invest so much money expanding roads and providing more parking.

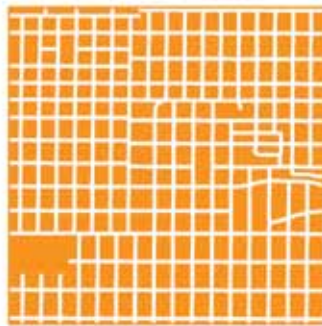
Despite the overall decline in driving, however, the average American family with two drivers still drives about 20,000 miles a year, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s 2009 National Household Travel Survey. This is expensive. The American Automobile Association (AAA) revised its estimate of the annual cost

What is a walkable block?

PHOENIX, AZ: 8-80 ACRES



PORTLAND, OR: 2-4 ACRES



PROVIDENCE, RI 4-6 ACRES



MISSOULA, MT 3-5 ACRES

The images above show a range of blocks in four different regions (all shown at the same scale). Typically, people will walk more often when blocks are less than eight acres. Regions of all shapes and sizes have some walkable blocks, but some regions have more than others. The neighborhood of Phoenix shown above has large blocks that are pretty unfriendly to walkers.

Source: *Reconnecting America*

of owning and operating a car up 1.9 percent over 2011 to \$8,946 a year in 2012, largely due to increased gas prices, which rose 15 percent from 2011 to 2012.

THE VALUE OF “WALKABLE”

AT THE SAME TIME THAT the interest in driving has been declining, the interest in walking — or at least in living in a walkable neighborhood — has been increasing, and this interest is reflected in an increase in land and property values in walkable neighborhoods. A number of recent studies have shown that cities and neighborhoods with the highest land values are those where people can easily interact and connect both within neighborhoods and to destinations outside, and they have held their value even in the recession.

Several of these studies are based on the Walk Score website, which measures walkability by calculating the number of “amenities” within walking distance of any address. The national nonprofit CEOs for Cities used the Walk Score algorithm to analyze 94,000 real estate transactions in 2009 and found that walkability was directly linked to higher home values in 13 of 15 major real estate markets. The study found, after controlling for factors that are known to influence housing value, that one point on the 100-point Walk Score scale was worth anywhere from \$500 to \$3,000 in terms of a house’s value.

Researcher Gary Pivo at the University of Arizona found in 2010 that properties scoring 80 on the Walk Score scale were worth 29 to 49 percent more than properties with a score of 20. Another 2010 study, in the *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate*, found that higher Walk Scores “were negatively related to mortgage default,” (and, conversely, that each additional household vehicle owned increased the probability of default).

The Walk Score website has become very popular with real estate

agents as well as the general public, and property owners placing ads on Craigslist brag about locations with high Walk Scores.

In 2012 the Brookings Institution released a study based on a five-tiered scale of walkability for the Washington, D.C. region, with level one being a completely non-walkable place to level five being very walkable. The study found that while a renter would pay about \$300 more for an apartment in a level two place than a level one place, an

apartment rental in a level five place would cost \$1,200 more. Moreover, the study found that each step up the scale equated to an 80 percent increase in retail sales and \$9 per square foot increase in office space.

“It is mindboggling,” Brookings Institution real estate expert Christopher Leinberger told *The Atlantic Cities* blog, “These were much more dramatic results than I would have guessed going in to this. It also shows our lack of understanding and why it’s important to measure this phenomenon.”

The average size of blocks in a neighborhood provides way to determine whether a place is walkable. While “walkable blocks” come in many shapes and

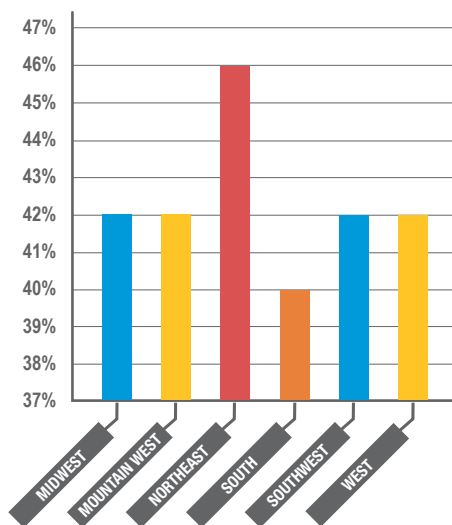
sizes, most researchers concur that if they are less than 8 acres in size — which roughly equates to 200 steps long — people are more willing to walk. See graphic on opposite page: *What is a walkable block?*

Opportunity areas — as defined in this report — include a preponderance of walkable blocks as well as a density of homes and/or work places. The regions with the smallest blocks tend to be the most walkable and typically are places where this development pattern was established before the dominance of the car, including historic cities in the Northeast region. See chart above: *Walkable blocks across the U.S.*

FREEWAY TEARDOWNS

THESE CHANGES IN THE value of walkable real estate have prompted many cities to consider something that they never would have considered a decade ago — tearing down their innercity freeways.

Walkable blocks across the U.S.



This chart shows the average percentage of blocks measuring 6 acres or less in geographic regions of the U.S.

Source: *Reconnecting America*

Developers and investors are keenly interested in building in downtowns, but there's typically very little land that hasn't already been developed. Freeway teardowns, however, can open up vast swaths of prime downtown real estate for development.

To date, four cities have torn down freeways: Portland, OR, San Francisco, Milwaukee, and Providence, Rhode Island. Syndicated columnist Neal Peirce wrote in 2012 that Portland's Harbor Drive freeway, rebuilt as Tom McCall Waterfront Park in 1984, helped spark a 10.4 percent annual increase in downtown property values, and that San Francisco's Embarcadero Freeway, demolished after damage from a 1989 earthquake and replaced by a pedestrian boulevard and transit, increased land values as much as 300 percent in nearby neighborhoods.

When Providence, Rhode Island, took down its inner-city freeway in 2012 to free up 40 acres of land for development, the Urban Land Institute, a national nonprofit representing the interests of developers, called it "the best economic development opportunity in the state."

"Highways don't pay taxes," noted Diana Lind, the founder-leader of the Next American City organization, at a 2012 Philadelphia forum on freeway teardowns. At that forum Streetsblog founder Aaron Naparstek pointed out that the collapse of a chunk of New York City's elevated West Side Highway in 1973 didn't cause the traffic Armageddon that was anticipated, and the construction of an urban boulevard in its place "made some of Lower Manhattan into some of the world's most valuable real estate."

While teardowns have gained popularity and momentum as urban renewal projects, they also gained credibility when the U.S.

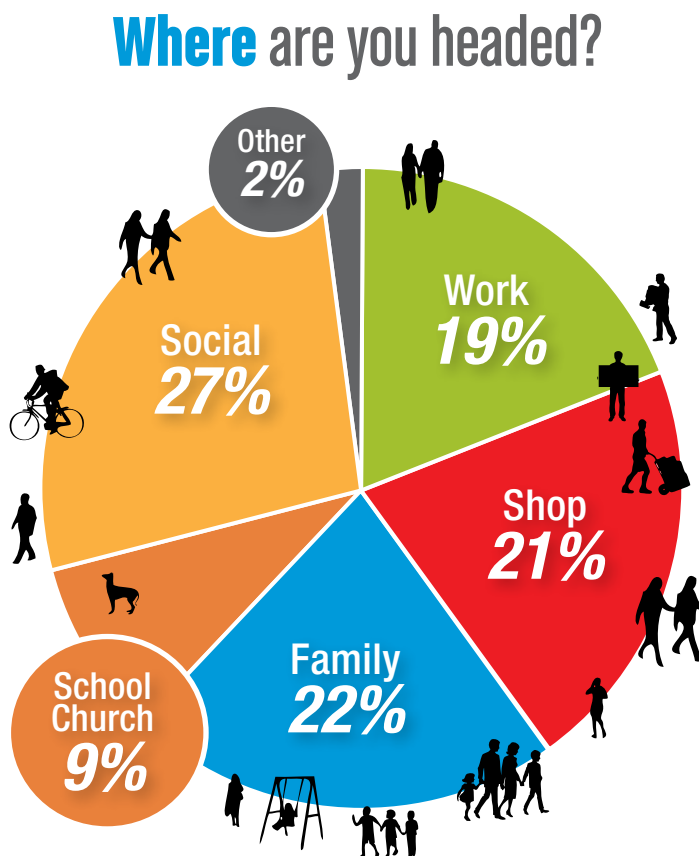
Department of Transportation awarded grants to study three teardown projects in New York City, New Haven, Connecticut, and in the New Orleans neighborhood of Treme — the historic and very low-income neighborhood that was hit hard by Katrina and has since been popularized in the new HBO series by the same name. A dozen other cities are also considering demolitions.

Peirce writes in his column that it's easy to forget how the construction of freeways in the 1950s and 1960s created "deep gashes in America's city fabric. The highway planners of the 1950s and 1960s seemed unfazed by pushing massive highways straight through cities, devastating minority neighborhoods as well as cutting off waterfronts. It's a dark chapter in our history."

Peirce cites author Peter Harnik's 2010 book *Urban Green*, in which Harnik writes: "Waterfronts were blockaded in Portland, Oregon; Cincinnati; Hartford; Cleveland; Philadelphia; and San Francisco. Nooses of concrete were wound tightly around the downtowns of Dallas and Charlotte. Trenches of noise and smog cut through Boston, Detroit, Seattle and Atlanta. Stupendous elevated structures threw shadows over Miami and New Orleans.

And wide strips of land were taken from large, iconic parks in Los Angeles (Griffith Park), St. Louis (Forest Park), Baltimore (Druid Hill Park), and San Diego (Balboa Park)."

It's important that we learn from these misguided transportation investments, which were made in order to achieve one objective — mobility. The lesson is that transportation investments today must be made in the context of multiple considerations that were previously thought to be unrelated, ranging from the impact on public health to



While less than a third (19 percent) of trips are to work, the commute trip is usually the longest regular car trip. Because most people commute in the morning and late afternoon, the road network is designed for maximum auto capacity, even though there may be few cars traveling on it the rest of the day.

Source: National Household Travel Survey, 2009.

the impact on real estate development and investment to the impact on the prosperity of all people.

THE BIAS OF TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

THE SHIFT AWAY FROM auto-oriented neighborhoods to a design that is more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists is difficult because the tools used on a daily basis by traffic engineers have a built-in bias toward the interests of drivers. Travel models, for example, predict the future need for roads based on the need in the past, instead of recognizing that the priorities of Americans are changing.

Studies have shown that people who live or work near transit are more likely to use it. This may seem like a no-brainer but conventional transportation models that are used to determine how many roads and how much parking should be built assume that every person, no matter where they live, will make the same transportation choices.

“Level of service” or LOS standards are geared so as to always prioritize the movement of cars:

Every change to a street — whether it involves adding a bike lane or painting a crosswalk — must be assessed in terms

of the impact on car traffic. If the change slows car travel, cities must spend significant time and money on additional analyses and “mitigation measures” before even minor changes can be made.

Before 1991 all roads built in the U.S. and paid for — partially or in full — with federal funds had to meet guidelines in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials *Green Book*, the official book of highway design. This book, long considered the bible of traffic engineering, referred to pedestrians as “traffic flow interrupters” during the 1990s.

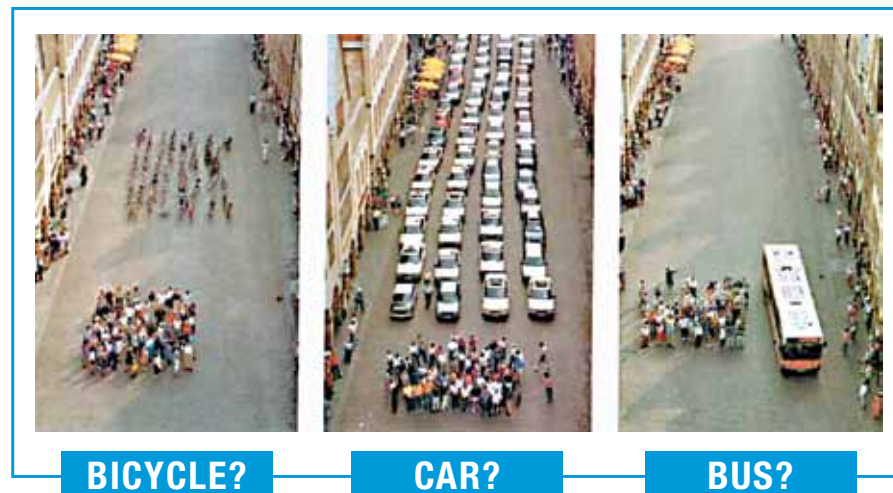
“Travel models and LOS standards are a deadly duo used to get rid of traffic congestion — it’s tantamount to using a rototiller to get rid of weeds in a flowerbed,” writes Gary Toth, transportation director for the national nonprofit Project for Public Spaces (PPS), on the PPS blog. “Sure you get rid of the traffic congestion and you get rid of the weeds, but it’s time to acknowledge that the collateral damage is too great. In ridding our communities of the weeds of traffic congestion, we have also pulled out the plants that made our gardens worthwhile in the first place.”

In a 2011 *Engineering News-Record* story, traffic engineer Sam Schwartz defends his profession but also opines: “We are the GEICO Neanderthals of society. As a profession we have continued to build

more roads, wider roads, and faster roads while knowing full well we were running out of capacity and making transport systems less efficient.” Schwartz cites the Brooklyn Bridge as an example, writing that when it was built as a rail and walking bridge it handled 430,000 people daily, but after it was “modernized” in the 1940s to remove rail and boost car capacity, its “daily person-carrying volume dropped to 180,000.”

The inefficiency of a transportation system focused on single-occupancy vehicles has troubled some transportation experts. “Cars are immensely convenient,” says Dan Sturges, a former car designer at GM, “but we all know the problems — billions of dollars a year sent to the Middle East, growing greenhouse gas emissions, traffic, noise pollution, the paving over of green space. Across the nation about 50 percent of urban land is dedicated to transportation, and in Denver, where I live, the average car has only 1.1 occupants — making the car an immensely inefficient contraption.”

How much space does it take?



Amount of space required to transport the same amount of people in a car, bus and on a bike

Source: City of Munster, Germany, Planning Department.

The City of Munster, Germany Planning, Department illustrated this idea with just three pictures. See graphic on previous page: *How much space does it take?*

“SMART MOBILITY” OPTIONS

THE GROWING DEMAND for more safe and pleasant environments for walking, biking and taking transit is being aided by transportation engineers like Sturges who are focused on making it easier for people to get to and from transit stations and bus stops — the so-called “first mile/last mile” connection. Because so many neighborhoods have been built to accommodate the automobile — with wide streets, deep lots and long distances between things — it isn’t always easy to get to stations, and there’s growing interest in the development of “intelligent multimodal transportation” or “smart mobility” options that rely on information and communications technology.

“Smart phones allow us to instantly rent a bike, carpool with someone just a mile up the road, find a bus, and even ‘ping a ride’ with a car service or cab,” says Sturges. “Transit service plus options like these will enable millions of people to get where they need to go without needing to own a car.”

Focusing on creating safe and pleasant first-mile/last-mile connections to transit stations is critical if we want to give people more choices for getting around, and retrofitting sprawling employment centers and big box shopping centers could take many years and require a near-term investment in shuttle services. But there are many ways to weave walking, biking, and transit into a seamless tapestry of transportation choices, including driving, even when transit service isn’t that frequent.

Myriad cell phone apps and Internet services provide real-time information about when trains and buses are arriving at stops nearby,

eliminating hours of wait time. Google Maps and Next Bus are two popular applications available nationwide. Google Maps helps riders time and program routes on foot, bike, transit or by car, while Next Bus provides info on nearby bus arrivals. Apps focusing on service in particular regions include Routesy in the Bay Area, One Bus Away in Seattle, PDX Bus in Portland, and “To a T” in Boston (where the MBTA transit system is called the “T”).

Not to be missed is the RedEye app in Chicago that not only provides info on trains, bus and taxis, as well as bars and restaurants near

stations and high frequency bus lines, but also has a “Missed Connections” feature that’s sort of like a personals page for transit riders. For example: Entitled “Don’t fear Admiral Akbar. It’s not a trap!” one rider, identified as “W4M” — a woman looking for a man — posted:

“Recently I saw this tall man on the 22 bus who looked strikingly like the Rebel Alliance commander Admiral Akbar. He looked so cool in his Wilco shirt and baby blue shorts. I didn’t even mind he was wearing Oakley’s from 1993. He seemed

so busy reading a book about Lego mini figs I never got to say hello. I think about you often Admiral Akbar. You in all your tall, lanky glory. XOXO” Check it out at missedconnections.redeyechicago.com.

Some agencies are also making it easier for people to plan their transit trips by providing maps that indicate service frequency and type with colors, numbers or clever names: The transit system in Allentown-Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, designates routes according to service frequency. Buses numbered in the 100s are core routes that offer the most service; 200s are key urban corridors; 300s are more suburban; 400s are special routes for students; 500s are flexible, reservation-based service; 600s serve particular markets. Boulder, Colorado, uses colorful names including HOP, SKIP, JUMP, BOUND, DASH, STAMPEDE and BOLT.



Nate Wessel, a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, got so fed up with confusing Cincinnati transit maps that he made his own, then found investors on *kickstarter.com*, a funding platform for creative ventures, who paid to print thousands of the maps for distribution. His map is simple, highlighting the routes that are the most frequent and convenient to use, providing the urban and suburban context in which they operate — allowing users to see the restaurants, shops, museums and services they can get to — and to more easily understand where lines intersect and connect.

“A good transit system should structure the city around it,” Wessel says on Soapbox Media, an online news and information magazine. “If there’s a bus making 75 trips a day along a route, that’s probably a good place to locate a business. This map is a first step in thinking about how we can restructure the city.”

Also, transit stations should be placed to take advantage of existing hubs of activity. Opportunity areas — because they already contain small blocks and moderate density housing and/or jobs — are “transit-ready” places that are likely to support high ridership and won’t need to provide much parking because some residents and workers can walk and bike. Reconnecting America’s research shows that today regions that have the largest number of stations in opportunity areas have either maintained a historic transit network, such as New Orleans or San Francisco, or have built new networks with stations sited in walkable places. See list at left: *Top 10 regions with stations in opportunity areas.*

TICKET TO RIDE

INTEREST IN TRANSIT HAS boomed during the past two decades, and transit ridership is up 13 percent since 2000. The American Public Transportation Association, in its 2011 analysis of transit use, found that “Americans took 10.4 billion trips on public transportation in 2011, the second highest annual ridership since 1957. Only ridership in 2008, when gas rose to more than \$4 a gallon, surpassed last year’s ridership.”

Regions across the country are responding by building new transit systems, often starting with one line that connects the downtown to major destinations. Since 2000, 12 regions have added new fixed-guideway transit lines, and 879 new stations have been built, according to CTOD. Denver, Salt Lake City, Houston, Seattle, Los Angeles, Charlotte, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Portland, St. Louis, and Baltimore are all planning

large expansions of their transit networks. Smaller regions — including Detroit, Orlando, Kansas City, San Antonio, Indianapolis, Grand Rapids, and Oklahoma City are planning bus rapid transit lines (BRT) and small streetcar systems. See map at right: *Building fixed-guideway transit.*



ON THE WAY THERE

Mayors As Transit Champions

Mayors — both Republicans and Democrats — have championed transit in cities large and small, including Houston, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Lakewood, Oklahoma City, and Denver. When voters defeated a sales tax for roads and transit in 2007, Greg Nickels, who was then mayor of Seattle, resubmitted it to voters as a transit-only initiative, and won. He then championed a downtown streetcar, with half the money put up by property owners, which has proven so popular that the City Council immediately planned a five-line expansion.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has become a champion both locally and nationally by making the case for transit in a highly publicized campaign on Capitol Hill and with President Obama. Following passage of the Measure R half-cent sales tax that will fund 12 new transit lines in LA over 30 years, Villaraigosa lobbied for a “30-10” plan to get federal low-interest loans and long-term bonds that could be secured by the 30-year sales tax revenue stream and allow the region to frontload the construction program and build all 12 lines in 10 years.

In order to keep the 30-10 program on track — Congress did not include a bond program in the new transportation reauthorization — Los Angeles County officials have decided to ask voters in November 2012 to extend the Measure R sales tax another 30 years, so that the longer revenue stream can be used to secure more upfront financing to build out the system.

Former Santa Monica Mayor Denny Zane, executive director of the business-labor-environmental “Move L.A.” coalition that sponsored the sales tax measure, notes that local transportation sales taxes have become the fastest growing source of revenue for transportation projects, due in part to the fact that voters sense that they can provide due diligence and have more control over local projects funded by local sources; that the funds are raised and spent in the counties that enact them so voters directly experience the benefits; and that most of them expire automatically.

So many fixed-guideway transit projects are proposed — 643 in 106 regions according to Reconnecting America’s 2011 “Transit Space Race” report — that if they are built they could transform the nation’s transportation system into one that is safer and healthier and less reliant on fossil fuels. Moreover, if all the planned projects that have already decided on station locations are built, Reconnecting America’s research shows they would connect workers to 25 percent more jobs.

Despite the upward trends in transit ridership, Congress continues to provide far more funding for roads. Traditionally there’s been an 80/20 split with about 80 percent of federal surface transportation funds going to build and maintain roads and about 20 percent going to public transit.

In the “Transit Space Race” report Reconnecting America was able to find cost estimates for 413 of the 643 proposed projects, which added up to \$233 billion. If these projects were funded at the 2011 rate of federal investment in new transit projects — \$1.6 billion a year — and included the standard 50 percent match from the federal government, building these projects would take a whopping 73 years,

according to the report. This country’s transit investment stands in sharp contrast to China, which is investing 11 times more than that amount in transit, and India, which is investing seven times more.

VOTERS CHAMPION TRANSIT

VOTERS HAVE PROVED to be enthusiastic supporters of transit, however, and have stepped up to tax themselves in order to make up for the shortfall in state and federal funding. Twenty-three sales tax measures for transit were passed in 16 states in the 2008 election. These sales tax measures are sometimes criticized as regressive because they impose a greater burden on lower-income families. Many states mitigate this by excluding necessities — such as food, medicine, clothing and rent — from the sales tax. But because of these concerns it is critical to ensure that the people hardest hit by sales tax increases benefit from the transit investment.

Denver took a bold step in 2004, voting to fund the full build-out of a light-rail system in a dozen years, the largest system expansion since the 1970s when Washington, D.C.’s Metro system was built. And Los Angeles County voters upped the ante in 2008 by passing Measure R, a 30-year transportation sales tax that raises a stunning \$40 billion for transportation, including \$30 billion for transit — providing enough money to double the size of the fixed-guideway transit system. A 30-year extension of the sales tax goes before voters in November 2012; if passed the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority could use the longer revenue stream to secure loans enabling the agency to accelerate the construction of seven rail lines over the next decade.

Los Angeles County has two other sales taxes for transit as well. In fact, in many parts of the country a large portion of transportation funding for highways and roads now comes from local sales tax measures. In Southern California local funding for transportation — as opposed to state or federal funding — has climbed to more than two-thirds the total amount, according to the Southern California Association of Governments.

The 2012 federal transportation bill called MAP-21 significantly expanded the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) low-interest loan program, which will provide opportunities for Los Angeles as well as other regions to use revenue streams such as sales taxes to secure very low-interest loans to build transit

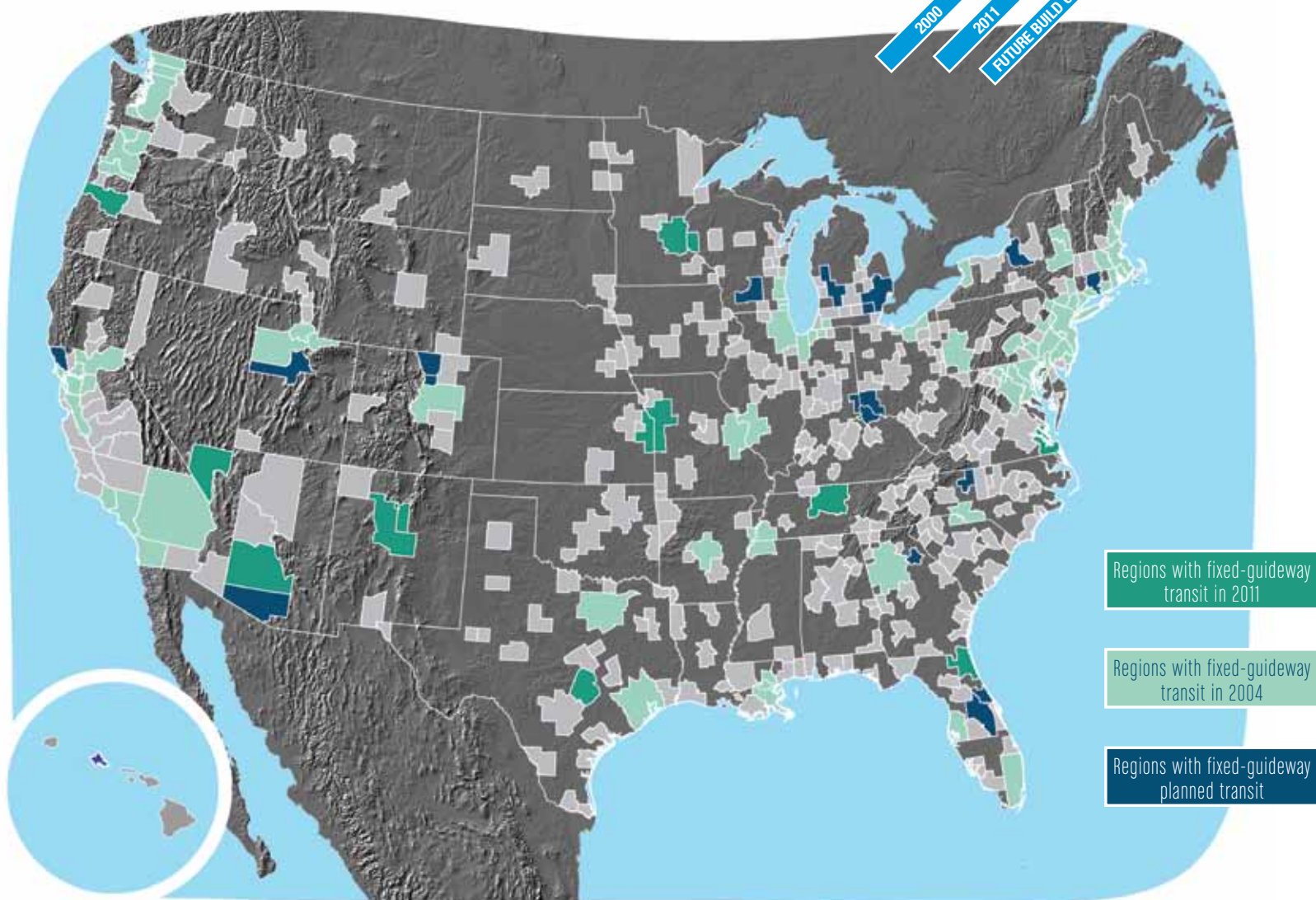
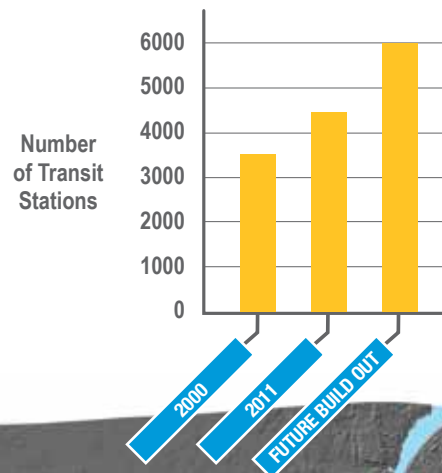
Successful transit sales tax ballot measures 2010-2011

<p>STERLING COUNTY, CO</p> <p>Extension with no sunset of 0.1-cent tax, expected to generate \$175,000/year</p>	<p>JEFFERSON COUNTY, WA</p> <p>0.3-cent increase in sales tax to generate \$1 million/year for operations</p>
<p>DURHAM COUNTY, NC</p> <p>0.5-cent sales tax to generate \$18.3 million/year to boost bus service 25% in first 3 years, launch commuter rail by 2018 and light rail by 2025</p>	<p>WALLA WALLA, WA</p> <p>0.3% increase for operations, bringing total tax to 0.6%</p>
<p>STARK COUNTY, OH</p> <p>Renews 5-year 0.25-cent sales tax</p>	<p>ST. LOUIS, MO</p> <p>0.5-cent sales tax; previous attempt in 2008 didn’t pass</p>
<p>OLYMPIA, WA</p> <p>0.2-cent increase</p>	<p>CLARK COUNTY, WA</p> <p>0.2-cent sales tax to augment existing 0.5% tax, providing \$8-\$9 million/year</p>
<p>BELLINGHAM, WA</p> <p>0.2% sales tax increase</p>	<p>Nine cities and counties passed sales taxes in 2010-2011</p>

Source: Center for Transportation Excellence.

Building fixed-guideway transit

More and more regions are adding fixed-guideway transit to the mix. The total number of fixed-guideway stations in the U.S. has increased by 25 percent since 2000 (nearly 900 new stations), and planned transit projects will only further that trend. As the map shows, only a few regions are not investing in new fixed-guideway transit. Light green regions had fixed-guideway transit in 2004, green regions built a line or more by 2011, and the dark blue regions are all planning or talking seriously about building fixed-guideway in the future. *Source: Reconnecting America and CTOD*

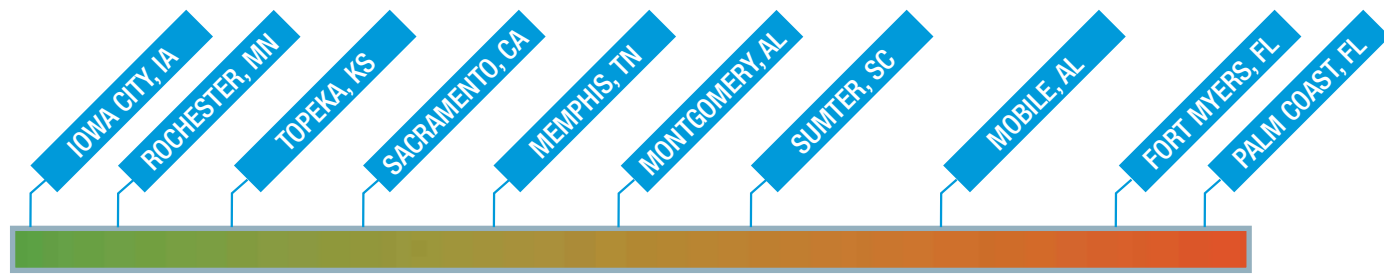


projects as well as highways — and TIFIA enables borrowing for not just one line but several. U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has called this loan program “the largest transportation infrastructure financing fund” in the history of the U.S. DOT.

However, some transportation experts have expressed concern that federal loans — and not grants — could be the future of federal

transportation funding. That is because gas tax revenues, the major federal source of revenue for transportation projects, have been declining for some time and are expected to continue to decline due to decreases in driving and increases in fuel efficiency, and because Congress shows no interest in increasing gas taxes. See chart at left: *Successful transit sales tax ballot measures 2010-2011*.

Best and worst regions for pedestrian safety



The regions at the green end of the spectrum are the safest; regions at the red end are most dangerous.

Source: *Transportation for America*

FUNDING TO BUILD BUT NOT OPERATE

BECAUSE THE AVAILABILITY of transit funding hasn't kept up with demand, the federal government — in order to sort out the best and most competitive projects — has made it harder to win funding. While this makes sense, it has ironic consequences: The federal funding process has become so time-consuming and costly that it is estimated to drive up the cost of transit projects significantly. This has resulted in fewer projects entering the federal funding pipeline, in spite of the heightened interest. Recent changes in the law and in the way that the Federal Transit Administration evaluates proposed projects are intended to make the federal process somewhat less burdensome.

Highways, in contrast, are not required to go through such a difficult and time-consuming process. The result is an enormous disincentive for building transit. Meanwhile, the rules for highway building make it much easier to build roads — even though driving has a much more deleterious effect on health, and has been attributed to much higher rates of asthma in children, and of poor lung function in people of all ages.

Buying buses and laying track for new rail systems — the capital expenses — are just part of the problem. While the federal government allocates funding each year for capital expenses, federal law forbids subsidizing operating expenses, which leaves local and state governments on their own when it comes to paying to operate the systems the federal government has helped build.

Yonah Freemark writes about this on his blog, *The Transport*

Politico, noting that the result of this policy is that “metropolitan areas with higher poverty rates and lower median incomes [which need transit more] are likely to have less money to spend than peer cities with lower poverty rates and higher median incomes.”

The recession, meantime, has forced cutbacks in service and fare increases at the very same time that transit use is at an all time high. Conventional wisdom is that ridership is significantly lower if trains and buses don't come at least every 15 minutes, so service cutbacks won't help transit make these new users into regular riders, or help people who rely on transit get to their jobs on time. That's why both Los Angeles and St. Louis included funding for transit operations as well as for transit construction in their sales tax packages. Salt Lake City adds a surcharge to diesel fuel when prices spike above \$3 a gallon, so that the transit agency has revenue to pay these higher prices.

MEAN STREETS

IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO that “the street” meant the entire open area between the buildings on either side, and that pedestrians had “undifferentiated dominion over both the sidewalk and the roadbed,” writes Christopher Gray in a 2011 op-ed in the *New York Times*. “Sidewalks were not pedestrian cattle pens but off-limits zones for vehicles . . . it's a question of territory, and the pedestrian has been losing for years.” Gray adds that the politics of this issue are changing quickly, in part because the real estate of the street is so limited and in part because pedestrians and bicyclists are much more vulnerable than motorists when hit.



ON THE WAY THERE

Not Free Parking

As UCLA Professor Don Shoup contends in his book *The High Cost of Free Parking*, American drivers park for free on nearly 99 percent of their car trips, and cities require developers to provide ample off-street parking for every new building. The result? Today's cities are far more suited to cars than people. A recent UC Berkeley study counted parking spots in the U.S. and concluded there are about three for every car and truck. Purdue University researchers surveyed the total area devoted to parking in a typical midsize Midwestern county, and found that parking spaces outnumbered resident drivers 3-to-1, and that the average area devoted to parking is more than 2 square miles.

This problem is exacerbated by the fact that areas with too much parking are not only an eyesore, they're also unsafe when there are few people around. Parking lots also contribute significantly to the "heat island effect," making it even hotter because the asphalt absorbs sunlight; on the other hand, asphalt doesn't absorb rainwater, often leading to stormwater problems. Most important, parking is never free, because we pay for the cost of the real estate through higher prices at the businesses that provide the parking or through taxes if the parking is public, and through higher mortgages and rents.

All of these reasons are causing cities to reconsider how they manage parking so as to make the most of what is a valuable and expensive resource. San Francisco is testing a new parking management system at 7,000 of the city's 28,800 metered spaces and 15 of 20 city-owned garages. The city provides real-time information about available parking so drivers can stop circling and find a space quickly, and adjusting meter and garage pricing up or down depending on demand.

Minneapolis is also revisiting its off-street parking policies in order to balance demand with other important objectives including a desire to maintain the city's traditional urban form and encourage people to use other means of transportation than the car. Minimum parking requirements have been eliminated from downtown and the provision of bike parking has been emphasized. Denver is also involving neighborhoods in parking management, following a study that found at least 25 percent of parking spaces in the 11 neighborhoods studied were vacant, and that lots reserved for particular businesses were significantly underutilized.

New York City has been a focal point for this territorial battle because Mayor Bloomberg and his Department of Transportation have turned Times Square and other stretches of Broadway into public plazas, and eliminated hundreds of parking places in order to install 250 miles of bicycle lanes. This effort has drawn international attention and Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan, who has been on the frontlines, has been lionized by pedestrian and bicycle advocates for taming the automobile and making city streets safe. But she's also drawn the ire of people who drive.

"I don't hate cars," she says in a 2010 article in *Esquire*. "It's a matter of balance . . . we're designing a city for people, not a city for vehicles," noting pedestrian fatalities are down 35 percent and retail sales are up. A 2012 *New York Times* poll showed that a majority of New Yorkers, 66 percent, think the bike lanes were a good idea, with the highest support among residents of Manhattan. Only 27 percent called the lanes a bad idea; 7 percent had no opinion or didn't answer.

A 2012 analysis from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that pedestrian fatalities in car crashes increased by 4.2 percent between 2009 and 2010. As alarming is the fact that while pedestrians and bicyclists account for a large percentage of traffic-related deaths and injuries, most safety money is used to fund projects that improve the safety of drivers. While a quarter of all traffic-related fatalities are pedestrians and bicyclists each year, only 1.5 percent of federal traffic safety funding is spent making roads safer for them, according to a 2011 report by Transportation for America, a project of Reconnecting America and Smart Growth America.

The decades-long neglect of pedestrian safety has exacted a heavy toll: Transportation for America analyzed 10 years of data on pedestrian fatalities in their 2011 study "Dangerous By Design," and found that 47,700 pedestrians were killed — the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of passengers crashing almost every month. During the same time more than 688,000 pedestrians were injured, a number equivalent to a pedestrian being struck by a car or truck every seven minutes. See chart on opposite page: *Best and worst regions for pedestrian safety*.

Moreover, even though roads have gotten somewhat safer, pedestrian fatalities have fallen at just half the rate of motorist

fatalities, dropping by just over 14 percent during the 10-year period compared to 27 percent for motor vehicle fatalities. While these deaths are “accidents” that are attributed to error on the part of the motorist or pedestrian, the majority of them share one characteristic: “They occurred along ‘arterial’ roadways that were dangerous by design — streets engineered for speeding traffic with little or no provision for people on foot, in wheelchairs or on bikes,” concludes the report.

The study also found that the Top 4 most dangerous regions for pedestrians are all in Florida — the state with the highest percentage of older Americans — while regions in California, Nevada, Arizona, Arkansas and Texas also ranked high on the list.

A 1999 report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

found that higher vehicle speeds are strongly associated with a greater likelihood of crashes involving pedestrian injuries. It was estimated that while only 5 percent of pedestrians would die when struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 mph or less, fatality rates climbed quickly as speeds increased: At 30 mph the pedestrian fatality rate was 40 percent; at 40 mph it was 80 percent; and at 50 mph it was 100 percent.

Another pedestrian safety study by the University of Connecticut in 2008 found that older cities with dense networks of streets and intersections are safer than newer cities — largely because older cities have more connected street networks, with shorter distances between intersections, which reduces speeds — while newer cities with wide, heavily trafficked arterials are more dangerous.



ON THE WAY THERE

How Livable Streets Make Us Healthier

(excerpted from an article by Sarah Goodyear in the online magazine *Grist*)

Ultimately, “the street” is what gives a neighborhood its character: Is it a place where passers-by can stop for a chat on the sidewalk? Where bicyclists can sally forth on a safely marked route? Where residents can gather and become neighbors?

“Great places have to be sustainable not just environmentally, but socially, too,” writes Sarah Goodyear on *grist.com*. “Because human beings are social animals. . . My dense, walkable, transit-rich neighborhood does a lot of great things for my carbon footprint (no car required, Zipcar within walking distance, farmers market only a few blocks away). But what it does for my soul might, in the end, be more important.

“My son has ridden his scooter up and down the sidewalk, and we’ve played stickball with the neighbor kids in the street. I’ve shoveled the snow in front of the house of the old couple next door. I’ve given hugs, picked up trash, and offered my shoulder to cry on. The street I live on is not just an address for me. It is an extension of my home.

“Over the years I have traded dog-sitting

services with one neighbor. A store around the corner has accepted packages for me when I’ve been out. I’ve gotten, and given career advice while sitting on the stoop. I’ve dropped my wallet on the sidewalk and had it returned by a woman whom I know could have used the money inside. She didn’t touch the cash.

“The sense I have — that my living room extends into the street — is, sadly, a privilege in this day and age. It’s made possible by relatively low car traffic and the high density of dwelling units on my block. This combination opens up a way of life that used to be common — in which human beings naturally connect with each other over time, forming networks that can then be called upon when the going gets rough.”

Goodyear cites a 1960 study by Donald Appleyard that is soon to be re-published in a book called *Livable Streets*. Appleyard found that people felt more connected to their neighbors and physical surroundings on streets with light car traffic. The heavier the traffic, the less this was true. And she cites other studies that have found that

“social capital” — the number and quality of social interactions — is higher in walkable communities, and that even small increases in connectedness and activity can have significant health benefits.

She applauds the success of complete streets legislation around the U.S., and concludes that “changing our streets to bring them back to human scale will take generations. It’s a process, but at least the work has begun in earnest.” She quotes Appleyard from his study: “People have always lived on streets. They have been the places where children first learned about the world, where neighbors met, the social centers of towns and cities, the rallying points for revolts, the scenes of repression . . . The street has always been the scene of this conflict, between living and access, between resident and traveler, between street life and the threat of death.”

Goodyear notes that Appleyard would be thrilled to see how his ideas have been championed by a new generation, but notes that he isn’t around to witness this because in 1982 he was struck by a car and killed.

COMPLETE STREETS

THE INCREASED INTEREST in making streets safer and more appealing for bikes and pedestrians has resulted in regional and state governments adopting “complete streets” policies mandating that all transportation policies and investments must take into consideration the safety and convenience of all users of the streets — not just drivers.

Complete streets are, according to the National Complete Streets Coalition, “designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.”

Complete streets policies have been adopted by 314 local jurisdictions — 100 were adopted in just the last year — as well as by 25 states and the District of Columbia. The city council meetings where these policies are considered often result in large-scale turnouts of bike, pedestrian and public-health advocates, such as a recent council meeting in Spokane that was attended by more citizens than any other council meeting during the year. A majority of those who spoke at this meeting supported the complete streets policy, including people representing health interests, senior citizens, people with disabilities, affordable housing advocates, locally owned businesses, the local farmers market, and schools. The city council voted in favor, 5 to 2.

Senior government officials are also speaking out in favor of investments in walking and biking: In an op-ed in the *Trenton Times*, New Jersey Transportation Commissioner James Simpson writes: “As a pedestrian I’ve seen drivers speeding down local streets, showing a lack of regard for pedestrians and bicyclists. I see the need for more ‘complete streets’ — more and improved sidewalks; better markings at crosswalks to put motorists on alert; bike paths where needed; and intersection improvements, including countdown pedestrian signals and accessible curb cuts to accommodate those who are mobility impaired.”

Delaware Governor Jack Markell has ordered state agencies to develop a statewide plan for a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails with the goal of establishing Delaware in the top 10 of bicycle-friendly states and to expand bike/ped linkages between the state’s cities and towns.

Virginia is saying goodbye to the cul-de-sac in favor of streets



Spotlight On Ithaca, New York

Built around a pedestrian-oriented college town, Ithaca, NY is both the safest place for pedestrians in the U.S. but is also the place where the most people walk and bike to work. And the region is in the top 20 for transit commuters, even though it does not have a fixed-guideway transit system. But while the region is doing well in terms of providing safe transportation choices, there are some areas that need improvement, including clustering jobs in opportunity areas (to make it even easier for more people to take transit to work) and providing the other elements of complete communities, including parks and grocery stores.

that are linked up to provide more connectivity and shorter distances that are easier to navigate on foot or by bike. State officials say the new rules will improve safety and save money on road maintenance because traffic will be spread out over more streets instead of channeled onto heavily trafficked arterials. Bike and pedestrian advocates often complain about the difficulty of changing the status quo, but when efforts can be framed as increasing safety and decreasing costs these changes are quickly prioritized.

A popular tool used to build support for investments in complete streets is the “walk audit”: Teams of people walk all the streets in a neighborhood and take note of the conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Lansing, Michigan, is kicking off the biggest such project in the nation, surveying walking conditions along 700 miles of streets.

These audits typically find that it's rough out there for pedestrians and especially for the disabled; wheelchair users wielding the Americans with Disabilities Act often lead the fight in the courts. In Los Angeles, for example, a recent story in the *Los Angeles Times* estimated that the city has 10,750 miles of sidewalks, and an estimated 42 percent are



SHOUT-OUTS

Transit Is Not Just For Big Cities

It's difficult and expensive to serve sprawling low-density suburbs with public transportation. But transit agencies are coming up with innovations. Here are five suburban transit ideas that work:

- Sprawling, suburban Prince William County, Virginia, is difficult to serve with public transit, but OmniLink's flexible bus routes allow riders to schedule trips two hours in advance. Bus drivers and dispatchers use a real-time GPS system to coordinate trips up to three-quarters of a mile off the main line.
- Highway 101 in L.A. is one of the most congested freeways in the U.S., but the Orange bus rapid transit line provides a hugely successful alternative for L.A.'s suburban San Fernando Valley because it connects residents with so many job centers and because dedicated lanes and signal priority at intersections ensure fast travel times
- Buses are permitted to drive on reconstructed shoulder lanes along highways in order to bypass stop-and-go traffic congestion, saving transit riders time and frustration in parts of Minnesota, Ohio, Florida, Washington, California, Kansas and Virginia.
- The New York City metro area has the most extensive transit network in the U.S. but driving is required to get to stations in some suburbs. However, when New Jersey Transit wanted to build a parking lot at the Maplewood commuter rail station the town protested, preferring to set up a shuttle service. Then a concierge service opened in the station, allowing commuters to patronize local business, return library books, send clothes to the cleaners, and have take-out food waiting upon their return from work.
- Ridership on Orlando's Lymmo downtown circulator more than doubled when it was converted to a bus rapid transit line with exclusive lanes, signal priority, stations with large shelters and real-time bus arrival information, and low-floor buses. The free service is part of a redevelopment strategy that has led to significant development downtown.

in disrepair. Fixing these crumbling sidewalks, and adding curb cuts to make them safe for wheelchairs as well as strollers, is estimated to cost about \$1.5 billion, according to the *Times*.

Some cities are experimenting with reconfiguring streets without curbs or lanes as "shared space" for pedestrians, bikes, transit and cars as a way to improve safety. These are typically narrow streets without curbs and sidewalks where vehicles are slowed by placing trees, planters, parking areas and other obstacles in the roadway, which is often lined by restaurants, street vendors, merchant displays and other commercial uses.

Proponents theorize that this improves safety because motorists become the intruders and must travel at very low speeds. Indianapolis debuted its shared street on TV during Super Bowl Sunday in 2012, winning praise from sports fans and journalists astonished that Indianapolis was actually walkable.

Complete streets are also high on the list of priorities for aging Baby Boomers and the decade-old movement to create "livable communities for successful aging." Advocates for older Americans want investments that make it easier and safer to walk and take transit so that seniors can get out and about and maintain their independence rather than having to depend on someone for a ride.

Seniors and their advocates are demanding more transportation choices and retrofits of Sun City retirement projects in Florida and Arizona. They're asking for traffic signals with longer walk times, more sidewalks and medians where pedestrians can seek refuge when trying to cross wide and busy streets, and they want transit to link not just to jobs but also to health-care facilities and community services.

THE POPULARITY OF BIKING

THE RESULT OF ALL THIS advocacy and all these improvements is that more people are walking and biking. Nationally, the percentage of commuters who walk or bike has increased by 10 percent since 2000. These commuters still represent a small share — just 3 percent — of all commuters. But some regions, especially those that include college towns — which are often designed to accommodate students who don't have cars — have higher numbers of people who commute on foot or by bike, including Ithaca, New York, with 18 percent.

In Minneapolis, which *Bicycling* magazine ranked as the No. 1

city for bikes in 2010, biking has increased a whopping 53 percent since Bike/Walk Twin Cities began counting cyclists and pedestrians at 42 locations in 2007. In the meantime, the number of pedestrians increased 18 percent.

Bicycle advocacy efforts in particular have enjoyed very robust growth across the U.S., in part because the bicycle is increasingly seen as a good replacement for the car, especially for errands and short trips. Moreover, bicycles can “extend the reach” of transit into neighborhoods by providing easy, convenient and inexpensive ways for residents to get from transit stops to their homes or jobs.

The Capital Bikeshare program in Washington, D.C., for example, grew faster than its proponents ever imagined; in 2011, its first year of operation, there were 1,100 bikes in more than 130 locations and 15,000 annual members. The program is being expanded this year to include a dozen surrounding suburbs, including Howard and Prince George’s counties. Boston’s 60-station 600-bike program is after just four months expanding across the Charles River to Cambridge and Somerville.

Musician and writer David Byrne summed up the importance of bikes in a 2012 *New York Times* op-ed: “For me, and lots of other people, the answer to the question “What would improve the quality of our urban life?” involves simple things like ... um ... bicycles, which make getting around — and being in — the city easier, more pleasant and more affordable. New York is one of many cities that are creating all kinds of new green spaces, riverside parks and bike programs, all of which are symptomatic of our desire to make our cities into our homes.

“Look around you. Bikes are everywhere: in glamorous ads and fashionable neighborhoods, parked outside art galleries, clubs, office buildings. More and more city workers arrive for work on bikes. The future is visible in the increasing number of bikes you see all over the urban landscape. This simple form of transportation is about to make our city more livable, more human and better connected.”

Byrne was writing about New York City, but ultimately that is what is new about transportation in the 21st century, in cities as well as in suburbs — bicycles, a better network of sidewalks, better maps and cell phone apps that make taking transit easier, and other low-cost alternatives to driving that are easy and convenient and more conducive to improved public health. And in the meantime we must also find ways to invest in the transit infrastructure that

will complement our extensive system of roads and highways with the goal of making our transportation system, and our communities, more complete and competitive. The Top 10 Lists on the following pages highlight some regions that are doing well along our Moving metrics, getting closer to building complete communities.



SHOUT-OUTS

Serving Rural America

Rural Americans spend a staggering amount of their income on transportation – as much as 42 percent – with low-income households suffering the biggest burden. Expanding cost-effective transit options through innovative programming and resource sharing is key to improving the health and prosperity of rural residents and in making these communities more economically viable into the future, yet funding still prioritizes new highways. However, there are rural transit innovations:

- In Alabama small communities use state and county vehicles including school buses to provide access to jobs and services.
- California’s Kings County offers an innovative system of 346 vanpools and 23 rural bus routes to ensure access to schools, jobs and services in the rural San Joaquin Valley. Workers can self-organize vanpools and designate a driver; the county provides the vans and insurance.
- York County Community Action Corporation in Maine provides an array of transit options over a 1,000-square-mile service area, operating bus transit to jobs and training, day care, shopping and medical appointments. A huge volunteer driver program provides service to residents whose needs cannot otherwise be met: Drivers volunteer their time and vehicles and are reimbursed only for mileage and tolls.
- Mason County Transit in Wisconsin coordinates and shares resources with its school district in order to make the best use of available buses and drivers and to provide for economies such as buying fuel at bulk prices. The agency transports students to and from after-school activities if they have to miss the bus to participate; school buses, in turn, augment transit service during the afternoon commute when all the transit buses are in use.
- St. John’s Council on Aging in St. Augustine, FL, began as a meal program serving seniors but now provides bus and shuttle service and has persuaded developers to contribute to a trust fund for public transit in lieu of building roads.



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Number Of Existing Fixed-Guideway Transit Stations

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	862
2	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	405
3	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	386
4	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	279
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	240
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	128
7	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	105
8	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	74
9	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	60
10	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	54
1	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	136
2	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	94
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	83
4	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	81
5	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	59
6	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	55
7	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	37
8	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	36
9	Salt Lake City, UT MS	28
10	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	25
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	27
2	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	18
3	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA	13
4	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	13
5	Albuquerque, NM MSA	8
6	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	7
7	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	7
8	Worcester, MA MSA	6
9	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	4
10	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	3
1	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	11
2	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	9
3	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	6
4	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	4
5	Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA MSA	4
6	Santa Fe, NM MSA	3
7	Bellingham, WA MSA	3
8	Michigan City-La Porte, IN MSA	3
9	Albany, GA MSA	3
10	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	2

Source: CTOD

Number Of Future Fixed-Guideway Transit Stations

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	104
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	98
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	76
4	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	64
5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	64
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	63
7	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	60
8	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	57
9	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	54
10	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	50
1	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	85
2	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	80
3	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	54
4	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	53
5	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	49
6	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL MSA	39
7	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	35
8	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	31
9	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	29
10	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA	24
1	Albuquerque, NM MSA	32
2	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI MSA	27
3	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	26
4	Tucson, AZ MSA	21
5	Honolulu, HI MSA	21
6	Madison, WI MSA	18
7	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	8
8	Syracuse, NY MSA	8
9	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	5
10	Lancaster, PA MSA	3
1	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	29
2	Albany, GA MSA	20
3	Winston-Salem, NC MSA	17
4	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	14
5	Santa Rosa-Petaluma, CA MSA	9
6	Boulder, CO MSA	6
7	Reading, PA MSA	5
8	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	5
9	Salinas, CA MSA	3
10	Racine, WI MSA	2

Source: Reconnecting America



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Fixed-Guideway Stations
In Opportunity Areas

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	83%
2	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	81%
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	75%
4	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	74%
5	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	60%
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	59%
7	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	59%
8	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	48%
9	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	44%
10	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	44%
1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	100%
2	Jacksonville, FL MSA	100%
3	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	96%
4	Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA	96%
5	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	81%
6	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	65%
7	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	60%
8	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	52%
9	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	47%
10	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	46%
1	Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA	54%
2	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	50%
3	Worcester, MA MSA	33%
4	Stockton, CA MSA	33%
5	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	33%
6	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	15%
7	Albuquerque, NM MSA	13%
8	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MS	11%
9	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	8%
10	N/A	
1	Norwich-New London, CT MSA	100%
2	Salem, OR MSA	100%
3	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	50%
4	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	44%
5	Santa Fe, NM MSA	33%
6	Michigan City-La Porte, IN MSA	33%
7	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	27%
8	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	25%
9	Mount Vernon-Anacortes, WA MSA	25%
10	N/A	

Source: Reconnecting America

Percent Of Commuters Who Take Transit

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	30.34%
2	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	14.53%
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	13.87%
4	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	11.89%
5	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	11.53%
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	9.22%
7	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	8.01%
8	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	6.06%
9	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	4.44%
10	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	3.77%
1	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	6.33%
2	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	6.26%
3	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	5.82%
4	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	4.65%
5	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	4.05%
6	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	3.65%
7	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	3.49%
8	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	3.47%
9	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	3.44%
10	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	3.43%
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	9.29%
2	Honolulu, HI MSA	7.46%
3	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	5.01%
4	Madison, WI MSA	3.92%
5	Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	3.66%
6	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	3.52%
7	Tucson, AZ MSA	2.57%
8	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	2.40%
9	Syracuse, NY MSA	2.19%
10	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	2.06%
1	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	8.16%
2	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	8.15%
3	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	7.41%
4	Ithaca, NY MSA	5.93%
5	Boulder, CO MSA	5.39%
6	Ames, IA MSA	5.29%
7	Champaign-Urbana, IL MSA	4.98%
8	Iowa City, IA MSA	4.92%
9	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	3.81%
10	Idaho Falls, ID MSA	3.80%

Source: U.S. Census



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Pedestrian Danger Index
(lower is safer)

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	21.63
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	30.40
3	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	35.06
4	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	35.90
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	38.52
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	43.57
7	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	46.77
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	54.63
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	74.68
10	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	75.99
1	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	29.45
2	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	30.42
3	Rochester, MN MSA	35.11
4	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	36.32
5	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC MSA	36.96
6	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	37.30
7	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA	37.71
8	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	41.63
9	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	47.95
10	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MS	49.03
1	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	15.21
2	Madison, WI MSA	16.48
3	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	17.08
4	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	20.62
5	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	24.74
6	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	26.84
7	Springfield, MA MSA	27.76
8	Lancaster, PA MSA	31.50
9	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	32.89
10	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	33.29
1	Ithaca, NY MSA	3.68
2	Iowa City, IA MSA	5.17
3	Corvallis, OR MSA	7.49
4	Ames, IA MSA	8.42
5	Grand Forks, ND-MN MSA	8.50
6	State College, PA MSA	9.93
7	La Crosse, WI-MN MSA	10.60
8	Eau Claire, WI MSA	11.54
9	Elkhart-Goshen, IN MSA	11.66
10	Rochester, NY MSA	12.45

Source: Transportation for America

Percent Of Commuters Who Walk Or Bike

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	6.5%
2	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	5.7%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	5.7%
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	4.3%
5	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	4.3%
6	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	3.6%
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	3.5%
8	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	3.4%
9	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	3.4%
10	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	3.1%
1	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	5.0%
2	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	3.9%
3	Rochester, MN MSA	3.8%
4	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	3.6%
5	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	3.6%
6	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	3.3%
7	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	3.3%
8	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	3.2%
9	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC MSA	3.2%
10	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	3.0%
1	Madison, WI MSA	7.7%
2	Honolulu, HI MSA	6.5%
3	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	5.7%
4	Springfield, MA MSA	4.8%
5	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME MSA	4.7%
6	Syracuse, NY MSA	4.6%
7	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	4.5%
8	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	4.5%
9	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	4.4%
10	Lancaster, PA MSA	4.3%
1	Ithaca, NY MSA	17.9%
2	Corvallis, OR MSA	14.3%
3	State College, PA MSA	13.1%
4	Champaign-Urbana, IL MSA	10.6%
5	Iowa City, IA MSA	10.5%
6	Missoula, MT MS	10.2%
7	Ames, IA MSA	10.1%
8	Flagstaff, AZ MSA	9.6%
9	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	8.5%
10	Boulder, CO MSA	8.4%

Source: U.S. Census



TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Blocks Smaller Than 6 Acres

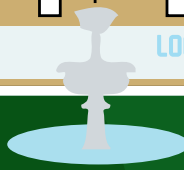
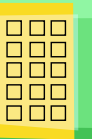
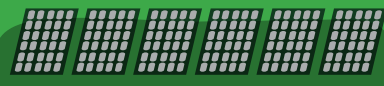
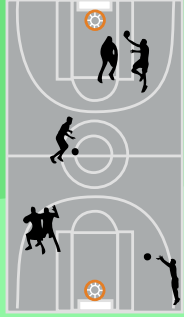
RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	63.09%
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	63.08%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	61.75%
4	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	56.06%
5	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	55.83%
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	54.65%
7	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	54.62%
8	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	51.87%
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	49.05%
10	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	47.17%
1	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	63.69%
2	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	63.39%
3	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	62.65%
4	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	59.94%
5	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL MSA	55.35%
6	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	53.52%
7	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	53.25%
8	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	52.67%
9	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	49.87%
10	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	48.91%
1	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	62.85%
2	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL MSA	58.85%
3	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA MSA	58.51%
4	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	54.37%
5	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, FL MSA	54.22%
6	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX MSA	51.94%
7	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC MSA	48.65%
8	Honolulu, HI MSA	48.62%
9	Elmira, NY MSA	48.23%
10	Stockton, CA MSA	47.89%
1	Ocean City, NJ MSA	74.37%
2	Altoona, PA MSA	66.01%
3	Johnstown, PA MSA	63.78%
4	Dover, DE MSA	61.84%
5	Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ MSA	59.36%
6	Charleston, WV MSA	59.22%
7	Lebanon, PA MSA	58.22%
8	Spokane, WA MSA	57.84%
9	Wheeling, WV-OH MS	57.41%
10	Anderson, IN MSA	56.99%

Source: Reconnecting America

Average Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Household

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	9,764
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	12,781
3	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	14,086
4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	15,476
5	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	16,490
6	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	16,567
7	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	16,896
8	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ MSA	17,150
9	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	17,429
10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	17,493
1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	15,796
2	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	15,971
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	15,974
4	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	16,770
5	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	16,973
6	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX MSA	17,052
7	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	17,231
8	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	17,242
9	Columbus, IN MSA	17,618
10	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	17,657
1	Toledo, OH MSA	17,218
2	Tucson, AZ MSA	17,345
3	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MS	17,414
4	Elmira, NY MSA	17,489
5	Albuquerque, NM MSA	17,497
6	Fresno, CA MSA	17,625
7	Honolulu, HI MSA	17,840
8	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA MSA	17,970
9	Dayton, OH MSA	18,044
10	Bakersfield-Delano, CA MSA	18,180
1	Champaign-Urbana, IL MSA	15,731
2	Lincoln, NE MSA	15,812
3	College Station-Bryan, TX MSA	16,090
4	Lubbock, TX MSA	16,778
5	Laredo, TX MSA	17,036
6	Fargo, ND-MN MSA	17,427
7	Abilene, TX MSA	17,434
8	Amarillo, TX MSA	17,460
9	Bloomington, IN MSA	17,477
10	Spokane, WA MSA	17,536

Center for Neighborhood Technology



LOCAL FOODS

FARMER'S MARKET



LIBRARY

HIGH SCHOOL

COMMUNITY GARDENS



GROCERY



CITY RECREATION CENTER

Thriving

THE PUSH FOR COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS on living, working and moving do not, of course, sum up all the things Americans need in order to thrive. We also need exercise and clean air, safe neighborhoods, good schools and quality childcare, healthy and affordable food, parks, shops, arts and culture — and a “built environment” in which all of this is available to people regardless of age or income or whether they can drive. But if indeed the “quality of human capital” is a key indicator of whether regions and the U.S. as a whole will be able to compete in the global economy — as discussed in the Economist Intelligence Unit report at the beginning of the Working chapter — then we also need to invest in human development, an essential element of thriving.

This point was persuasively made by the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), a national community development finance institution that serves as a steward for capital in community-building initiatives, in a 2009 report entitled “Coming Out As a Human Capitalist.”

“Recent research is making the case that the communities we live in can help or harm us at every level — physically, socially, emotionally,” LIIF CEO Nancy Andrews and Christopher Kramer write. “These effects can stay with us for the rest of our lives. There is a revolution in knowledge afoot that demonstrates convincingly that investing in people, especially in children, is every bit as important as investing in markets and buildings.”

The report discusses the growing evidence that children exposed to poverty suffer from actual impairment of brain function because they

experience a level of stress — from family turmoil, substandard housing and overcrowding, neighborhood and/or family violence, frequent relocation — that results in a reduction of working memory. This, in turn, affects their ability to learn and limits their chances of success.

Housing costs currently consume 66 percent of a poor household’s budget, according to the report, leaving less than \$500 a month for everything else — less than \$20 a day to feed the children, and pay for transportation, health care, books, clothing and recreation. “This is a budget of deprivation,” the authors write, “where families are often forced to choose between the rent and food, between heating and eating. Conditions like this can produce high levels of stress, poor nutrition and poor health. They can be crushing, especially to young children . . . We must understand that our vision cannot be community development alone, but rather community and human development together.”

Our report is largely about the community development part of the equation — how the built environment and choices about housing, jobs and transportation can set us up for success or failure according to a number of metrics. In this chapter we broaden this discussion to include factors such as public health and access to quality education and childcare. But as the LIIF report makes clear, affordability and access to economic opportunity really are key to determining whether many of us will thrive, or only some of us, and this will determine whether America will remain competitive.

GETTING PHYSICAL

THE PUSH FOR COMPLETE communities has gained real political muscle because of grave concerns about this country's health. Take the problem of obesity, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers to be "epidemic" in the U.S., and which is linked to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, strokes and chronic illness. A 2011 report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that in the last six years the rate of adult obesity nearly doubled in 17 states, and didn't decrease in any. The CDC reported in 2012 that childhood obesity has tripled in the past 30 years, and that two-thirds of American adults and one-fifth of all children are now considered overweight or obese.

Clearly America has to lay off the fast food, but the problem is more complicated than that. Our love affair with the automobile has caused us to literally engineer routine physical activity out of our lives. While going

to the gym and exercising is good, health experts argue that "incidental activities" such as a purposeful walk to the store, bus stop or school constitute an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

Studies have found correlations between obesity and driving, and between where you live and how much exercise you get. For example, while nearly half of all Americans do not meet the Surgeon General's recommendation of 30 minutes or more of physical activity daily, a 2005 study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that Americans who use transit get 19 minutes of exercise daily just walking



Most and least physically active regions

MOST PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

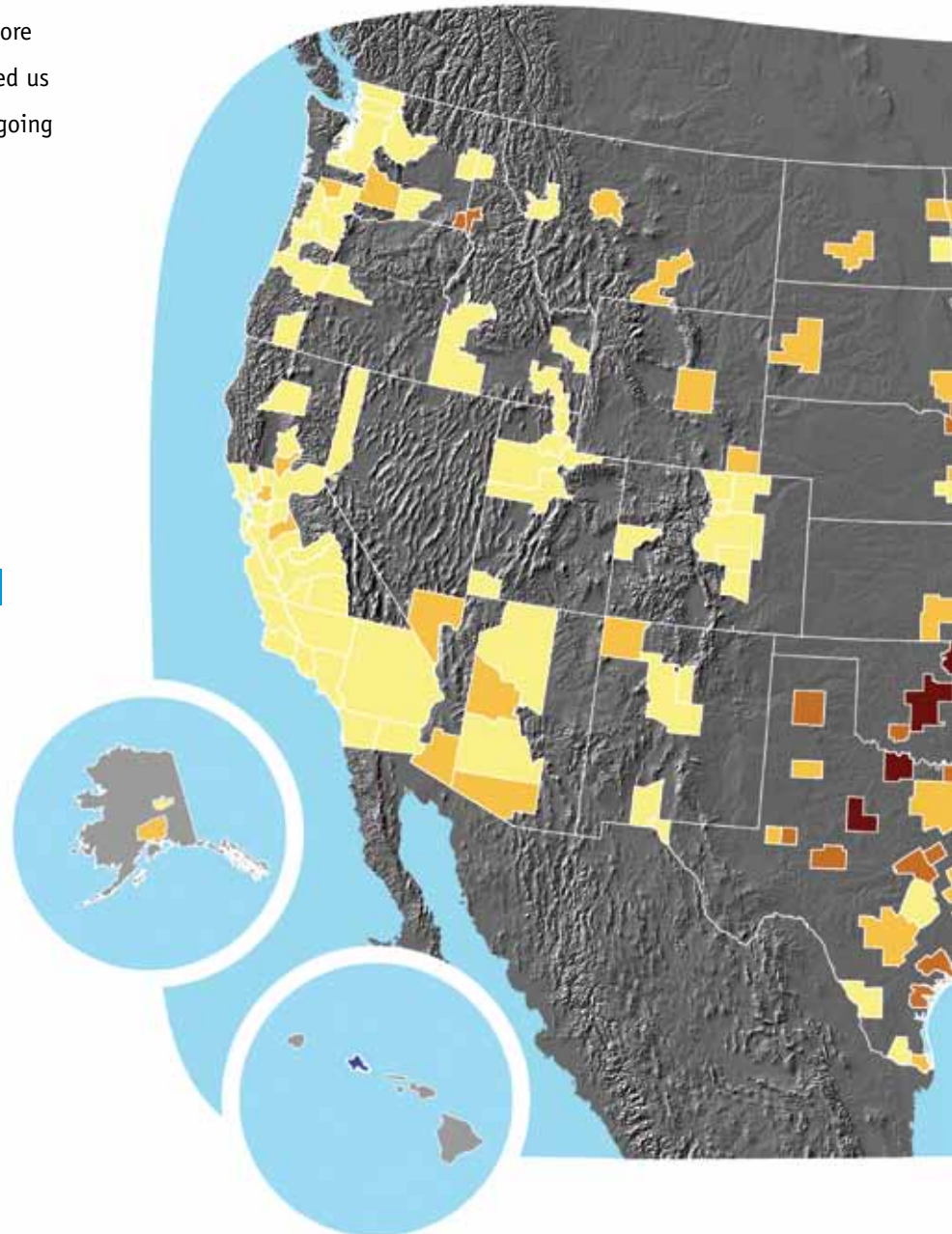
Boulder, CO
Santa Cruz, CA
Santa Fe, NM
Provo, UT
Corvallis, OR
Fort Collins, CO
Medford, OR
Bend, OR
Salinas, CA
Denver, CO

LEAST PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Gadsden, AL
Morristown, TN
Pine Bluff, AR
Johnson City, TN
Huntington, WV
Florence, AL
Weirton, WV
Charleston, WV
Cleveland, TN
Texarkana, TX-AR

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracks the general health trends in regions and states across the U.S.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



to and from the train or bus. More than 30 percent of transit users get the recommended 30 minutes during their commute.

A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in 2011 found that the body mass of residents of Charlotte, North Carolina, who started to ride a light rail line that opened in 2007 fell an average of 1.18 points compared to those who didn't ride — which translates into a loss of about 6.5 pounds for a 5-foot 5-inch tall person. In addition, these light rail users were 81 percent less likely to become obese over time.

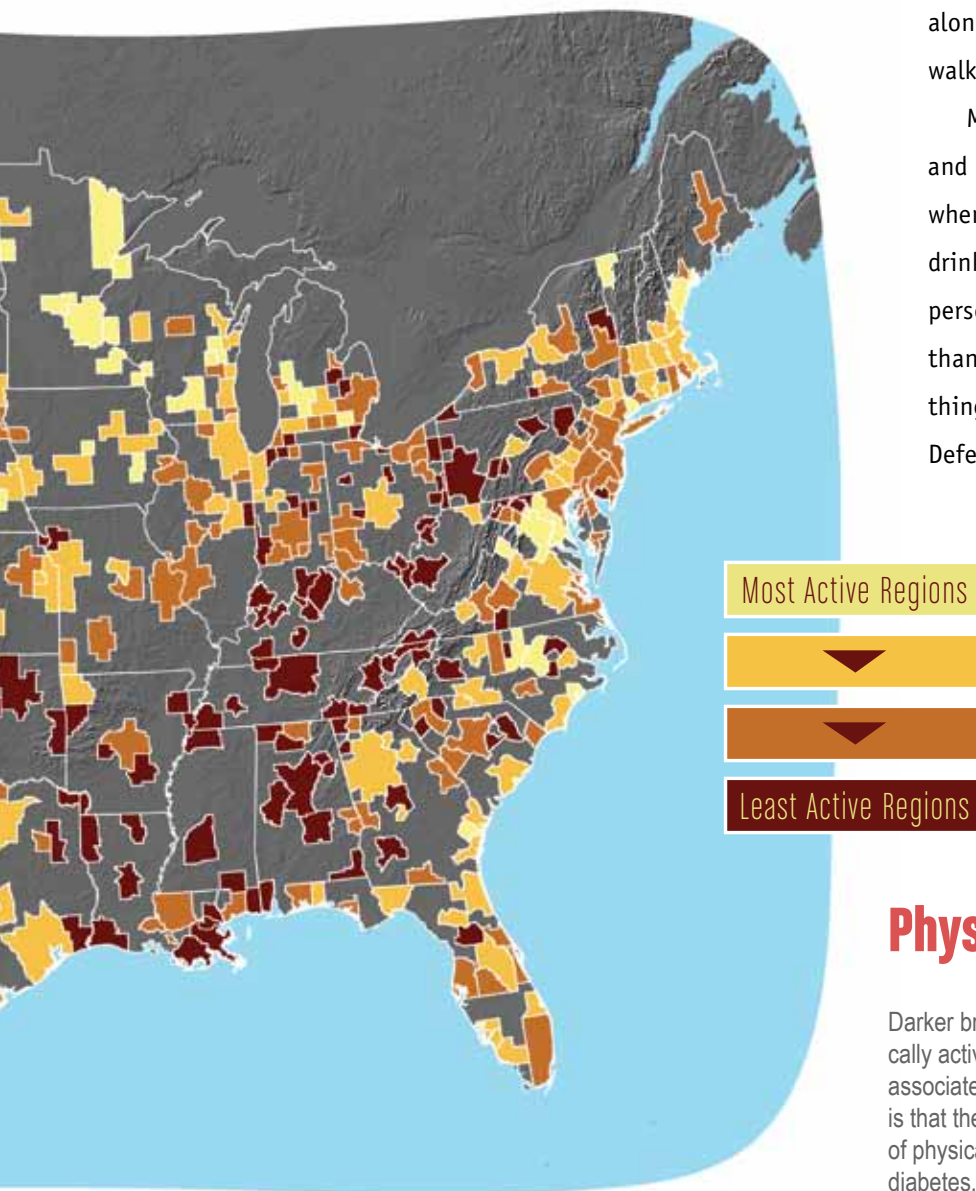
Moreover, Americans want to walk. A 2011 survey by the National

Association of Realtors found that more than three-quarters of Americans consider having sidewalks and places to walk a top priority. Six in 10 say they'd prefer a smaller house in a neighborhood with destinations to walk to rather than a bigger house in a less walkable neighborhood.

Having places to walk to is essential: A 2011 study from the University of California at Irvine shows that people walk more when their neighborhood is close to Main Street. The study found that residents of traditionally designed areas with main-street style shopping districts were three times more likely to travel on foot than those who live in newer, suburban-style neighborhoods with shops located along busily traveled roadways. The study also found that residents of walkable neighborhoods used their cars less.

Mark Holland, a former Vancouver, British Columbia, city planner and the founder of the Healing Cities Institute, says walking increases when homes are within 500 yards of a grocery store or an eating or drinking establishment, or within a half-mile of a park. "That's why a person who lives in a suburban density is at least 10 pounds heavier than the average person who lives in an urban density — all other things being equal," he tells Kaid Benfield of the Natural Resources Defense Council on NRDC's Switchboard blog.

Opportunity areas embody these critical components of traditional design — a higher intensity of people and activity due to a higher density of stores, restaurants, parks, homes and jobs, all connected by walkable streets. See List at left: *Most and least physically active regions*.



Physical activity across the U.S.

Darker brown regions show the places with some of the least physically active people in the U.S. We know that physical activity is associated with positive health outcomes, but what may be startling is that the South and Appalachia — the regions with the lowest levels of physical activity — are also the places with the highest rates of diabetes, obesity and heart disease.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HEALTH ADVOCATES ENTER THE FRAY

THIS EMERGING UNDERSTANDING about the relationships between physical activity, health and the built environment has pushed public health advocates into the arena of transportation and land-use planning, where they've gotten consistent and impressive results. For example, in Nashville, Tennessee, the regional planning agency has incorporated public health objectives into its transportation plan, which now includes a bike and transit network, and has provided immediate funding for a "complete streets" policy requiring 70 percent of roads — up from 2 percent — to include sidewalks and bike lanes.

In Tennessee, where one in three residents are obese, Governor William Haslam has created a statewide Health and Wellness Task Force to enable everyone to make healthy lifestyle choices. Last year the League of American Bicyclists recognized Tennessee for its progress, its emphasis on bike safety and on creating Safe Routes to School for children. "As a bicyclist myself, I realize the importance of safety in offering this healthy option as we encourage Tennesseans to take responsibility for their personal health," Haslam says.

Government agencies in Baltimore, the Twin Cities, Denver, Atlanta, Los Angeles and many other places have started using "health impact assessments" (HIAs) to encourage the input of health experts and medical professionals on land-use planning and investment decisions. Nashville's HIA found strong links between chronic disease and a lack of physical activity. San Francisco's HIA revealed major disparities between higher- and lower-income areas: life expectancy was 28 years lower for men and 25 years lower for women in low-income neighborhoods. These measures bring the best of medical science into the planning profession — and make for some compelling new ways to measure whether communities are moving in an undisputed positive direction.

In Louisville, Kentucky — the home of Colonel Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken and the "Hot Brown," a turkey and bacon sandwich

smothered in a rich Mornay sauce — six of 10 residents are considered obese. This fact alarmed former Mayor Jerry Abramson so much that he worried it was scaring away business. "[A] healthy work force is more productive and

less costly, so this became a competitiveness issue," he says in a 2011 *New York Times* article. "Every city was offering tax incentives and real estate deals but not every city had the weight problem we do."

Louisville responded by providing grants to help stock corner stores with fresh produce, helping to pay for refrigerators, dry goods tables, marketing, community outreach, technical assistance

and even the first order of produce, and also by encouraging community gardens, and building bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and more parks. KFC is even offering a non-fried menu.



THE AIR POLLUTION THREAT

PUBLIC-HEALTH ADVOCATES have also focused on the transportation and land-use planning arena because they are concerned about the threat posed by transportation-related air pollution. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), mobile sources of air pollution — cars, trucks, trains, planes — are the largest contributor of air toxics, including more than half the carbon monoxide, over a third of the nitrogen oxides, and almost a quarter of the hydrocarbons. "Particulate matter," a catchall phrase often used to describe a number of pollutants, has been identified as a major cause of ill health, especially among children.

More than 2,000 peer-reviewed studies have been published since 1996, the last time that the EPA reviewed the standards for particle pollution. The new studies validate earlier research showing strong relationships between particulate pollution and illness, hospitalization and premature death. And they suggest that the health effects are more far-reaching than was previously believed.

Many of these studies have shown that children living next to highways are more likely to develop respiratory problems such as asthma, and to have a reduced life expectancy. University of Southern California researchers published a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2004 that found higher rates of decreased lung function, coughing and bronchitis in children living in more polluted areas. A follow-up study in 2005 expressly linked living near freeways to higher levels of nitrogen dioxide, and showed that children living near freeways were more likely to have asthma.

The evidence that poor air quality has on health keeps piling up. A group of researchers, including Rochelle Green from EPA, found in a 2009 study that pregnant African-American women who live within a half mile of freeways and busy roads were three times more likely to have miscarriages than women who don't regularly breathe exhaust fumes. Dr. Joan Denton, director of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment at the California Environmental Protection Agency, says: "This study adds weight to the growing body of evidence that constant, heavy exposure to traffic exhaust significantly increases the risk of reproductive harm."

EVERYTHING EASY HAS BEEN DONE

CITIES IN CALIFORNIA continue to rank at the top of the American Lung Association's annual ranking of places with the worst air, though the list also includes cities such as Cincinnati and Phoenix. "If Southern California is ever to have consistently clean air, we need to take dramatic new steps," says Bonnie Holmes-Gen, the Lung Association's senior policy director in California. "At this point, anything that's easy has already been done. We need to transition away from petroleum fuel to plug-in electric vehicles and to redesign cities around public transit, biking and walking."

The EPA has been working for years to help improve air quality, and research on the health impacts of poor air quality has led to higher emissions standards as well as cleaner fuel. Lawmakers in California began passing stricter regulations in the 1960s to reduce what was then and still is some of the worst air quality in the nation and in the world — regulations that had the effect of spurring auto industry innovations in emissions-control technology.

In a compelling op-ed in a Riverside County newspaper this year, three doctors sum up health professionals' concerns about our dependence on

the automobile. Riverside County is part of an area of Southern California known as the "Inland Empire," which has consistently ranked among the top three regions with the worst air quality in the U.S.

"If doctors were in charge of planning our cities," write Cameron Kaiser, Richard Rajartnamand and T. Allen Merrit in *The Riverside Press-Enterprise*, "our cities would look very different. Why? The answer is simple:



ON THE WAY THERE

Diesel Death Zone

The corridor stretching from Long Beach north to East Los Angeles is called the "diesel death zone" because of the trucks that rumble up the 710 freeway from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the two largest ports in the U.S. Scientists have been studying residents of the low-income ethnic communities along the 710, and their conclusion, in the words of Linda Birnbaum, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, is that "Living near major roads is hazardous to your health. Period."

Birnbaum funds many of these researchers, many of whom were quoted in a 2011 *Scientific American* story about the health threats from traffic pollution. Half the residents of L.A. County — about 10 million people — live within a mile of a freeway, Cone notes, a distance that Dr. Ed Avol, a professor of preventive medicine at USC, describes as "dramatically close." Dr. Frank Gilliland, director of the Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center, says the lung function of children who grow up near freeways is about 10 percent lower due to the high levels of ultra-fine particles in the air. USC professor Heather Volk adds that children born to mothers living within 350 yards of a freeway appear to be twice as likely to have autism.

L.A. County environmental health director Angelo Bellamo told Cone that there are at least 90 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District close enough to freeways that children are highly exposed to traffic fumes. The school district has adopted a policy that prohibits the siting of schools within 500 feet of a freeway unless the district determines there are no other possible sites. But Bellamo is concerned about the 90 schools that are already too close. And he notes that freeways and other heavily traveled roadways are moving closer to existing schools. "There's a growing body of knowledge [about these health effects]," he says, "and the craziness is that we are still doing it."

The epidemic of air pollution and chronic disease in the Inland Empire is fundamentally linked to our built environment and dependence on vehicles.

“As doctors in Riverside County, we spend most of our time treating illnesses such as asthma, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

These are illnesses that are caused in part by the double whammy of air pollution and a lack of physical activity. We see too many children struggling to breathe from asthma and too many patients die prematurely from these chronic illnesses. Changing the way we plan our cities can help reduce this burden of disease.”

PARKS ARE PART OF THE ANSWER

PROXIMITY TO PARKS and gardens can help turn opportunity areas into complete communities by providing possibilities for exercise, play and social interaction, as well as access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Opportunity areas that have access to parks are one step closer to becoming complete communities. See list on page 72: *Top 10 regions with park rich opportunity areas.*

They are especially important to neighborhoods with high rates of obesity and other health problems. Moreover, trees, grass and plants return significant amounts of oxygen to the atmosphere and help filter out air and water pollutants while also countering the “heat island effect” by providing shade and reducing air temperatures.

Numerous studies also link access to green and recreational spaces to reduced rates of crime and property damage, in part because parks and gardens act as gathering places where neighbors can get to know one another, and where at-risk youth can be engaged in constructive activities. Studies also show physical activity is associated with better academic performance, higher GPAs, and better scores on standardized tests. Fourteen studies reviewed by researcher Amika Singh at VU University in the Netherlands in 2011 showed children with higher physical activity rates also performed better on tests in school, particularly in math and reading.

Singh says the benefits of physical activity may extend beyond improvements in academic performance. “Children learn by participating in sports, learning rules, and learning to act appropriately in a social environment,” she adds. “That translates into the classroom, where children who are physically active may adhere better to classroom rules and get along better with teachers and classmates. Academic performance may just be the short term benefit of exercise; in addition to a whole range of other social and behavioral benefits.”

Access to parks and open space ranks high on the list of priorities for Americans, who have repeatedly voted for bond measures to pay for the acquisition of open space. The national nonprofit Trust for Public Land —



ON THE WAY THERE

Why Nimbys Are Becoming Yimbys

Residents who oppose change in their neighborhoods – the notorious NIMBYS (Not In My Backyard) – get a lot of media attention. But in fact more and more neighbors are coming together to say “Yes In My Backyard” to both development and to density – two things NIMBYS abhor – because they’ve seen the community benefits these generate. Neighbors in suburban Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, are urging a doubling or tripling of density, hoping that — as in Bethesda, Maryland, and Arlington County, Virginia — it will increase their home values, which escalated in Bethesda and Arlington by 40 to 80 percent.

A 2009 study by Goody Clancy, an architecture and urban design firm in Boston, finds that it takes about 1,500 new residents in a half-mile radius to support one new block of stores. This corresponds to neighborhoods with gross densities — not counting streets and parks — of 15 to 30 dwelling units per acre, which translates into a mix of narrow-lot detached single family houses, row houses, and low-rise lofts. Double that density to 60 units per acre — a density found in highly desirable neighborhoods such as Boston’s Back Bay — by adding mid- and high-rise housing to the mix.

Goody Clancy reports that when people are asked what they would like to add to their neighborhoods, the three top choices are: a vibrant Main Street that offers shops, services and public places including restaurants where residents can socialize; expanded housing options for those who are older, younger, or who have disabilities; and alternatives to dependence on cars.

Complementary research by Kittleson and Associates, a transportation planning, engineering and research firm, indicates that the densities that support a Main Street are about equal to what supports “walk-to-bus rapid transit” stations, removing the need for large and expensive parking structures. The higher densities required to support a supermarket can also support BRT service throughout the day.

which is working toward the goal of ensuring that everyone in the U.S. has access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home — has over the past decade helped communities get 496 ballot measures approved that have provided \$34 billion in new funds for parks and land conservation.

Across the U.S., parks tend to be located in wealthier neighborhoods, making park access not just about health but also about fairness. Los Angeles, for example, has 23,000 acres of park land, most of it concentrated near the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent to high-income communities such as Brentwood and Malibu. It has been estimated that almost 40 percent of Los Angeles County residents live too far away from a park to use it frequently.

But wealthier neighborhoods are also park-poor. Atlanta, for example, has 7.7 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, just half the national average, but the wealthy neighborhood of Buckhead is one of the most “under-parked” neighborhoods in one of the most under-parked major U.S. cities. A 2011 news story in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* discussed the problem, pointing out that “private and corporate parks and oversized yards make it appear as if Buckhead has plenty of green space, masking the need for a major gathering spot.” The story concluded that it’s difficult to buy park land in “one of the most expensive zip codes in the city . . . where transactions are going for \$500 per square foot.”

The Trust for Public Land’s *parkscore.org* is an interactive mapping website that provides information on the nearest parks and recreation centers with the goal of promoting “park equity” by displaying demographic information so everyone can see which neighborhoods are park-deficient. For example, while 86 percent of all residents in Denver are within a half-mile walk of a park, affluent neighborhoods are more likely to be park-adjacent. And because Denver is one of the fastest growing areas in the U.S., the ratio of parks to population is slipping, and Denver Parks and Recreation is now using the Parkscore website to prioritize investment in neighborhoods with the most acute need for open space.

TACTICAL URBANISM

THE COST OF CREATING the average community park can run into millions of dollars, and finding new park land in existing communities, especially urban neighborhoods, is particularly tough. As a result, new parks and especially small “pocket parks” are sprouting up in unlikely places, including landfills, rooftops, reservoirs and even cemeteries.

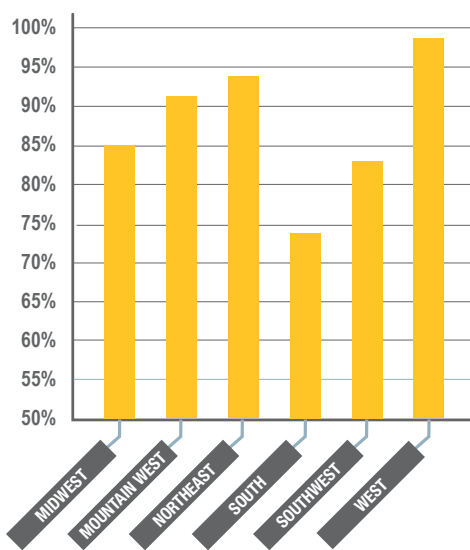
The new park that everyone has been talking about is in the most improbable of places. New York City’s High Line park is built on an abandoned elevated rail line that once brought freight cars into the factories and warehouses that lined the streets of Chelsea.

Paul Goldberger, writing in *National Geographic* in 2011, describes the park as “part promenade, part town square and part botanical garden,” and he says: “Walking on the High Line is unlike any other experience in New York. You float about 25 feet above the ground, at once connected to street life and far away from it. You can sit surrounded by carefully tended plantings and take in the sun and the Hudson River views, or you can walk the line as it slices between old buildings and past striking new ones . . . Not the least of the remarkable things about the High Line is the way, without streets to cross or traffic lights to wait for, ten blocks pass as quickly as two.”

Like many public and private investments, however, the High Line is being linked to gentrifying adjacent neighborhoods and property in an already unaffordable city. This is yet another example of how a city can do well in terms of one measure of making a community more complete — by providing park access — but continue to be challenged in terms of another key measure: equitable access to amenities.

The difficulty of finding park space has also driven park advocates to reclaim the streets — estimated to cover nearly a third of the urban landscape — as active public spaces. Some cities are even going so far as to identify some streets in their regional parks systems, thereby

Food access in opportunity areas



Opportunity areas in the South and Southwest do not provide easy access to healthy food choices.
Source: USDA Food Atlas and Reconnecting America

emphasizing them as important places to “share the road.” Portland, Oregon, for example, has set a goal of making 25 percent of all trips be on bicycle by 2030, and in order to do so is developing neighborhood greenways that can be used for biking and walking. By 2015, Portland plans that 80 percent of residents will live within a half-mile of a neighborhood greenway.

The lack of open space and of resources for new parks and public spaces has given rise to a movement that has been called “tactical urbanism” — quick, cheap, often temporary interventions that can be staged in order to make a small part of a neighborhood more lively and enjoyable, and provide people with the know-how to stage interventions in other communities.

The 2012 *Tactical Urbanism 2: Short-term Action, Long-term Gain* by the Street Plans Collaborative,

an urban planning, design and advocacy firm, describes interventions including: “guerilla gardening,” “open streets,” “pavement-to-parks,” and “depaving” (a project to improve storm water treatment by removing unnecessary driveways and concrete surfaces) as well as the popular annual “Park(ing) Day,” now staged in hundreds of cities across the U.S., when parking spaces are turned into temporary parks.

“Tactical urbanism is how most cities are built, really, especially in the developing nations,” lead author Mike Lydon notes on the online magazine *The Atlantic Cities*. “It’s step-by-step, piece-by-piece. We’re noticing more and more of these tactics are popping up and leading to longer-term change. It’s very appropriate [considering] the way the economy [is].”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

HEALTHY FOOD IS as important as exercise to improving the health of Americans. For many Americans, a fast food outlet is easier to get to than a market selling fresh produce, and a child’s meal costs less than broccoli and carrots — largely the result of federal subsidies for commodity crops

such as corn and soybeans that are the building blocks of a fast food meal. (The corn provides cheap sugar and the soybeans cheap fat.) As a result, more and more communities are exploring ways to make it easier and cheaper for people to get good food — from urban farms and rooftop gardens, to convenience stores offering fresh produce and mobile food trucks selling organic collard greens, mangos and heirloom tomatoes.

“Food access” has become a huge issue, and the term “food deserts” has been used to describe the 10 percent of U.S. neighborhoods where

residents cannot walk to buy an apple, and must travel long distances to find a supermarket. Communities that include grocery stores are more complete, and 95 percent of all opportunity areas are located within a mile of a supermarket, proving again that when trying to create complete communities, opportunity areas are a good place to start. See



chart on previous page: *Food access in opportunity areas*.

Many food deserts are in lower-income communities where people may not own cars and have few alternatives to eating fast food or shopping at a convenience store — and these tend to be neighborhoods with higher rates of diabetes and obesity. In Chicago, food deserts have become such a problem that Mayor Rahm Emanuel has made it his goal to ensure everyone living in a low-income neighborhood can find nearby stores selling fresh fruit and vegetables.

The South generally does not do a good job of providing access to healthy food relative to the rest of the U.S. This is where low-income people and those without cars have to travel the furthest. Reconnecting America looked at U.S. Department of Agriculture data and found that regions in New Jersey, Louisiana, West Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia all make the Top 10 worst list. See list above: *Top 10 worst regions for food access*.

A 2012 story in the *New York Times Magazine* depicts the health crisis in rural Mississippi, a state where a black man’s life expectancy is

lower than the average American's life expectancy was in 1960, where 69 percent of adults are obese or overweight, a quarter of all households don't have access to healthy food, and getting to a grocery store can involve driving 30 miles. "In one of the country's most fertile regions, people sometimes have to shop for their groceries at the gas station," Suzy Hansen writes. "Consequently, Mississippians are dying from diabetes, hypertension, congestive heart failure and asthma . . . in the 1960s people starved, and today they die from food."

FAST FOOD TO HEALTHY FOOD RATIOS

IT'S IRONIC THAT rural communities – which often are surrounded by farmland —rank so high on the list of food deserts. The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found in 2008 that in California — where agriculture is a major industry — the average California adult lives near four times as many fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as grocery stores and produce vendors. This ratio of "fast food to healthy food" is becoming a benchmark used to assess the need for change in communities. See list on page 79: *Top 10 regions with the worst ratio of fast food to healthy food options.*

"The point that this study makes is that we can't just look at issues of weight as a personal choice," says Jonathan Fielding, Los Angeles County's public health director told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2008. "We are affected by our environment. We understand that when we're talking about air quality, but we forget that it also affects what we eat."

In 1999, the study in the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, ("Supermarket Access in the Inner City") found the city of Philadelphia had the second fewest supermarkets per capita of any major U.S. city. Two years later, the state of Pennsylvania created a public-private Fresh Food Financing Initiative that has helped build 88 new grocery stores in 34 counties, including 26 in Philadelphia – with the added benefit that 5,000 new jobs were created.

This success has led other states to experiment with similar initiatives, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has created a national fresh food financing initiative that could include federal tax credits, below-market-rate loans, loan guarantees and grants to attract private investment in grocery stores, supermarkets and farmers markets in neighborhoods that don't have them.

But a big supermarket isn't the answer for every community. Some worry that big-box stores will take sales and jobs away from existing

locally-owned businesses, and they are concerned about the traffic that big stores attract and the fact that communities have little control over the quality or sourcing of produce.

"What we need," Gary Nabhan and Kelly Watters wrote on the online magazine *Grist* in 2011, is "tangible support for rebuilding the rural and urban infrastructure that can enable more marketing of fresh, local foods by farmers, orchard keepers, and ranchers directly to neighboring consumers. The lack of a big-box store in our community may be an asset — not a disadvantage — in keeping our children healthy and food secure."



ON THE WAY THERE

Oklahoma City Goes On A Diet

Mayor Mick Cornett is an Oklahoma City native and popular former sports broadcaster who garnered a record high 87.6 percent of the vote in his 2006 re-election. That was just about the time Oklahoma City began showing up on rankings of the fattest U.S. cities (at No. 7), and when he stepped on the scale he found that, at 217 pounds, he was part of the problem. So he began to diet and decided to also start a public conversation. "I came up with this stunt of putting the city on a diet," he told *Governing* magazine. "I went to the zoo, stood in front of the elephants, and said, 'We're going to lose a million pounds.'" The mayor lost 40 pounds but the city did even better — as of mid-2011 residents lost almost 900,000.

In the process of losing weight the mayor pondered the city's predicament.

"We had an automobile-centric culture, a drive-through restaurant mentality," he told *Governing*. "We hadn't built a pedestrian-friendly community." So the mayor came up with a bold \$777 million plan to remake the city as walkable and urban, with an extensive new streetcar system, sidewalks throughout the city, a 60-mile network of bicycle trails and walking paths, a new 70-acre park downtown and a new convention center — all of it funded by the extension of an existing one-cent sales tax. "We're trying to change the culture of the community from an infrastructure standpoint," says Mayor Cornett, "from a community where life revolves around the car to one where life revolves around people."

Oklahoma City voters have renewed their sales tax several times in order to continue funding major projects, which have all been paid for before completion and not incurred additional debt.

URBAN FARMING

IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS, the interest in moving away from corporate farms and stores and toward local, organic food sources has boosted interest in urban farms. Cities across the country are changing ordinances to permit the sales of home-grown produce — and even allowing the raising of farm animals — as residents demand access to high-quality food and greater connection to the source of that food.

Baltimore's urban agriculture movement, for example, has taken root with a cadre of small-time entrepreneurs launching urban farms and rooftop gardens with the support of local foundations, city agencies, a city food policy director and "healthy food zoning." One urban farm is

run by the city school district, another by a Montessori charter school and a third by an urban service corps.

Other farmer/entrepreneurs are starting "crop circles" and rooftop gardens to provide members of this "community sponsored agriculture" program with shares of the harvest. Baltimore's Big City Farms is creating a national network of urban farms on underutilized land in U.S. cities with the goal of aggregating these efforts and getting big contracts with major customers such as Whole Foods.

Baltimore's urban farmers were able to get the support of the city, which created a Food Policy Task Force after urban farming was deemed a key strategy in the city's sustainability plan. First steps included drafting a zoning code allowing residents to grow and sell produce in higher-density neighborhoods and on city-owned vacant lots. The city is requesting proposals to turn city-owned vacant lots into farms and is providing a central site for composting. Beth Strommen, director of the city's Office of Sustainability, says her role is to help urban farmers navigate city bureaucracy. "The concept of farming in the city is new," she tells *grist.org*. "I'm trying to help farmers keep their costs down."

But even with the right zoning and government support, urban farmers still face substantial challenges in urban environments, where dust containing lead from vehicle exhaust, lead-based paint and manufacturing facilities has worked its way into the soil. Studies show that lead levels are highest around the foundations of buildings and within a few feet of city streets. The number of programs helping residents test their yards for lead has increased, partly in response to the growing urban farming movement.

SCHOOL QUALITY

ACCESS TO GOOD SCHOOLS, early childhood education and quality childcare are integral to the idea of complete communities. The effect of education was monetized in the Low Income Investment Fund report "Coming Out As a Human Capitalist" cited at the beginning of this chapter. "There is broad consensus that education is the key that unlocks a child's future," write the authors. "A high school graduate will earn \$270,000 more over his/her lifetime than a high school dropout. College graduates earn nearly twice (177 percent) the amount earned by students who have received only a high school diploma. And these benefits carry



SHOUT-OUTS

Eating Right

In the absence of a quality grocery store located in every neighborhood, communities have gotten creative. We'd like to give shout-outs to:

- The Healthy Corner Store Program in Minneapolis sets retailers up with produce-handling training and a store operations manager at a local food co-op to develop a merchandising plan and get help on pricing and margins.
- Under Philadelphia's Philly Bucks program people get \$2 in credit for every \$5 they spend at participating farmers markets, which also accept food stamps.
- Baltimore's public library has created a virtual supermarket allowing residents to order food online from a full-service supermarket. The food is delivered to the public library for residents to pick up, and the city pays for delivery.
- The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission is working to integrate a local food system that includes community gardens, a neighborhood campus that teaches classes in food production, transportation planning focused on food access, and a healthy food team.
- In Spartanburg, South Carolina, 40 community vegetable gardens have been planted to supply two weekly farmers markets and a mobile food truck that sells fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income neighborhoods.
- The Miami-Dade Health Department is revising policies and practices to increase the availability of healthy foods at schools, worksites, hospitals and other community institutions.

over into future generations — children from parents with higher levels of education do better than those without.”

In a knowledge-based economy these effects are multiplied: “Moreover, the benefits of education have been growing: In 1973, a male high school dropout’s wage would have been \$13.61 per hour, compared to \$9 per hour now; those with advanced degrees earn 20 percent more than three decades ago,” add the authors.

Because the correlation between quality education and future economic security is so profound, parents who live in urban neighborhoods today are less likely to send their children to local public schools than they were 50 years ago — in the intervening time financial resources, including the tax base, have been drained from many of these neighborhoods, resulting in a decline in the quality of education.

The result has been a growing, if controversial, interest in an educational reform effort called “school choice,” a term used to describe a wide array of programs. These include the option to attend public schools in other neighborhoods, to attend private schools using vouchers or receiving tax credits or deductions for school-related expenses, to be schooled at home, or to attend “charter schools” that are independently run, funded by taxpayers, and free from many of the regulations of the existing school system, and which may be more innovative and encourage greater involvement by parents.

The upside of expanded school choice is that parents living in neighborhoods with low-performing schools can find other schools with higher-quality educational programs. The downside is that children may end up attending schools located far from where they live, which means they can’t walk or bike to school — and that they and their parents will end up spending a lot of time driving across town during rush hour. And there’s another downside: This evolving educational landscape has

changed the notion of the “neighborhood school,” once the heart of a community, because parents whose children don’t attend neighborhood schools are less invested in the performance of those schools.

Moreover, the competition to get into high-quality schools in densely populated urban neighborhoods is often fierce, which means that children may have to attend a school that was not at the top of their parents’ list. Or it may mean that once couples have children they may leave the city and move to the suburbs, where the quality of public schools tends to be higher.

A 2012 story on the *San Francisco Chronicle’s* SFGate website, reported that new census figures showed that “San Francisco is bleeding families with children — losing 5,278 people younger than 18 between 2000 and 2010.” The story prompted Aaron Renn to ask a provocative chicken-and-egg question on his Urbanophile blog: “Do

schools have to improve before families will stay in the city?” he asks. “Or do families have to stay in the city before schools will improve?”

THE CONDITIONS OF LEARNING

TEST SCORES HAVE BECOME the most common method used to assess school quality, even though decades of social science research suggest there are other critical factors that will help determine whether a child succeeds. “The quality of schools can explain about one-third of the variation in student achievement whereas two-thirds is due to ‘non-school’ factors such as neighborhood quality and safety, the availability of affordable transportation, and access to healthcare, after-school programs, open space and cultural assets, and parental involvement,” writes Richard Rothstein, research associate at the Economic Policy Institute, in a 2010 report entitled “How to Fix Our Schools.”

There are at least two other factors: The first is that the most recent





Safe Routes To School

Nearly half of all children walked or biked to school in 1969, but only 13 percent walk or bike today. Two recent national surveys of parents found the most commonly cited reason was that schools are too far away, followed by concerns about traffic safety and crime. But the fact that children no longer walk or bike has serious health repercussions: Obesity among children has tripled over the last two decades, and more than 20 percent of morning traffic is generated by parents driving kids to school. The combined emissions from all those cars and school buses adds up to the single greatest cause of pollution in many cities.

When Congress funded the Safe Routes to School program in 2005, it was responding to a grassroots movement that had rallied to make streets safer for kids by adding sidewalks, bike paths and crosswalks, and by providing education and encouragement. The popularity of the program is fueled by alarm over childhood obesity and lack of physical activity as well as parents' nostalgia for their own walks to school and a desire to connect with other parents, spikes in the price of gas, and concern about climate change. The program produces very real results.

At the Bear Creek Elementary School in Boulder, Colorado, Principal Kent Cruger serves as inspiration, arriving at school via foot-powered scooter, skateboard or unicycle — to cite a few of his choices — when he isn't carpooling. The number of students now regularly walking and biking has risen by 30 percent, with a corresponding 30 percent reduction in traffic counts. At the Green Street School in Brattleboro, Vermont, the number of "walking school buses" — groups of children are accompanied by adults on the walk to school, picking up students along the way — and "bicycle trains" have tripled. A public outreach effort to reduce speeds around this school, just outside downtown, has resulted in a 40 percent reduction in the number of cars speeding through the school zone.

Due to increased interest in walking and biking in Auburn Washington, the Auburn School District has been able to reduce the number of school buses from six to one, resulting in an annual savings of \$220,000. At Pioneer Elementary in Auburn, 85 percent of students walk or bike on a regular basis and they receive the highest academic scores in the district, which Principal Debra Gary attributes to their healthy, active lifestyles. And Miami-Dade County has seen a 43 percent decrease in childhood pedestrian injuries and a 64 percent decrease in the number of children seen at local trauma centers because of pedestrian injuries.

census data shows that the number of single parents is increasing, which may mean the family's financial resources are constrained and that parents are less able to pay for educational enrichment activities such as tutors, music instruction or participation on a sports team. And the spatial mismatch between where families live and where their children attend school may mean their children are in unfamiliar neighborhoods, that arranging playdates is difficult because too much driving is required, that they may have to spend a lot of time in after-school care instead of going home, and that so much time is spent traveling to and from school that parents have little time to cook dinner, spend time with their children, or help them with homework — all factors that contribute to whether children can reach their potential.

Jeff Vincent of California's Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California, Berkeley is among those who believe that where a school is sited has an important and underacknowledged impact on school quality. This means, he says, that it is essential to coordinate school planning with planning for complete communities and also that school officials consider the urban context and built environment in which schools will be located, as well as how students will get to school and whether they can walk and bike.

The learning environment is significantly enriched when the community in which a school is located has supportive community services and after-school programs, parks, recreation centers, libraries, and stores with affordable and healthy food. At the very least we must work to ensure that neighborhoods are safe places where kids can run and bike on the streets, meet friends and hang out. If there's transit, older children and teens can become independent, allowing them to engage in after-school activities, meet with friends, and get back home even if their parents still have to work. Communities with these attributes can lower family stress and enhance stability by providing a supportive network and safety net.

Vincent notes that while public schools have historically been built as large facilities on large sites, there is increasing interest in building smaller schools on urban infill sites. The EPA is revising its guidelines for new school site selection. Previously minimum acreage requirements caused officials to build new schools on the outer edges of cities because that's where there was land that was undeveloped, inexpensive, and available. According to the National Center for

Educational Statistics, these policies caused the number of schools in the U.S. to fall from 262,000 in 1930 to 95,000 in 2004 — even as the number of students doubled.

“The point is that the policy tools that enable complete communities also create the conditions for learning,” says Vincent, adding that a school can become a place where the entire community can come together. Because of this, he says, there is increasing interest in turning schools into mixed-use facilities with the goal of truly making them a hub of activity by providing extended hours before and after school and during the weekends and the summer, and including academic and non-academic services such as social services and activities that engage parents and the entire community.

CHILDCARE AND TRANSIT

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION is also identified as a key factor in setting children up for success. Quality preschools and daycare facilities in high-access locations have proven to be a real benefit to harried parents dropping kids off on their way to work. A study by Local Investment in Child Care, a California nonprofit organization, finds that locating childcare facilities within a third of a mile of transit results in high ridership by families: 34 percent of people dropping their children off then walked or used transit to commute to their destination, with even higher numbers in low-income areas.

Childcare facilities not only provide an essential service to families but they can also serve as “anchor tenants” in a development that can provide other needed shops and services that serve families.

But many urban neighborhoods with high-quality transit service do not have high-quality schools and childcare facilities. In Denver, for example, less than 10 percent of the region’s 5,251 schools are located within a mile of existing or planned fixed-guideway transit, and there are very few highly rated preschools within a half-mile of transit. As a result of this spatial mismatch, some regions have begun mapping the locations of childcare and educational facilities relative to the locations of transit lines in order to help ensure that there are transit connections.

This report has focused on all the ways that we can make communities complete in order to address the challenges of a new century in an integrated, coordinated and collaborative way that also



Spotlight On Boulder, Colorado

In 2010, Boulder, Colorado, was rated the “happiest” region in the U.S. by the Gallup Healthways assessment. And Boulder is first among regions in the amount of physical activity residents receive, has great access to parks, and many people walking and biking to work. But the region still has work to do. Very few affordable units and few jobs are in opportunity areas, which will make it harder to connect to low income families to jobs via transit, and the ratio of fast food to healthy food is among the worst in the nation.

maximizes the use of existing resources, including opportunity areas. The concept of thriving, however, also involves factors that are less tangible than those we have discussed but that are nurtured within the physical context of complete communities.

Complete communities provide the elements that people need to thrive because they also provide the nexus where people can come together in a web of supportive relationships that enhance learning and promote an understanding and acceptance of diversity — of age, income, ethnicity, lifestyle, ability — and the richness it provides. It is this complete community nexus that can allow us to reach our potential as human beings, individually and collectively. The Top 10 lists on the following pages highlight some regions that are doing well according to our Thriving metrics, which means they are getting closer to building complete communities. The full list of metrics for 366 regions can be found on our website: reconnectingamerica.org/arewethereyet.

10

TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Low-Income Households More Than A Mile From A Grocery Store

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	1.36%
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	1.81%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	2.22%
4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	2.89%
5	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	3.08%
6	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	3.09%
7	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	3.50%
8	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	4.19%
9	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	4.24%
10	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	4.25%
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	1.55%
2	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	2.28%
3	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	3.33%
4	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	3.47%
5	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	3.91%
6	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	4.42%
7	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	4.66%
8	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	4.79%
9	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	4.88%
10	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	5.82%
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	3.64%
2	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	4.75%
3	Stockton, CA MSA	4.96%
4	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	5.41%
5	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	5.70%
6	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, FL MSA	5.81%
7	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	6.05%
8	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ MSA	6.46%
9	Madison, WI MSA	6.51%
10	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	6.71%
1	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	2.68%
2	Carson City, NV MSA	2.92%
3	Boulder, CO MSA	3.54%
4	Napa, CA MSA	4.51%
5	Reno-Sparks, NV MSA	4.52%
6	Lincoln, NE MSA	4.58%
7	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	4.67%
8	Appleton, WI MSA	5.06%
9	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	5.09%
10	Manchester-Nashua, NH MSA	5.32%

Source: USDA Food Atlas

Percent Of Opportunity Areas In Food Deserts

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	0.8%
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	0.8%
3	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	0.9%
4	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	1.2%
5	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	1.4%
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	1.7%
7	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	1.9%
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	2.4%
9	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	3.1%
10	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	4.6%
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	0.0%
2	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN MSA	0.0%
3	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	0.0%
4	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL MSA	0.0%
5	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	0.6%
6	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	2.9%
7	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	3.1%
8	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA MSA	4.1%
9	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MSA	4.9%
10	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	5.3%
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	0.0%
2	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA MSA	0.0%
3	Stockton, CA MSA	0.0%
4	Lancaster, PA MSA	0.0%
5	Bakersfield-Delano, CA MSA	0.0%
6	Albuquerque, NM MSA	0.0%
7	Modesto, CA MSA	0.0%
8	Madison, WI MSA	0.0%
9	Port St. Lucie, FL MSA	0.0%
10	Wichita Falls, TX MSA	0.0%
1	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	0.0%
2	Reading, PA MSA	0.0%
3	Salinas, CA MSA	0.0%
4	Altoona, PA MSA	0.0%
5	Reno-Sparks, NV MSA	0.0%
6	Champaign-Urbana, IL MSA	0.0%
7	Evansville, IN-KY MSA	0.0%
8	Peoria, IL MSA	0.0%
9	Binghamton, NY MSA	0.0%
10	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA MSA	0.0%

Source: USDA and Reconnecting America

10

TOP TEN

Number Of Fast Food Establishments For Every Healthy One

Percent Of Population Getting No Regular Physical Activity

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	1.65
2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	2.68
3	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	3.02
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	3.12
5	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA	3.13
6	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	3.19
7	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	3.34
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	3.42
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	3.46
10	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	3.66
1	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	3.03
2	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	3.28
3	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	3.37
4	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	3.47
5	Columbus, IN MSA	3.57
6	Rochester, MN MSA	3.63
7	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	3.65
8	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	3.65
9	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	3.65
10	Oklahoma City, OK MSA	3.77
1	Stockton, CA MSA	2.32
2	Lancaster, PA MSA	2.50
3	Modesto, CA MSA	2.52
4	Bakersfield-Delano, CA MSA	2.53
5	Fresno, CA MSA	2.74
6	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI MSA	2.84
7	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY MSA	2.88
8	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	2.99
9	Baton Rouge, LA MSA	3.14
10	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	3.19
1	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA MSA	0.97
2	Madera-Chowchilla, CA MSA	2.09
3	Trenton-Ewing, NJ MSA	2.26
4	Merced, CA MSA	2.28
5	Visalia-Porterville, CA MSA	2.30
6	Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton, NJ MSA	2.37
7	Yakima, WA MSA	2.57
8	Lebanon, PA MSA	2.57
9	Hanford-Corcoran, CA MSA	2.75
10	Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA	2.76

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	11.37%
2	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	12.56%
3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	12.64%
4	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	12.67%
5	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	13.46%
6	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ MSA	13.88%
7	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA	14.13%
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	14.29%
9	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	15.80%
10	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	15.83%
1	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	11.29%
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	12.15%
3	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	12.50%
4	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	12.68%
5	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	12.75%
6	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	13.06%
7	Raleigh-Cary, NC MSA	13.99%
8	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX MSA	15.02%
9	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	15.44%
10	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	15.90%
1	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	9.64%
2	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	11.40%
3	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	11.51%
4	Boise City-Nampa, ID MSA	11.86%
5	Albuquerque, NM MSA	12.19%
6	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	12.29%
7	Elmira, NY MSA	12.85%
8	Honolulu, HI MSA	13.00%
9	Madison, WI MSA	13.25%
10	Stockton, CA MSA	13.45%
1	Boulder, CO MSA	7.55%
2	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA MSA	8.71%
3	Santa Fe, NM MSA	9.45%
4	Corvallis, OR MSA	9.83%
5	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	9.92%
6	Medford, OR MSA	10.86%
7	Bend, OR MSA	10.91%
8	Salinas, CA MSA	11.04%
9	Flagstaff, AZ MSA	11.38%
10	Las Cruces, NM MSA	11.44%

Source: USDA Food Atlas

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

10

TOP TEN

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

Percent Of Households Near Parks

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	80.8%
2	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	70.8%
3	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	69.0%
4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	67.0%
5	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	66.2%
6	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	62.5%
7	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	60.4%
8	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	56.3%
9	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	55.7%
10	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	55.1%
1	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	72.7%
2	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	70.9%
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	69.1%
4	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	63.7%
5	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	62.7%
6	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	56.0%
7	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	49.9%
8	Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA	48.9%
9	Columbus, IN MSA	48.2%
10	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	46.9%
1	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MSA	67.9%
2	Honolulu, HI MSA	64.9%
3	Colorado Springs, CO MSA	61.1%
4	Albuquerque, NM MSA	55.4%
5	Madison, WI MSA	54.9%
6	Modesto, CA MSA	50.8%
7	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	50.7%
8	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	50.5%
9	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	50.2%
10	Ogden-Clearfield, UT MSA	49.1%
1	Carson City, NV MSA	76.5%
2	Lincoln, NE MSA	70.3%
3	Boulder, CO MSA	65.9%
4	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA MSA	65.5%
5	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	61.8%
6	Janesville, WI MSA	61.3%
7	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	58.3%
8	Salinas, CA MSA	56.7%
9	Racine, WI MSA	56.3%
10	Reno-Sparks, NV MSA	55.2%

Source: Reconnecting America

Percent Of The Households Near Parks That Are Low Income

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	48.1%
2	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	47.8%
3	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL MSA	47.7%
4	Houston-Sugarland-Baytown, TX MSA	47.0%
5	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC MSA	46.2%
6	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	43.9%
7	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA	43.9%
8	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	43.1%
9	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	43.0%
10	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MSA	43.0%
1	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	48.6%
2	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN MSA	48.5%
3	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	47.8%
4	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH MSA	47.7%
5	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	47.3%
6	Raleigh-Cary, NC MSA	47.0%
7	Jacksonville, NC MSA	46.6%
8	Oklahoma City, OK MSA	46.5%
9	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	46.2%
10	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	46.1%
1	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	50.0%
2	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL MSA	49.7%
3	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA MSA	49.5%
4	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	49.5%
5	Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC MSA	49.1%
6	Worcester, MA MSA	48.6%
7	Dayton, OH MS	48.4%
8	Springfield, IL MSA	48.3%
9	Fresno, CA MSA	47.8%
10	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	47.7%
1	Redding, CA MSA	50.1%
2	Terre Haute, IN MSA	50.0%
3	Burlington-South Burlington, VT MSA	50.0%
4	Manchester-Nashua, NH MSA	49.6%
5	Coeur d'Alene, ID MSA	49.5%
6	Cape Girardeau-Jackson, MO-IL MSA	49.3%
7	Athens-Clarke County, GA MSA	49.2%
8	Sumter, SC MSA	48.8%
9	Hattiesburg, MS MSA	48.8%
10	Goldsboro, NC MSA	48.7%

Source: Reconnecting America

10

TOP TEN

Acres of Parks For Every Household In Opportunity Areas

Employees In Arts And Entertainment Jobs (per 1000 people)

Regions Over
3 Million

Regions 1 to
3 Million

Regions 500,000
to 1 Million

Regions Under
500,000

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ MSA	51.54
2	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	33.63
3	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	30.56
4	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	25.53
5	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	23.35
6	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	21.14
7	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA	20.66
8	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	14.73
9	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	13.28
10	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	11.82
1	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA MSA	379.20
2	Rochester, MN MSA	171.46
3	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	107.05
4	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA MSA	83.98
5	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX MSA	31.30
6	Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA	29.02
7	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT MSA	27.83
8	Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	25.61
9	Richmond, VA MSA	24.89
10	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MSA	21.25
1	Elmira, NY MSA	199.07
2	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	111.68
3	Greensboro-High Point, NC MSA	73.62
4	Madison, WI MSA	67.58
5	Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC MSA	48.06
6	Modesto, CA MSA	29.13
7	New Haven-Milford, CT MSA	25.78
8	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL MSA	22.41
9	Chattanooga, TN-GA MSA	22.36
10	Worcester, MA MSA	21.69
1	Sherman-Denison, TX MSA	98.46
2	Olympia, WA MSA	84.68
3	Sheboygan, WI MSA	61.33
4	Alexandria, LA MSA	56.76
5	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	56.24
6	Flint, MI MSA	44.65
7	Holland-Grand Haven, MI MSA	38.89
8	Ann Arbor, MI MSA	25.93
9	Ithaca, NY MSA	25.92
10	Morgantown, WV MSA	24.75

Source: Reconnecting America

RANK	REGION	SCORE
1	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	4.1
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	4.0
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	3.8
4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MSA	3.6
5	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA	3.3
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	2.8
7	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI MSA	2.6
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	2.6
9	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	2.4
10	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA	2.4
1	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN MSA	4.2
2	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL MSA	3.6
3	Pittsburgh, PA MS	3.5
4	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO MSA	3.4
5	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	3.4
6	Salt Lake City, UT MSA	3.1
7	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN MSA	3.1
8	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI MSA	2.9
9	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MSA	2.8
10	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	2.8
1	Honolulu, HI MSA	3.5
2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT MSA	3.2
3	Madison, WI MSA	3.0
4	Toledo, OH MS	2.8
5	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC MSA	2.7
6	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA MSA	2.6
7	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	2.6
8	Lancaster, PA MSA	2.2
9	Wichita Falls, TX MSA	2.0
10	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA MSA	2.0
1	Myrtle Beach-North Myrtle Beach-Conway, SC MSA	4.9
2	Green Bay, WI MSA	4.9
3	Pittsfield, MA MSA	4.5
4	Sioux Falls, SD MSA	3.3
5	Grand Forks, ND-MN MSA	2.9
6	Anchorage, AK MSA	2.8
7	Norwich-New London, CT MSA	2.8
8	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA MSA	2.7
9	Fargo, ND-MN MSA	2.7
10	Kalamazoo-Portage, MI MSA	2.6

Source: U.S. Census County Business Patterns

Conclusion



AS DISCUSSED THROUGHOUT THIS REPORT, America is in a period of transition, pushed forward by changing demographics — a rapidly aging population, an increasing number of single person and single parent households — and a changing economy. If manifest destiny drove America’s ever-outward expansion, facilitated first by wagons and railroads and then by highways and suburban tracts of single-family homes in the last century, the younger generation and boomers alike seem to be driven by a need to return to the center in the 21st century, redeveloping older communities to make them more complete, and making our economy more resilient and sustainable by doing things more efficiently across our regions.

In this report we have measured and discussed a broad spectrum of factors that contribute to the creation of complete communities, yet Re-connecting America recognizes that there are so many more that contribute to a community’s vitality and desirability but which can’t necessarily be planned for or quantified. These “intangibles” have much to do with whether we are attracted to a place and whether we decide to stay there, and they result from complex influences that include a community’s history, its people and its cultural traditions, its aesthetics, architecture, food, arts and music, and the proximity of our friends and family.

Community is the nexus where all of these elements come together. It is this great mix of intangibles along with the stuff that we can touch and feel that give a community — and the region where it is located — its character and sets up the people who live there or the businesses that operate there for success.

Ultimately the challenge we face as a country is about connecting 21st century Americans with 21st century opportunities, embracing the changing demographic composition of our communities and putting aside antiquated methods of addressing problems. This means forging new partnerships and collaborative efforts and seeking better and more efficient linkages between federal and state policy and what we are striving to realize on the ground.

The Living chapter included an excerpt from a blog by Clare Thompson, who writes about how she fears for the future of the socio-eco-

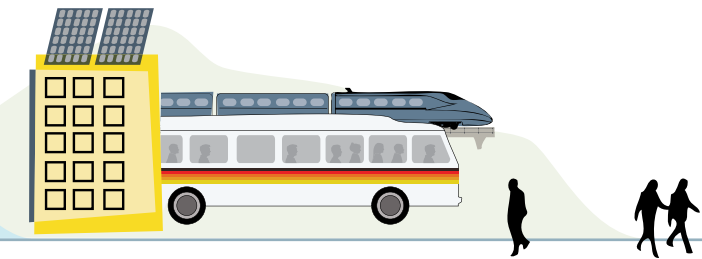
nomically and ethnically diverse suburb of Seattle where she lives. She loves the community because of its diversity but can’t envision where and how everyone’s interests can converge. She concludes that living in such areas is complicated and not necessarily comfortable, but that this is exactly the point: Neighborhoods like this are crucibles for developing tolerance, openness and understanding.

In the Moving chapter Sarah Goodyear writes eloquently about how she views the street as an extension of her home, and that she believes streets are a shared public space that give communities their character and that provide places where people can meet and become neighbors, forming the relationships and social networks that can then be called upon when the going gets rough.

The observations of both Thompson and Goodyear concur with the findings of the Gallup polling firm and the Knight Foundation in their “Soul of the Community” survey, which finds the three main factors that attach people to place are how accepting a community is of diversity, its wealth of social offerings, and its aesthetics. Gallup and Knight concluded that what connects us to a neighborhood doesn’t change much from place to place, and that one of the main outcomes of people feeling connected to where they live is local economic growth.

This sentiment was echoed by well-known urbanist and writer William “Holly” Whyte in his book published in 1988 titled *City: Rediscovering the Center*, who used direct observation of urban activity centers to develop his understanding of the role of cities in American life: “[T]he center is the place for news and gossip, for the creation of ideas, for marketing them and swiping them, for hatching deals, for starting parades. This is the stuff of the public life of the city — by no means wholly admirable, often abrasive, noisy, contentious, without apparent purpose. But this human congress is the genius of the place, its reason for being, its great marginal edge. This is the engine, the city’s true export. Whatever makes this congress easier, more spontaneous, more enjoyable is not at all a frill. It is the heart of the center of the city.”

How can we begin to realize that potential? As the examples in this



report show, the effort has already begun in many places. There are new transit lines connecting more people to jobs, new financial tools for building and preserving affordable housing in opportunity areas, pop-up parks and fresh food access in underserved communities — these are just a few of the many activities transforming neighborhoods into complete communities.

In addition, the preceding chapters provide examples of successful policies and strategies for completing communities — from zoning changes to suburban retrofits to community benefits agreements. In many cases, the public sector will play a critical role in sparking innovation and investment. Government at all levels — because of its authority over regulations and permitting, taxes and bonding — has both the tools and the responsibility to create public policies which promote completing our communities. While many of the solutions are locally driven, addressing the challenges that our communities face requires partnerships that transcend the local level and involve state and federal entities as well. Federal and state programs for housing, transportation, agriculture, food, health and other elements of complete communities are perhaps the greatest influences on the shape of America’s communities, and local solutions are most effective when state and federal policies work in tandem with local efforts to meet local and regional goals. As Congress and the administration wrestle with national fiscal and economic policy decisions, our federal leaders must not lose sight of the local needs identified in this report. We must all work together to align federal policies and programs with state and local efforts to provide more support for transit and for mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods, as these investments are the very essence of true economic development and resulting prosperity.

We know elected officials and community leaders across the country are already involved in bringing people together to develop regional strategies for improving performance and quality of life. The metrics we’ve developed and the grades on current performance are not meant to condemn, but to help communities target the areas in which they should focus their efforts and resources. In some cases these metrics will be

integrated into work already underway; in others they will help stimulate comparisons, conversations and efforts in other regions. By outlining what constitutes a complete community — living, working, moving and thriving — we aim to provide a valuable tool that regional leaders should use when prioritizing activities and investments. Reconnecting America has a keen interest in working closely with diverse partners to help regions hone in on their priorities and develop the most effective strategies for moving forward.

One further note about the grading: In our development of the metrics, we experienced ongoing challenges in accessing consistent and reliable data to measure progress across cities and regions. While we believe that the information presented in this report is the best that is available today, we also believe it would advance our efforts to build complete communities if we could work with other organizations to develop a shared national data set to track progress in building complete communities at the regional level and at other appropriate levels. By tracking this data over time, we can identify the best practices and strategies that help places improve their performance, and we can identify those sure-fire investments that produce better outcomes.

We recognize that transforming a neighborhood, let alone an entire region, does not happen overnight. The challenges we face today were decades in the making, and it may well take decades to bring all regions up to passing grades. No one individual, no one government, no one generation can complete this task. Instead, it will take concerted effort by government leaders at the local, state, and federal levels; by business leaders, nonprofit and philanthropic entities; and community residents, if we are to achieve the goal of building complete communities in which people of all incomes and backgrounds can thrive. This will be a generational effort — a task undertaken not just by and for ourselves, but by and for our children and grandchildren. Yes, the task before us is a big one — too big to complete in a single generation — but not too big to begin.

We at Reconnecting America look forward to being a part of the journey, as we all work together to get closer to “there.”

Grades By Region Reconnecting America

graded every one of the 366 metro areas based on how they measure up to our vision of complete communities. The Living grades show how regions are doing on creating housing choices that are affordable and accessible to people with a variety of needs. The Working grades show how regions are doing on creating jobs in the places where people of all incomes can access them and improve their opportunities. The Moving

grades show how regions are doing on creating safe and accessible transportation choices in our communities. The Thriving grades show how regions are doing on creating opportunities for safe, fun, and healthy lifestyles through access to parks, healthy food, etc. Note that metro areas are graded on a curve against metro areas of a similar size. More details on how Reconnecting America calculated the grades can be found in the Methodology.

Regions Over 3 Million

Atlanta, GA	C	D	D	D
Boston, MA	A	A	B	C
Chicago, IL	B	B	B	B
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	D	D	D	C
Detroit, MI	C	C	D	C
Houston, TX	D	C	C	D
Los Angeles, CA	B	B	B	A
Miami, FL	B	C	B	C
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	C	B	C	B
New York, NY	A	A	A	A
Philadelphia, PA	B	B	B	C
Phoenix, AZ	D	C	C	C
Riverside, CA	D	D	D	D
San Diego, CA	C	C	C	B
San Francisco, CA	A	A	A	A
Seattle, WA	C	B	B	B
Washington, DC	B	A	B	B

Regions 500,000 to 3 Million

Akron, OH	B	C	C	C
Albany, NY	B	B	C	C
Albuquerque, NM	C	B	C	B
Allentown, PA	B	C	A	C
Augusta, GA	D	D	C	D
Austin, TX	C	A	C	B
Bakersfield, CA	B	C	D	B
Baltimore, MD	A	A	A	B
Baton Rouge, LA	C	D	C	C
Birmingham, AL	B	C	D	D
Boise City, IA	B	C	C	A
Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL	C	C	C	C

Bridgeport, CT	A	B	B	A
Buffalo, NY	A	B	A	B
Cape Coral, FL	D	C	D	C
Charleston, SC	C	C	C	B
Charlotte, NC	C	B	C	A
Chattanooga, TN	C	C	D	D
Cincinnati, OH	B	B	B	C
Cleveland, OH	B	A	B	B
Colorado Springs, CO	D	C	A	B
Columbia, SC	D	B	D	D
Columbus, OH	C	B	B	C
Dayton, OH	B	C	B	C
Denver, CO	A	A	A	A
Des Moines, IA	B	A	C	B
Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	C	B	C	C
El Paso, TX	C	C	B	B
Fresno, CA	B	B	C	B
Grand Rapids, MI	B	B	C	A
Greensboro, NC	D	D	D	D
Greenville, SC	D	D	C	D
Harrisburg, PA	B	B	A	C
Hartford, CT	C	B	C	B
Honolulu, HI	A	A	A	A
Indianapolis, IN	B	C	C	B
Jackson, MS	D	C	D	D
Jacksonville, FL	D	C	C	C
Kansas City, KS	B	C	B	B
Knoxville, TN	C	C	D	D
Lakeland, FL	B	D	D	D
Lancaster, PA	B	C	B	B
Las Vegas, NV	C	B	B	B
Little Rock, AR	B	B	C	D
Louisville, KY	B	B	C	C
Madison, WI	B	A	A	A
McAllen, TX	D	D	C	D
Memphis, TN	B	C	C	D
Milwaukee, WI	B	A	A	A
Modesto, CA	B	C	C	B

Nashville, TN	D	B	D	C
New Haven, CT	A	B	B	B
New Orleans, LA	B	A	A	C
Ogden, UT	B	C	C	B
Oklahoma City, OK	C	C	C	C
Omaha, NE	B	B	B	B
Orlando, FL	D	C	C	A
Oxnard, CA	B	C	C	A
Palm Bay, FL	D	D	D	D
Pittsburgh, PA	A	A	A	C
Portland, ME	B	B	C	B
Portland, OR	A	A	A	A
Poughkeepsie, NY	B	D	A	B
Providence, RI	B	B	A	C
Provo, UT	D	B	A	A
Raleigh, NC	C	C	D	B
Richmond, VA	B	B	D	B
Rochester, NY	B	B	C	B
Sacramento, CA	B	C	B	A
Salt Lake City, UT	B	B	A	A
San Antonio, TX	B	B	B	C
San Jose, CA	A	A	A	A
Scranton, NY	B	C	B	D
Springfield, MA	C	C	B	C
St. Louis, MO	B	C	B	B
Stockton, CA	B	C	C	B
Syracuse, NY	B	A	B	C
Tampa, FL	B	C	B	C
Toledo, OH	B	C	B	C
Tucson, NM	C	B	B	C
Tulsa, OK	D	C	C	D
Virginia Beach, VA	C	D	B	C
Wichita, KS	C	C	C	B
Worcester, MA	B	C	C	B
Youngstown, OH	B	D	C	D

Regions Under 500,000

Abilene, TX	B	C	B	C
Albany, GA	D	D	B	D
Alexandria, LA	B	B	C	C
Altoona, PA	A	B	B	B
Amarillo, TX	B	B	B	C
Ames, IA	D	C	A	B
Anchorage, AK	B	B	B	A
Anderson, IN	C	B	B	B
Anderson, SC	D	C	D	D
Ann Arbor, MI	B	A	B	A
Anniston, AL	D	D	D	D
Appleton, WI	B	B	C	A
Asheville, NC	B	B	C	B
Athens, GA	C	A	B	C
Atlantic City, NJ	A	A	A	B
Auburn, AL	D	D	C	D
Bangor, ME	B	B	B	D
Barnstable Town, MA	D	C	C	A
Battle Creek, MI	D	C	C	C
Bay City, MI	A	B	B	D
Beaumont, TX	B	C	C	D
Bellingham, WA	B	C	A	A
Bend, OR	D	D	C	A
Billings, MT	B	B	A	B
Binghamton, NY	A	A	B	C
Bismarck, ND	A	A	C	B
Blacksburg, VA	D	C	B	C
Bloomington, IN	C	A	A	C
Bloomington-Normal, IL	A	A	A	B
Boulder, CO	B	A	A	A
Bowling Green, KY	B	B	D	C
Bremerton, WA	B	B	B	A
Brownsville, TX	B	C	B	C
Brunswick, GA	D	D	D	C
Burlington, NC	B	B	C	C
Burlington, VT	B	B	B	A
Canton, OH	A	B	A	B

Cape Girardeau, MO	D	D	D	D
Carson City, NV	C	B	B	A
Casper, WY	D	C	B	C
Cedar Rapids, IA	B	A	A	B
Champaign-Urbana, IL	B	A	A	B
Charleston, WV	B	A	B	C
Charlottesville, VA	B	A	B	A
Cheyenne, WY	D	B	B	C
Chico, CA	B	B	A	B
Clarksville, TN	B	C	D	C
Cleveland, TN	B	C	D	D
Coeur d'Alene, ID	C	D	B	B
College Station-Bryan, TX	D	C	A	D
Columbia, MO	B	A	B	C
Columbus, GA	B	B	D	C
Columbus, IN	D	C	C	B
Corpus Christi, TX	B	B	B	C
Corvallis, OR	B	B	A	A
Cumberland, MD	B	C	A	C
Dalton, GA	D	D	D	C
Danville, IL	C	D	C	C
Danville, VA	D	D	D	D
Davenport, IA	B	B	B	C
Decatur, AL	D	D	D	D
Decatur, IL	C	B	B	B
Deltona, FL	B	C	C	C
Dothan, AL	C	C	D	D
Dover, DE	B	B	B	C
Dubuque, IA	B	A	B	B
Duluth, MN	B	A	B	B
Eau Claire, WI	B	C	C	B
El Centro, CA	A	C	C	B
Elizabethtown, KY	D	D	B	D
Elkhart, IN	B	C	C	B
Elmira, NY	B	B	A	C
Erie, PA	A	A	B	C
Eugene, OR	B	A	A	A
Evansville, IN	B	B	B	B
Fairbanks, AK	B	B	B	B

■ Living ■ Working ■ Moving ■ Thriving

Fargo, ND	A A B B	Jackson, TN	D D D D	Mankato, MN	B C C A	Racine, WI	B B A A	Terre Haute, IN	B B B C
Farmington, NM	D D D D	Jacksonville, NC	D D C C	Mansfield, OH	B C C C	Rapid City, SD	B B B C	Texarkana, TX-AR	B C C D
Fayetteville, AR	C B C C	Janesville, WI	B C C B	Medford, OR	B B B A	Reading, PA	A A A B	Topeka, KS	B A B B
Fayetteville, NC	D D C D	Jefferson City, MO	B B D C	Merced, CA	A C C B	Redding, CA	B C D B	Trenton, NJ	A A A A
Flagstaff, AZ	D D C B	Johnson City, TN	B B C C	Michigan City, IN	B B B C	Reno, NV	A B B A	Tuscaloosa, AL	C C C C
Flint, MI	B B C B	Johnstown, PA	B A B C	Midland, TX	C B D C	Roanoke, VA	B B B C	Tyler, TX	C C D D
Florence, AL	D D D D	Jonesboro, AR	D D D C	Missoula, MT	A A A A	Rochester, MN	B A B A	Utica, NY	A B C C
Florence, SC	D D D D	Joplin, MO	B C C D	Mobile, AL	B B D C	Rockford, IL	B B C B	Valdosta, GA	D D C C
Fond du Lac, WI	B B C B	Kalamazoo, MI	B B C B	Monroe, LA	C B C D	Rocky Mount, NC	C C D D	Vallejo, CA	A C B B
Fort Collins, CO	C A B A	Kankakee, IL	B B B B	Monroe, MI	B C C B	Rome, GA	C B B C	Victoria, TX	C B C D
Fort Smith, AR	B C C D	Kennewick, WA	B C B A	Montgomery, AL	B B D B	Saginaw, MI	B C C B	Vineland, NJ	B C C D
Fort Walton Beach, FL	B B C C	Killeen, TX	B C B C	Morgantown, WV	B B A C	Salem, OR	B B A A	Visalia, CA	B C C B
Fort Wayne, IN	B B C B	Kingsport, TN	D D C D	Morristown, TN	D D C D	Salinas, CA	B A A A	Waco, TX	B B B D
Gadsden, AL	D D D D	Kingston, NY	B B B B	Mount Vernon, WA	B B B B	Salisbury, MD	B B C C	Warner Robins, GA	D D C C
Gainesville, FL	B B A B	Kokomo, IN	B D C B	Muncie, IN	B C A D	San Angelo, TX	B B B C	Waterloo, IA	B B A B
Gainesville, GA	D D D B	La Crosse, WI	B B A A	Muskegon, MI	B C C B	San Luis Obispo, CA	B C A A	Wausau, WI	C B C B
Glens Falls, NY	B C D B	Lafayette, IN	B B A B	Myrtle Beach, SC	B C D B	Sandusky, OH	B B B C	Weirton-Stebenville, WV	B C A D
Goldsboro, NC	D D D C	Lafayette, LA	B B C B	Napa, CA	B B A A	Santa Barbara, CA	A B A A	Wenatchee, WA	B C B A
Grand Forks, ND	C C B B	Lake Charles, LA	B B D C	Naples, FL	C C C A	Santa Cruz, CA	B B A A	Wheeling, WV	B B B C
Grand Junction, CO	B C B B	Lake Havasu City, AZ	D D D D	Niles, MI	D C C C	Santa Fe, NM	B A B A	Wichita Falls, TX	B B B D
Great Falls, MT	B B A A	Lansing, MI	B A B A	Norwich, CT	B C B A	Santa Rosa, CA	B B A A	Williamsport, PA	A B A C
Greeley, CO	C B C B	Laredo, TX	A B B B	Ocala, FL	C C D C	Savannah, GA	A A B B	Wilmington, NC	B B D C
Green Bay, WI	B B C B	Las Cruces, NM	B B B C	Ocean City, NJ	C B A B	Sebastian, FL	D D C B	Winchester, VA	D D B B
Greenville, NC	B B C C	Lawrence, KS	B B A B	Odessa, TX	C D C B	Sheboygan, WI	B C B A	Winston-Salem, NC	C A C B
Gulfport-Biloxi, MS	D B C C	Lawton, OK	C D B C	Olympia, WA	B B C A	Sherman, TX	C C C C	Yakima, WA	B C B B
Hagerstown, MD	B C C C	Lebanon, PA	A B B B	Oshkosh, WI	B B B B	Shreveport, LA	B B B C	York, PA	A B B B
Hanford, CA	B C B B	Lewiston, ID	D D B B	Owensboro, KY	C C C D	Sioux City, IA	B B B C	Yuba City, CA	C C B B
Harrisonburg, VA	D D C B	Lewiston, ME	B B B C	Palm Coast, FL	D D D C	Sioux Falls, SD	B A B A	Yuma, AZ	D D A B
Hattiesburg, MS	B B D C	Lexington, KY	B B B B	Panama City, FL	D D C D	South Bend, IN	B B A C		
Hickory, NC	C C D C	Lima, OH	B C C C	Parkersburg, WV	C B C C	Spartanburg, SC	C C D C		
Hinesville, GA	D D C D	Lincoln, NE	A A A A	Pascagoula, MS	B B D D	Spokane, WA	A A A A		
Holland, MI	B B C A	Logan, UT	B C B B	Pensacola, FL	B B B B	Springfield, IL	A A B B		
Hot Springs, AR	B D C C	Longview, TX	D D D D	Peoria, IL	B A B B	Springfield, MO	C B C B		
Houma, LA	C C D D	Longview, WA	B B C C	Pine Bluff, AR	C D C D	Springfield, OH	B C C B		
Huntington, WV	B B B C	Lubbock, TX	B B B B	Pittsfield, MA	B B B B	St. Cloud, MN	B B B B		
Huntsville, AL	B B D C	Lynchburg, VA	B C C D	Pocatello, ID	B B B B	St. George, UT	D D C B		
Idaho Falls, ID	C D C B	Macon, GA	B B C C	Port St. Lucie, FL	B B C B	St. Joseph, MO	B C B C		
Iowa City, IA	B A A B	Madera, CA	B C D A	Prescott, AZ	D D C C	State College, PA	C A B B		
Ithaca, NY	B A A B	Manchester, NH	A A C A	Pueblo, CO	B B B C	Sumter, SC	D D D D		
Jackson, MI	B B C C	Manhattan, KS	B B C C	Punta Gorda, FL	D D D B	Tallahassee, FL	B A C B		

Methodology

INDICATORS

Reconnecting America has collected data to understand the existing condition of our regions and track progress at the regional level in all 366 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the country. The full list of indicators is shown after the introduction.

Why these particular indicators? We researched and debated and narrowed our original list of indicators from hundreds down to 33 individual data points. There are other elements of complete communities that we would have liked to have included, but did not, for a couple of reasons.

In some cases, we couldn't find indicators at the right scale, or what we could find only measured some of the 366 metropolitan regions that we analyzed. We did make a few exceptions to this rule, because we wanted to include work that others had done for the top 100 metros. School quality was one indicator that we knew would be difficult to quantify at the regional scale and that we hope will be studied more in the future. Neighborhood safety and security are also difficult to define regionally but are key to supporting infill growth. We want this conversation to continue, so visit our website, *reconnectingamerica.org*, and let us know what indicators you would like to see in the future.

Why the region? We chose to grade places at the regional scale, rather than the city or county because, ultimately, efforts to improve individual neighborhoods must trickle up to change regional performance. We believe that successful coordination of transportation and land use happens at the regional scale, and we also wanted to make sure that we recognized the important role that suburbs will continue to play in our metropolitan areas. To be technical, we used the census-defined "Metropolitan Statistical Areas."

Transit access: Several indicators are about having people, or jobs, etc. "near fixed-guideway transit." The TOD Database (CTOD) is one source of information for these data points, which we used in this report. We also calculated these data points ourselves in some cases. To do that, we utilized a database of all existing fixed-guideway transit stations (including various forms of rail, bus rapid transit and ferry service) collected by CTOD. "Near transit" is defined as within a half-mile.

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Opportunity areas were calculated by combining information on block size and intensity (total number of residents and workers) in a census tract. National and international research shows that the density (or intensity) needed to support the most basic transit service is about seven dwelling units an acre, or about 14 people an acre. Higher densities support more frequent, higher quality transit service. Similarly, research shows that when blocks are about six acres in size or less, people are more willing to walk and bike.

These inputs were combined to create an index that identified which tracts in metropolitan areas would be classified as opportunity areas. For a tract to qualify, it needed to have a ratio of intensity to block size of 2.0 or less. In practical terms, this means that a tract with larger blocks, but more people, would qualify because the intensity of people living there could make transit service possible. Likewise, a tract with fewer people but very small blocks would also qualify because the small blocks would make it easier for people to choose to walk or bike.

LIVING INDICATORS

Percent of households near fixed-guideway transit: A combination of the updated TOD Database created by CTOD and GIS analysis. The GIS analysis utilized the CTOD database of all existing fixed-guideway transit stations and household data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2005-2009.

Percent of households in opportunity areas: Using the tracts defined as opportunity areas and the American Community Survey 2005-2009, the number of households living in each opportunity area in the region was calculated.

Percent of households near fixed-guideway transit who are low income: Low income was defined as 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), or the median income of the MSA. Using demographic data from the American Community Survey 2005-2009, we calculated the share of households making 80 percent AMI or below and living within a half-mile of a fixed-guideway transit.

Percent of households in opportunity areas who

are low income: Same definition of low income as above, and the opportunity area geography.

Percent of Section 8/202 units near fixed-guideway transit: The location of Section 8 and Section 202 units was obtained from HUDUser, HUD's data sharing website. These locations were geocoded in GIS and the units within a half-mile of fixed-guideway transit calculated.

Percent of Section 8/202 units in opportunity areas: The location of Section 8 and Section 202 units was obtained from HUDUser, and those units in opportunity areas calculated in GIS.

Growth in opportunity areas compared to the region: Using Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2005-2009 household information, the population growth in opportunity areas was compared to the population growth in each MSA overall. A "location quotient" was calculated to identify the regions growing at different rates in opportunity areas compared to the MSA, and regions were ranked based on that number.

WORKING INDICATORS

Percent of jobs near existing fixed-guideway transit: Using data provided by the U.S. Census through the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2010), Reconnecting America calculated the share of jobs near existing fixed-guideway stations (CTOD's transit station database.)

Percent of jobs near planned fixed-guideway transit: In the 2011 report "Transit Space Race", Reconnecting America identified regions planning new transit investments and geocoded the locations of stations when that information was available. Then the jobs near these proposed stations (excluding those not already near existing stations) were calculated using the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2010).

Percent of jobs accessible by transit (within a 45 minute commute): This metric was taken from the Brookings Institution's "Missed Opportunities" report, which calculated the share of jobs accessible by transit within a 45 minute commute.

Percent of jobs in opportunity areas: Using the opportunity area geographies and the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2010), Reconnecting

America calculated the share of jobs within each MSA that are located in opportunity areas.

Weighted employment density: The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) calculated the employment density of most metropolitan regions within the U.S. For more information on PPIC's research on the connection between jobs and transit, read their February 2011 report, "Making the Most of Transit: Density, Employment Growth, and Ridership around New Stations."

Percent of 18- to 34-year-olds with a college degree: Using American Community Survey 2005-2009 data, Reconnecting America calculated the share of 18- to 34-year-olds who have obtained a degree from a four-year college.

Percent of low- and moderate-income jobs accessible on transit (within a 90 minute commute): Again, the Brookings Institution's "Missed Opportunities" report provided this indicator, the share of low and moderate-income jobs accessible within a 90-minute commute.

MOVING INDICATORS

Number of fixed-guideway transit stations: The number of existing transit stations was taken from the database of all fixed-guideway transit stations maintained by CTOD.

Number of future fixed-guideway transit stations: Future transit stations were identified in the 2011 "Transit Space Race" report by Reconnecting America.

Percent of fixed-guideway transit stations in opportunity areas: Calculated using GIS and identifying how many existing fixed-guideway transit stations are located in opportunity areas in each MSA.

Percent of commuters who take transit: American Community Survey 2005-2009 by MSA.

Change in number of commuters who take transit: Comparing Census 2000 to American Community Survey 2005-2009 data.

Pedestrian Danger Index: Transportation for America created a Pedestrian Danger Index as part of its "Dangerous by Design" report.

Percent of commuters who walk or bike: American Community Survey 2005-2009 by MSA.

Percent of blocks smaller than 6 acres: Reconnecting America using U.S. Census Tiger files and

calculated the area of each block in each MSA using GIS. The share of blocks smaller than six acres was then calculated.

Average vehicle miles traveled per household: The Center for Neighborhood Technology's H+T Index also includes information on the average number of vehicle miles traveled per household.

THRIVING INDICATORS

Both the percent of low-income households more than a mile from a grocery store and the percent of households with no car more than a mile from a grocery store were taken from the USDA's Food Environment Atlas.

Percent of opportunity areas in food deserts: The USDA has created a Food Desert Locator and makes the tracts they have identified as food deserts available on their website. Reconnecting America compared these tracts to the opportunity areas and identified where there was overlap.

Number of fast food establishments for every healthy one: The USDA Food Atlas provided this data.

Percent of population getting no regular physical activity: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention collects survey data on the amount of activity residents in counties across the U.S. are receiving. The "inactivity rate" is based on those who respond to the survey saying they get no activity outside of work during the week.

Percent of households who live near parks: Calculated in GIS using American Community Survey 2005-2009 data. "Near" a park is defined as being within a half-mile.

Percent of the households near parks who are low income: Using 80 percent AMI as the definition of low income, Reconnecting America used GIS to calculate the share of low-income households within a half-mile of a park.

Acres of parks for every household (in opportunity areas): Reconnecting America used GIS to calculate the acreage of parks in or bordering opportunity areas and then calculated the ratio of households living in opportunity areas to the acres of parks.

Employees in Arts and Entertainment Jobs: Using U.S. Census County Business Patterns data, Reconnecting America calculated the number of jobs in

artistic industries in each MSA per 1,000 people.

Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index: Gallup's Well-Being index provided this ranking of the top 100 metro regions.

GRADES

The grades are a composite of these indicators. First, Reconnecting America divided regions into three categories by size (under 500,000, between 500,000 and 3 million, and over 3 million.) This was done so regions would be graded compared to the performance of their peers.

Then, each metric was ranked within its size category. Regions in the top quartile (top 25%) received four points for that indicator, in the second quartile, three points, in the third quartile, two points, and in the first quartile, one point. A region could get zero points for an indicator if it had absolutely no progress to show. For example, regions with no opportunity areas received a zero for households living in opportunity areas.

A region could also be exempt from a particular indicator (and not penalized by receiving a zero), if there was data missing. (For example, the Brookings Institution's "Missed Opportunities" report only analyzed the top 100 metro regions – not all 366.) A region could also be exempt from receiving a zero if it already received a zero for a related indicator. (For example, if a region had no households near opportunity areas, it was not also penalized for having no low-income households near opportunity areas.) Regions with "exempt" indicators received a "N/A" which was not calculated into the overall average.

In some cases, the indicators shared similar components (for example, share of existing jobs near transit, share of future jobs near transit, and share of jobs accessible by transit within a 90 minute commute). In these cases, Reconnecting America averaged those similar indicators first, and then combined them with the independent indicators in the next step.

Once every indicator had been assigned a score, the scores were averaged together to give a composite score ranging from 0 to 4. The regions with the highest scores got an A, the regions with the lowest scores a D.

Project Director and co-author

Allison Brooks

Lead author

Gloria Ohland

Team Leaders

Abby Thorne-Lyman and **Elizabeth Wampler**

Metrics Team

Abby Thorne-Lyman, Elizabeth Wampler

Jeff Wood, Bill Sadler and **Sam Zimbabwe**

Support Team

Sarah Kline, John Hughes, Becky Sullivan

John Robert Smith and **Sasha Forbes**

Editor

Kateri Butler

Designer

John Curry/Smartpill

Illustrator

Cole Gerst/option-g

This report was completed with the
generous financial support
from the **American Public Transportation Association (APTA)**,
the **Ford Foundation** and the **Surdna Foundation**.

A very special thanks
for the time and expertise donated by
Dena Belzer, Heather Hood, Greg LeRoy and **Jeff Vincent**
in the creation of this report.



Washington, DC

1707 L Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20036

Oakland

436 14th Street, Suite 1005
Oakland, CA 94612

Denver

899 Logan Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80203