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**SPRAWL AND SENSIBLE GROWTH:
WEATHERING THE POLITICS AND MYTHS**

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Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy

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Foreword

One of the most controversial issues facing local communities deals with the continued development and redevelopment of commercial and residential properties. As families move into new developments former farms and forest lands turn into subdivisions and shopping centers. This requires more schools and widened roads. And what is created certainly doesn't look like was there originally.

The history of civilization is one of cities and towns growing, expanding and offering their communities jobs and economic security. As population grows the needs for roads, schools, houses, and commercial development also expand. As long as we have a growing population, we will see development.

Much of the debate over growth and economic development has become emotional exchanges between those who want to see development and those who say "no more development."

As this debate over "sprawl" continues, the facts and reasonable compromise have at times been put on the sidelines. The long-term consequences of actions taken without a clear understanding of facts surrounding these issues can cause unintended problems.

It is time to take a step back and look at the issues surrounding this growing debate. And that is exactly what Dr. David Schnare does in his newest paper for our foundation. Dr. Schnare has created a briefing paper that helps put many of the so-called "sprawl" issues into perspective.

This paper is a follow-up to the well-received study written by Dr. Schnare for the Thomas Jefferson Institute in 1999, which received widespread acclaim.

These ideas in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Members of the Thomas Jefferson Institute Board of Directors. Nothing in this paper is meant to influence pending legislation in the General Assembly.

Michael W. Thompson
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September 2003

SPRAWL AND SENSIBLE GROWTH: WEATHERING THE POLITICS AND MYTHS

BY: DR. DAVID W. SCHNARE, ESQ. PH.D.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The voter who opposes “sprawl” is like the patient who opposes “pain”. Officials, like doctors, must take the complaint seriously, but until they know a great deal more, they cannot help. No one can cure “sprawl” with a so-called “smart growth” legislative proposal any more than a doctor can cure pain with a lick and a promise. This paper discusses how to deal with this oversimplification problem – a problem that begins with voter’s perceptions about sprawl, many of which may be unfounded, but all which will demand political attention.

When asked about environmental issues and sprawl,

- the vast majority of Americans and voters (over 90%) believe the environment is an “important” issue and 81% believe that sprawl is an “important” issue;

but

- only 3% of voters rank environmental issues as the most important among issues confronting the nation (it usually comes in last of 15 common issues), and only 9% believe the quality of life has decreased because of sprawl (79% think the quality of life has improved or remained the same).

AND

- **there is no definition for the term “sprawl,” resulting in deep confusion as to the actual nature of citizen’s concerns and the nature of solutions to those problems.**

In general, Democrats exploit the first of these findings and tend to disregard the second. Republicans exploit the second finding and otherwise take moderate positions that reflect the sentiment of the first finding. **Almost no one has addressed the third point.** As a result, voters trust Democrat over Republican politicians on environmental issues by a margin of about 21 percent (Gallup and Zogby 2002).

A voter’s attitudes about traffic congestion, local land use, local open space, classroom crowding and restrictions on use of automobiles can, and often do differ completely from their attitude about “sprawl” in general, and are nearly completely divorced from their attitudes regarding “the environment.”

Like many scientific and engineering-driven issues, complexity associated with and a lack of knowledge about the nature and causes of sprawl fuel political positions. That lack of knowledge, on which many politicians rely, tends to dissolve in the face of familiarity and even deep knowledge that voters have about specific local issues. Thus, sprawl may be bad, but more roads, a home of your own, two cars in front of your home or in your garage, and an abundance of trees are all good – and the political position that embraces one (sprawl is bad) without embracing the other (you can have the American Dream) is doomed to failure, if exposed.

It gets worse. Voters have not accepted the reality of “sprawl”. They view sprawl as bad and the causes of sprawl (the American Dream) as good. They also believe they can have it all – a good environment, less traffic congestion, less crowded schools, lots of open space and a home for everyone. Voters don’t want to confront the need for choices between open-space and more roads, between more homes and less traffic, between political promises and reality.

This paper offers a background on “sprawl”. It also provides access to the robust literature on the subject, with special attention to “myths and facts” and current voter attitudes. The paper presents this information in five sections:

- I. Recent polling information on environmental issues, including sprawl;
- II. Recent political and governmental activities associated with growth-related issues;
- III. Myths and facts;
- IV. Sensible Growth resources; and,
- V. Growth control resources.

Information alone will not bridge the gap between voter attitudes and responsible political positions. The structure of the paper, and its content, offers a roadmap to development of intelligent, responsible and sensible policy positions. In brief,

The Candidate who wishes to offer proven solutions and remain sympathetic to voters’ opinions on sprawl must:

- **Begin by defining sprawl in these specific terms:**
 - **traffic congestion**
 - **cost-effective mass-transit**
 - **school class size**
 - **bars to economic development**
 - **housing availability (this is a race issue)**
 - **parks and open space**
 - **who gets and who pays**
 - **competing budget and community needs**
- **Draw a clear line from citizens concerns to practical solutions; and**
- **Be prepared to identify and demystify the myths about sprawl.**

I. POLLING DATA

It is important not to confuse “the environment” with “sprawl”. Voters know the difference. Below are relevant and reasonably recent polling data regarding “the environment” and “sprawl.”

When interpreting these data, it is vital to understand the bias in the way the polling organizations ask the questions. Specifically, when asked whether environmental quality is important, you will nearly always get an affirmative response. But when asked whether the environment is important when compared against all other issues, you will nearly always get a negative response. The same is true for sprawl questions.

Here is the result of asking the stand-alone “environment” question . . .

- 97% of voters agree with the statement: “the environment” is an important issue.

And here is the result of asking the “environment” question in context . . .

And, which of the following issue areas would be MOST important to you in deciding how to vote for a candidate for President? Is it....			
Issue	May 2003	Oct 2002	Mar 2002
The economy and jobs	29	26	20
Terrorism and National Security	11	8	8
Social Security and Medicare	13	10	10
Education	10	10	16
Affordable Health Care	9	8	11
Moral Values	13	11	12
Federal Spending	5	4	6
Taxes	3	4	9
The Environment	2	3	3
Crime and Illegal Drugs	1	3	2

This survey also finds the environment least among issues for every age group, political affiliation and income level. NPR National Survey May 2003

http://www.greenbergresearch.com/publications/reports/npr060903_gr.pdf

Here's another example:

"How important will the following issue be in the elections for Congress this November"

- 24% of respondents considered the environment as an "extremely important" issue, last among all cited issues, (tied with energy policy) in terms of importance.

Gallup June 2002, as reported on CNN Environmental News Network

<http://www.cnn.com/2000/NATURE/04/10/enviro.poll.enn/>

We find the same phenomena with the stand-alone and context question for sprawl.

Here is the result of asking Virginians the stand-alone “sprawl” question . . .

- 92% of Fredericksburg-to-Charlottesville voters said sprawl would be an important factor in the 2003 elections
- 81% of Virginia voters said it would be an important factor in the 2003 elections

And here is result of asking the “sprawl” question in context . . .

- 9% of voters believe the quality of life has deteriorated and sprawl is the primary cause of this deterioration
- 21% of voters believe the quality of life has deteriorated over the past 5 years
- 79% of respondents believe the quality of life has improved or stayed the same over the past five years.

Virginia voters support growth controls but admit they don’t know anything about them . .

- 77% of Virginia voters support “no more people in my town” local and state growth and development controls (this is the “I got mine, I don’t care about you” attitude)
- 8% of Virginia voters say that they are 'very familiar' with laws and regulations used by the state and localities to manage growth and development.
- 53% of Virginia voters state that they are 'not too' or 'not at all familiar' with these policies. [This is a problem since most don’t know that the growth control measures use New York City inner-city high-rise housing density as a goal].

Virginia Anti-Growth Organizations’ Poll January 2003¹

<http://www.pecva.org/landuse/2003vapoll/2003vapollreport.pdf>

[Author’s note: Growth controls exacerbate sprawl problems. See the section on myths, below.]

Voters have no working definition of “sprawl” (nor does anyone else), and therefore cannot decide what will fix the undefined problem. They are, however, unhappy with traffic congestion and school crowding – in Virginia and in the rest of the nation.

¹ This poll used a deeply biased opinion survey. There are no Virginia surveys that have addressed sprawl issues against a factual basis. Of particular trouble is that the survey combined environmental quality, sprawl and traffic congestion into a single category of evil. This prevents an assessment of the actual cause of unhappiness amongst voters. Other data sources seem to suggest that traffic congestion and school crowding is the culprit behind unhappiness with “sprawl”.

“What is the biggest issue facing your county today?”

- 39% “growth management: sprawl – traffic – environment”
[*biased question, see footnote (1) on the previous page*]
- 25% “poor schools/education issues” [not ‘crowded schools,’ which was not addressed]
- 14% “the economy – jobs – economic development”
- 7% a “budget crisis”
- 5% “high taxes and government spending”

Virginia Anti-Growth Organizations’ Poll January 2003

<http://www.pecva.org/landuse/2003vapoll/2003vapollreport.pdf>

In California, “the mother of all sprawl,” sprawl is bad, but nobody is willing to change their lifestyles, a phenomena also seen in Northern Virginia . . .

- 58 percent of Californians consider air pollution a "serious health threat,"
- 68 percent believe there has been little to no progress in dealing with the problem over the last 20 year
- 47 percent of the state's residents cited vehicle emissions as the top contributor to California's notorious yellow-brown smog
- 44 percent said they were "very" or "somewhat" concerned that their own cars polluted too much
- 73 percent of employed California residents drive to work alone
- 4 percent consider a car's potential for polluting the environment as the most important factor when purchasing a new vehicle
- 66 percent of adults reported two or more registered cars in their home
- 7 percent do not drive

The Public Policy Institute of California July 2003

<http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/21473/story.htm>

1. 78 % support encouraging commercial development
2. 52 % discourage population growth in their community (the “I got mine” attitude)
3. This ambivalence is most prominent among those Californians living in the suburbs
4. 66% of Californians believe that new single family housing should be encouraged in their community. Renters and lower income Californians are the subgroups most likely to feel this way. (the “I want mine, too” attitude)
5. 67% of residents describe suburban sprawl as a very (40%) or somewhat (27%) important problem in their region.
6. Californians believe the main causes of suburban sprawl are:
 - a. population growth (26%)
 - b. lack of affordable housing (13%)
 - c. developers (7%)
 - d. people wanting to get out of the city (6%)

- e. a lack of planning (6%), and
- f. uncontrolled immigration (6%).
- 7. Problems caused by sprawl:
 - a. More traffic and longer commuting time (22%)
 - b. loss of open space/poor land management (13%)
 - c. increasing costs to local communities to provide public services (11%)
- 8. Majorities of Los Angeles County and Bay Area residents agree that their growth limit has been reached, most residents in other areas disagree.
- 9. By a 70% to 25% margin, Californians overwhelmingly support the idea of the state requiring cities and counties to create a regional plan to manage growth and land use issues
- 10. 53% support making growth and land use decisions at the regional level
- 11. 43% favor retaining this decision making authority within their local governments.
 - a. Residents of rural areas or small or medium sized towns are more likely to support retaining local control
 - b. Those living in large cities or the suburbs surrounding large cities are more supportive of regional control.

Field Poll - California May 2002 <http://field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RLS2045.pdf>

[Author's note: Californians understand the problems they face (item 7) but do not understand what caused those problems (item 6). See the section on myths, below.]

<p>Voters think Democrats handle environmental issues better than Republicans, but this says nothing about who best handles sprawl</p>

- 22 point difference between voters' views of which political party could best handle environment issues (Republican 30% vs Democrats 52%).
- 73 percent of moderate and liberal voters and more than 68 percent of conservative voters agree with the statement "we can have a clean environment and a strong economy at the same time without having to choose one over the other." [Author's Note: This question does not address the causes of sprawl.]
- 78 percent of those polled say they favor candidates who vote for the environment over those who vote for fewer government regulations.
- 60 percent of respondents view pro-environment candidates as responsible and trustworthy, positive traits not attributed to candidates who support reducing environmental regulations on business.

CNN Environmental News Network (**Zogby** June 2002)
<http://www.cnn.com/2000/NATURE/04/10/enviro.poll.enr/>

"Whether the Republicans or the Democrats in Congress can better handle environmental issues".

- 49% of voters casting their preference for Democrats and 28% casting their votes for Republicans.

Gallup June 2002, as reported on CNN Environmental News Network
<http://www.cnn.com/2000/NATURE/04/10/enviro.poll.enn/>

POLLING DATA BY POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

Republican Primary Voters August 1999 (Sprawl was actually examined)

- 93% said protecting the environment was important in deciding their vote for a presidential candidate, tied with "encouraging family values" (93%) and cutting taxes (91%), and considerably greater than abortion (61%).
- GOP voters who call themselves environmentalists (47%) and those who say they are not (50%).
- 85% of respondents state it is important to them that a candidate be a strong supporter of the environment.
- The most important environmental issues to likely Republican primary and caucus voters, who were asked to choose from a list of eight issues, were
 - improving drinking water (97%),
 - cleaning up toxic waste (96%),
 - improving air quality (93%),
 - requiring auto companies to meet fuel efficiency standards (88%)
 - global warming, (79.5%).
- The most popular pro-environment positions, which will help GOP candidates win the most support from likely primary voters, include
 - requiring manufacturers to include information about cancer-causing ingredients on their product labels (67% would be more likely to support such a candidate),
 - support for modernizing power plants and automobiles to reduce emissions (59%), and
 - favoring a stronger federal role in regulating pesticides currently in use (56%).
- The least popular anti-environmental positions, that would cost Republican primary candidates the most support, include
 - accepting political contributions from companies that pollute and then want to weaken clean air and water laws (79% would be less likely to support such a candidate),
 - saying global warming has not been proven and is nothing to worry about (65%),
 - relaxing the Clean Water Act (61%).

- Issues that the federal government should do more to address, according to a plurality of those surveyed, are
 - cleaning up toxic wastes (46%),
 - improving drinking water (44%), and
 - **protecting against sprawl (44%).**

Zogby – <http://www.lightparty.com/Economic/GOPVotersSupportEnv.html>

Democratic National Committee December 2002 (Sprawl not examined)
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<i>Which two issues do you think are most important for the Democrats to concentrate on in the 2004 presidential campaign?</i>	
Economy /Jobs/ unemployment	95*
War on terror/ National security issues	31
Health Care / prescription drugs	24
Education	11
Foreign policy (other than Iraq)	6
Iraq/War with Iraq	3
Social Security	3
Taxes (specific mention)	2
Environment	2
Other	16
* Respondents were asked to choose up to two issues, so answers add up to more than 100%.	

CBS News/The New York Times Poll – http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/c2k/dnc_back.pdf

II. GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

Every political jurisdiction within the Commonwealth seeks some kind of sprawl-associated assistance from officials and legislators in Richmond, but the Commonwealth has provided little, other than the authority of localities to assess a “penny tax” for road construction – an authority voters have now rejected at the polls.

- Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads/Norfolk voters want relief from traffic congestion and school crowding, but will not approve a local “penny-tax” by which to pay for it;
- High Growth Communities’ voters seek increased local authority to force developers and new residents to bear the full cost of public facility and service expansion. The following have joined the “Virginia Coalition of High Growth Communities:”
 - Counties:

▪ Albemarle	Goochland
▪ August	Hanover
▪ Bedford	Isle of Wight
▪ Culpeper	James City
▪ Dinwiddie	Loudoun
▪ Fairfax	Montgomery
▪ Fauquier	Powhatan
▪ Fluvanna	Rockingham
▪ Franklin	Spotsylvania
▪ Gloucester	Stafford
 - Cities:
 - Chesapeake
 - Fredericksburg
 - Suffolk

Source: Virginia Law Foundation.

- Rural jurisdictions seek an expanded tax base and more state funds for infrastructure, as reflected in recent comments to the Rural Prosperity Commission:
 - The critical need to upgrade highways (Grayson County) to allow engaging in economic activities that bring prosperity;
 - State assistance to provide local infrastructure, including water and sewer lines and high-tech telecommunications access (Bluefield);
 - Full state share of funding for K-12 education and adult and workforce education (Carroll County);

- Support for existing manufacturing industries and assistance in pursuing "new economy" businesses (Marion).

Virginia Rural Prosperity Commission
<http://www.technews.vt.edu/Archives/2000/Dec/00396.html>

- An unhappy body politic lurks beneath views expressed immediately above. We find that the citizens' attitudes have generally been manipulated by a small, highly politicized and vocal "anti-sprawl" advocacy community that generally proposes a "one-size-fits-all" agenda of taking people out of cars and increasing housing density to New York City levels (the so-called "smart growthers")

Virginia Anti-Growth Organizations' Poll January 2003
<http://www.pecva.org/landuse/2003vapoll/2003vapollreport.pdf>

The Commonwealth's Response

Having provided localities the opportunity to use the penny tax to build roads and schools, only to be rebuffed by voters also facing dramatically increased residential property taxes, the General Assembly has retreated to the federal approach, *i.e.* to further study the problems. This year, they refused to pass legislation giving local jurisdictions the authority to stop development (no growth), and instead directed the anti-sprawl and developer lobbyists to draft a consensus bill. (*See:* <http://www.leesburg2day.com/current.cfm?catid=54&newsid=6574>). In addition, they sent to committee for further study the three bills that would have given local governments growth control authority.

As well, they continue to fund two legislative groups to study related issues:

- Joint Subcommittee Studying Land Development Patterns and Ways to Address Demands for Increased Services and Infrastructure Resulting from Residential Growth is examining:
 - Adequacy of public facilities
 - Impact fees
 - Transferable development rights
 - Purchased development rights
 - Cash proffers
- Commission on Growth and Economic Development seeks to extend its life and its studies on:
 - Clustering homes to reduce infrastructure costs and preserve open space
 - Regional and local funding to address transportation shortfalls (beyond the penny tax)
 - Liability relief for property owners seeking to redevelop industrial "brownfield" sites

- A dedicated fund to preserve open space
- Alternative funding mechanisms for infrastructure
- Revitalization of inner cities and suburbs
- Redevelopment of abandoned sites (brownfields)
- Preservation of open lands
- Protection of property rights

The executive branch has very little underway. VDOT has endorsed HOT lanes and public-private toll lane construction. (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization/safetea_analysis.htm) but will not be able to increase highway construction without large increases in federal funds (<http://virginiadot.org/info/service/news/newsrelease.asp?ID=CO-41>). VDOT has no other response to sprawl problems. VDEQ has made reference to sprawl in its water resources protection programs, but has taken no role on growth management, so-called smart growth, or other land development practices, other than its vigorous Brownfields program to redevelop old industrial sites through liability protection of old and new owners.

The Federal Response

The most Federal response is not all that recent and proposes an authority to conduct another study indicating how to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality by “telecommuting.”

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUTING AND AIR QUALITY ACT, 1999
(as part of HR 2084)

SEC. 365. (a) The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall make a grant for the purpose of conducting a study for the following purposes:

(1) To develop and evaluate methods for calculating reductions in emissions of precursors of ground level ozone that are achieved within a geographic area as a result of reduced vehicle-miles-traveled in the geographic area (through telecommuting).

(2) To develop a design for the following proposal for a pilot program: (A) For the purpose of reducing such emissions, employers electing to participate in the pilot program would authorize and encourage telecommuting by their employees.

Northern Virginia Technology Council
<http://www.nvtc.org/infocent/ecommute.htm#myths>

EPA continues to promote growth control (New York-style housing densities and get people out of cars), and continues to ignore cost-effectiveness analysis as a means to evaluate competing approaches to dealing with sprawl. EPA has a prescribed mission regarding air pollution, infill and maintenance of green space, while generally giving no attention to traffic congestion, school crowding and affordable housing for minorities. <http://www.epa.gov/livability/>

The Department of Transportation is seeking legislation entitled the “Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century” (TEA-21), also known as SAFETEA. Provisions associated with sprawl include:

- Diluting highway programs by forcing combination of state highway and transit planning agencies, which will move money from highways to transit;
- Shift highway funding from new construction to repair of existing lanes;
- Allowing states to convert High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy and Toll (HOT) lanes if needed to manage congestion;
- A shift from emphasis on rail-based mass transit to bus-based mass transit,
- Discontinuation of funding for “suspended” monorail demonstration projects;
- Initiation of cost-effectiveness analysis of current federal transit funding, the first step in determining which kinds of public transit move the most people at the least cost.

U.S. DOT SAFETEA

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization/safetea_analysis.htm

III. MYTHS AND FACTS

A sensible response to concerns about “sprawl” must begin with identification of a specific problem, from which one moves to possible solutions. Failure to take this step results in ridiculous proposals. For example, the anti-sprawl groups continually push for controls over development, although the major complaints of voters are traffic congestion and over-crowded schools. Growth controls will not fix either problem.

Even with focus on a specific problem, junk science and political agendas can overwhelm sensible political debate. Consider the latest silliness, the suggestion that sprawl causes obesity and related hypertension. These studies begin by ranking counties according to how many bad sprawl characteristics they contain. Then, they examine the average weight of people living in those communities. Both steps lead to nonsensical outcomes. The table below provides the data for the four “best” and “worst” Virginia jurisdictions. Notice the following:

- Fairfax County, Richmond City and the Tidewater cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth are considered to have the least sprawl in the Commonwealth!

This will come as a surprise to their residents since these localities have the highest level of traffic congestion in the state. It will also come as a surprise to the “Smart Growth America” folks who hold them out as examples of sprawl, a peculiar outcome since the same group funded the study cited below.

- If the junk science of the study presented below is to be taken seriously, it must get past the real possibility that apparently no one in their study is obese, regardless of the community in which they live. The ideal weight for a 5’7” male is from 138 to 168 pounds, depending on the size of the person’s frame, a range that captures the average weight in all the communities below. (See: University of Michigan Medical School <http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/primry/life15.htm>.)
- There is no meaningful difference between the average weights in these jurisdictions, even if there is a statistically significant difference. At the largest, the difference is a mere 1.4 pounds between the “best” city and the “worst” county in Virginia. A normal person will vary by this amount from morning to evening of the same day.

County/City	Sprawl Score (lower number means higher degree of sprawl – 100 is average)	Weight of an average person (height 5’7”)
Good Counties		
Norfolk City	131.92	165.94
Richmond City	127.18	166.04
Portsmouth City	124.93	166.09
Fairfax County	117.81	166.25
Bad Counties		
Hanover County	74.97	167.19

Powhatan County	72.48	167.25
Dinwiddie County	72.45	167.25
Goochland County	67.59	167.35

Source: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/healthreport.html> ²

There are many myths to demystify. Below is a list of ones deserving immediate attention. These are drawn from “The Journalist’s Guide to the American Dream,” which provides quantitative, neutral facts related to an even longer list of myths. The list is hyperlinked to a brief discussion below of the myth and the data that debunks the myth.

The Myths

Automobile use is highly subsidized – it isn’t.

Automobile ownership is getting more expensive – it isn’t.

We can’t build our way out of congestion – we could but might not want to.

Building new roads simply induces more driving – it satisfies more citizens’ needs.

Transit can reduce congestion – not in Richmond, Tidewater, Roanoke or No. Virginia.

Balanced transportation means more money for transit – it shouldn’t.

One rail line can move as many people as a twelve-lane freeway – they don’t.

Rail transit promotes local investment and redevelopment – it doesn’t.

The automotive industry conspired to destroy American transit systems –no, it conspired to shift from rail to buses.

Residential land use design can reduce driving and congestion – it doesn’t.

High residential population density moves people into transit and out of cars – it doesn’t.

Limiting growth cures sprawl – it destroys the American Dream and is invidiously racist.

Cars cause increasingly bad air quality – not for the past 30 years.

Sprawl has destroyed open spaces – actually, “Smart Growth” destroys open spaces

Mass transit is the only solution for traffic congestion – it isn’t, but telework may be.

Myth: Autos are popular only because they receive huge government subsidies

Reality: More than 90 percent of highway costs have been paid by highway user fees.

The vast majority of spending on highways has come out of gasoline taxes and other taxes and fees that are explicitly collected as highway user fees. During the 1990s, highway user fees equaled or exceeded highway spending by both the federal and state governments. Local governments did spend more on roads than they collected in user fees. When everything is totaled, however, user fees account for more than 90 percent of highway expenditures.

² This paper is not the appropriate forum in which to explain all the problems with this study, and a second one also released this year. Nevertheless, the number of biases and the amount of analytical legerdemain in this study destroy its credibility, although it will garner an inordinate amount of press attention.

Myth: Auto ownership is costly and getting more expensive each year.

Reality: As a share of personal income, the amount Americans spend on autos has declined since at least 1960.

According to the Department of Commerce, Americans spent 9.8 percent of their personal incomes on autos in 1980. In 2001 they spent only 8.5 percent. Since the average American drives more than three times as many miles today as fifty years ago, this is a phenomenal bargain. On the plus side, thanks in part to increased mobility, inflation-adjusted personal incomes today are two-and-one-half times greater than in 1960.

Myth: We Can't Build Our Way out of Congestion

Reality: Cities that have built more roads in the past two decades have had less congestion growth.

The Texas Transportation Institute's annual mobility report shows that many urban areas have kept congestion in check by aggressively building new roads. Houston, for example, has nearly doubled its freeway and arterial system in the last eighteen years. As a result, Houston congestion has increased by less than 8 percent, compared with more than 25 percent in the other nine of the nation's ten largest urban areas.

We can theoretically eliminate congestion by building enough roads. But this would be very expensive and wasteful if much of the new road capacity were used only a few hours a day. *Value pricing*, meaning road tolls that are higher during congested periods than other times of the day, can smooth out traffic peaks and dips by encouraging people to drive at less-congested times of the day. According to commuting expert Alan Pisarski, commuters make up less than half of morning rush-hour and less than a third of afternoon rush-hour driving, so value pricing could greatly reduce peak-period demand even if few commuters have flexible hours.

Myth: Building New Roads Simply Induces More Driving

Reality: Adding road capacity in congested areas provides important benefits for nearly everyone in the area.

The observation that new roads are quickly congested is explained by people changing their travel habits to take advantage of new road capacity. This is not induced demand, it is a release of suppressed demand. Even if there were induced demand, the idea that this could be a problem is based on the notion that driving produces costs without benefits. One gets a picture of Americans as mindless robots, brainwashed by auto manufacturers and oil companies to drive around and spew pollution aimlessly. In fact, every trip people make has a purpose that is worthwhile to the people making the trip.

This doesn't mean that every highway proposal makes sense. Road plans should be subjected to the same benefit-cost analyses as rail plans. But by any measure, highways in general are one of the most successful government programs in America. They are heavily used for very valuable purposes and they pretty much pay for themselves.

Myth: Transit can reduce congestion

Reality: Outside of a few inner-city areas, transit carries too few riders to make any difference to urban congestion.

Transit carries more than 10 percent of passenger travel in just one U.S. urban area—New York—and more than 3 percent of travel in only five other areas: Boston, San Francisco, Washington, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Transit's share of travel depends on the concentration of jobs. New York has a high share because it has 2.5 million jobs in Manhattan. The other five urban areas with high transit shares also have lots of downtown jobs.

Transit can capture very little market share in urban areas in which jobs are spread out, such as San Jose and Los Angeles, even though both have population densities greater than New York. Residential densities just aren't as important to transit as job concentrations.

Myth: Balanced transportation means more money for transit.

Reality: For more than thirty years, transit funding has been far greater, per passenger mile, than funding to autos & highways.

Transit supporters frequently point to the billions spent on highways and claim that transit deserves additional funding to make up for this supposed bias. Yet they neglect to point out that nearly all of the funds spent on highways are paid out of highway user fees, while only a small share of transit funds are paid out of transit fares. Highways are much more productive than transit. In 2001, highways carried 83 times as many passenger miles as transit, yet total highway spending was less than four times as much as transit spending.

Highways cost about 3.2 cents a passenger mile, mostly paid by highway users, while transit cost 71 cents a passenger mile, only 18 cents of which was paid by transit riders. Highways also carried billions of ton-miles of freight, while transit carried little to no freight.

Myth: One rail line can move as many people as a twelve-lane freeway.

Reality: Except for New York City subways, no transit line in the country carries as many people as even one freeway lane.

A review of rail transit systems in the U.S. reveals that, outside of New York, none carry as many people as a single freeway lane, much less an eight or twelve-lane freeway.

Myth: Rail transit promotes local investment and redevelopment.

Reality: Development on rail lines usually requires more subsidies.

“Urban rail transit investments rarely ‘create’ new growth,” says a report sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration, “but more typically redistribute growth that would have taken place without the investment.” The report adds that “The greatest land-use changes have occurred downtown.” Thus, rail transit is mainly a subsidy to downtown property owners.

Myth: The automotive industry conspired to destroy American transit systems.

Reality: Buses are so superior to rail transit that almost every transit company in the U.S. converted streetcars to buses as fast as they could.

Far from driving people away from transit, buses were welcomed by transit riders because buses were faster, safer, more comfortable, and could go places the rails didn’t go. Of the hundreds of transit lines that were *not* owned by National City Lines, all but four or five also converted their streetcars to buses. In any case, it is clear that the “GM conspiracy” was a conspiracy to sell buses, fuel, and tires, not a conspiracy to harm transit systems.

Myth: There is a connection between land use and transportation, so residential land use design can reduce driving and congestion.

Reality: Transportation technology influences land uses, but residential designs do not influence citizens’ choice of transportation.³

Transportation technology influences urban design, but urban design does not influence transportation choices. Comparisons of per capita driving with population density in America’s urban areas reveal there is no correlation between urban design and transportation practices.

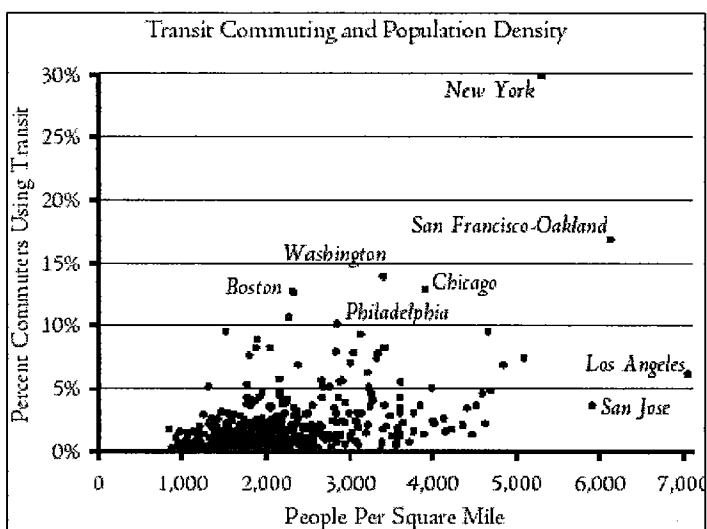
For example, in comparing the San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago urban areas, studies show that San Francisco has the densest population, the most pedestrian-friendly design, the most intensive transit service. Yet their data also show that San Francisco has the most cars and most miles driven per capita.

³ Don’t confuse cause and effect. Many people who live in “walkable/bikeable” neighborhoods do so by choice, not because they must. They always have neighbors who chose not to walk & bike, but instead use automobiles.

Urban Area Land-Use and Driving Characteristics			
Urban area	San Francisco	Los Angeles	Chicago
Population/acre	12.38	10.11	5.20
Transit density	22.66	6.13	18.29
Pedestrian friendly	.50	.23	.21
Vehicles/capita	0.71	0.62	0.53
Miles driven/capita	6,291	6,248	5,829

Myth: High residential population density moves people into transit and out of cars.

Reality: Job density in urban areas produces high transit ridership.



High levels of transit usage are achieved in urban areas with high concentrations of centrally located jobs. Population density does not have a significant influence on transit ridership. Source: 2000 census.

Myth: Limiting growth cures sprawl.

Reality: Regulatory limitations on development drive up the cost of housing, thereby limiting economic opportunity and lifestyle choices for those climbing the economic ladder – an invidious form of racism.⁴

Zoning and other regulations designed to limit urban expansion or impose lifestyle choices on other people all serve to drive up the cost of housing, especially those forms of housing not favored by the planning czars. Urban-growth or urban-service boundaries create artificial shortages of land that drive up land prices. Other regulations, including

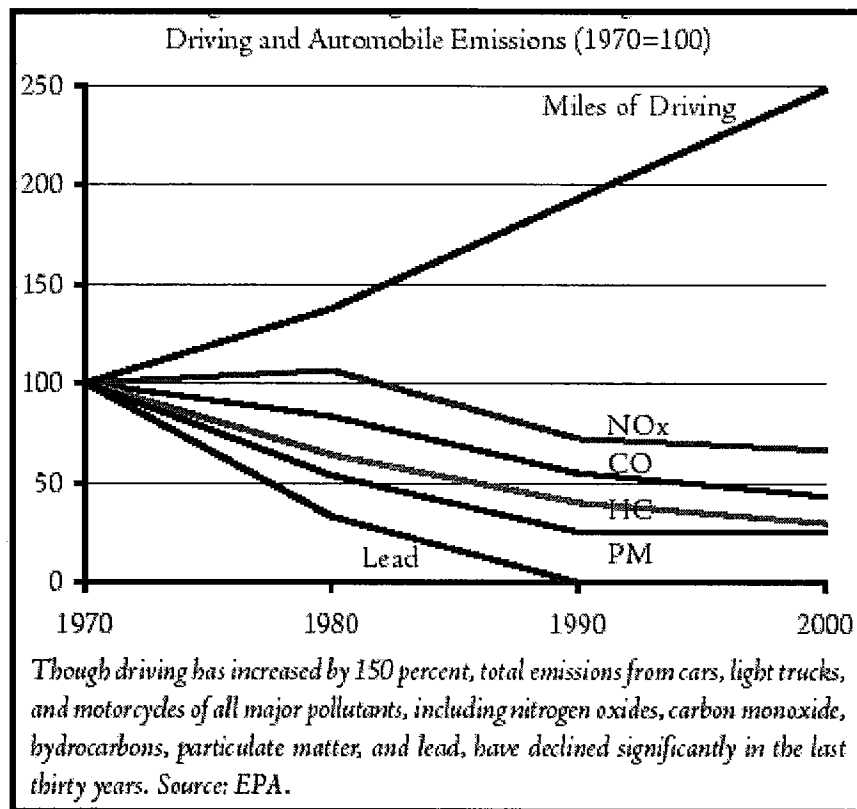
⁴ This subject is relatively complex and the short description provided here does not do it justice. The following link provides an excellent three page discussion on Housing (and growth controls) and the American Dream. <http://americandreamcoalition.org/ADGuideB&W.pdf>

design codes, tree ordinances, and extensive review processes, all increase the costs of home construction.

Studies show the single most important source of funds for new businesses in the United States is a mortgage on the entrepreneur's house." More than two out of three American families own their own homes, and this high rate of homeownership helps explain why the U.S. is the world's wealthiest nation. Anything that increases the cost of homeownership therefore limits people's ability to generate wealth and poses a particularly severe hardship on low-income people who do not yet own their own homes – economic classes that are predominantly people of color.

Myth: Cars cause increasingly bad air quality.

Reality: For the last 30 years, miles driven has gone up while air pollution has gone down.



Engine emission controls and turn over of the automobile fleet, not human behavior modifications, are the keys to cleaning up the air. Existing technologies have already done much to reduce pollution. Even faster results can be obtained by giving people incentives to keep their cars clean and further reduce the amount of pollution they generate.

Myth: Sprawl has destroyed open spaces.

Reality: Smart growth will destroy urban open spaces and development is miniscule compared to real open space.

Urban open spaces are important for recreation, scenery, wildlife, and watershed values. Smart-growth advocates rely on public worries about disappearing open space to build support for their policies. But smart growth doesn't protect urban open space. At best, it trades off certain valuable forms of open space for less valuable ones. At worst, smart growth's demand for infill actively eliminates valuable open spaces.

Despite popular fears that urban growth is paving over America, the cities and suburbs in the nation's 450 urbanized areas of 50,000 people or more cover just 2.4 percent of the contiguous 48 states. When all smaller (non-urban, non-suburban) towns and unincorporated concentrations of people are included, the total is still well below 4 percent. Urbanization does not threaten rural open space. In Virginia, only 8.5% of the Commonwealth is urban and only 10.4% is developed.

Myth: Mass transit is the only solution for traffic congestion.

Reality: Mass transit is cost-inefficient, but telework may be a very cost-efficient solution.

The U.S. Federal Government (Bureau of Transportation Statistics) estimated that in 1996 the annual congestion cost for 70 metropolitan areas in the U.S. was approximately \$74 billion. Dr. Roger Stough has indicated that "a ten-percent reduction in vehicle traffic will result in approximately a thirty-percent reduction in traffic volume." This means that there is a three-to-one impact on congestion for each car taken off the road

Northern Virginia Technology Council

<http://www.nvtc.org/infocent/ecommute.htm#myths>

Sixty internet providers now service Northern Virginia, and 56% of all adults in Northern Virginia connect to the internet from their homes. Most do so through telephone lines, reflecting the higher cost of high-speed connections via cable and DSL.

http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/chart.asp?img=08_Regional_CapReg.jpg However, over 260,000 in Northern Virginia and more than 450,000 customers in the Hampton Roads and Roanoke areas are served by cable, meaning a very large proportion could engage in telework with access to their normal electronic networks at speeds equal to their normal work stations. http://www.media-general.com/news/1999/apr22_99.htm

If the Federal Government expanded its transit subsidy to pay for the cost of high-speed internet connections and in exchange mandated such subsidy users to telework at least one-day a week, the result would be the frequent absence of these cable-served employees from our roadways. This approach would reduce traffic congestion by more than 25 percent. Virginia could force this through its Clean Air Act State Implementation Plan by tying its attainment of national air quality standards to expansion of the current federal transit subsidy to include telework.

IV. SENSIBLE GROWTH RESOURCES

Hyperlinks to sections below:

[Comprehensive Studies](#)

[Automobility](#)

[Congestion](#)

[Transit](#)

[Air Quality](#)

[Land Use](#)

[Housing](#)

[Open Space](#)

[Smart Growth Disasters](#)

Comprehensive Studies

The Journalists' Guide to the American Dream *Author:* Randal O'Toole
rot@americandreamcoalition.org *Citation:* American Dream Coalition, 2003
americandreamcoalition.org *Summary:* *The Journalists' Guide to the American Dream* examines seven important topics: automobility, congestion, transit, housing, air pollution, land use, and open space. As appropriate for each topic, the Guide presents their positions, demystifies popular myths, analyzes the best available data, and shows how to get more information about their local areas. <http://americandreamcoalition.org/ADGuideB&W.pdf>.

Sensible Growth - The Politics and Practicalities of Metropolitan Expansion *Author:* David W. Schnare, Esq. Ph.D. (mailto: SchnareLaw@cox.net) *Citation:* Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy, 1999, 64 pp. *Summary:* America has the will and tools to ensure "Sensible Growth" in its cities and suburbs. Inevitably, these metropolitan regions will expand, but by applying sensible approaches we can reduce congestion, preserve open space and keep pace with demands for schools - all while providing for new economic and residential expansion. This paper provides an alternative to the radical proposals often described as "smart" growth and describes how principles of Sensible Growth can address problems in Virginia's metropolitan communities. *Executive summary:* http://www.thomasjeffersoninst.org/pdfs/sensbl_growth.pdf
Full Report: http://www.thomasjeffersoninst.org/pdfs/sensbl_growth_ex_sum.pdf

Taking the Politics Out of Planning: A New Statewide Model for Prioritizing Transportation - August 1999 *Authors:* Steve Blake and Alan Pisarski. *Citation:* Thomas Jeggerson Institute for Public Policy, 1999, 161 pp. *Summary:* This report provided to the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and its Commonwealth Transportation Alliance a model and methodology by which transportation projects can be prioritized in accordance with a set of value criteria. The model and methodology contained in the report provides eight (8) criteria for assessing the relative merits of a particular transportation project, allowing each area of the state to develop goals reflecting local desires but insisting that these goals be compatible with an overall statewide strategy for providing a comprehensive and efficient transportation system as

cost-effectively as possible. Most importantly, the model can be used to compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of transportation projects in Virginia.

http://www.thomasjeffersoninst.org/reports_transportation.php .

Automobility

Highway Statistics *Author:* Federal Highway Administration *Citation:* Washington, DC: US DOT, various *Summary:* Annual reports provide detailed data about America's automobiles, highways, fuel consumption, driving, and highway finances. Summary edition has data extending back for decades. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/ohimstat.htm>

Cars, Women, and Minorities: The Democratization of Mobility in America *Author:* Alan Pisarski (mailto: pisarski@ix.netcom.com) *Citation:* Washington, DC: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 1999, 18 pp. *Summary:* Women and minorities are driving more and more, but proposed restrictions on the automobile are likely to hit them the hardest. *Quote:* "'Induced travel,' the notion that improvements in transportation facilities *merely* induce people to travel more, may be reviled by some, but in fact it is a highly desirable phenomenon. Future increases in induced travel will come largely from getting personal vehicles into the hands of minority populations. This is a fact to be celebrated, not condemned." <http://www.cei.org/PDFs/pisarski.pdf>

Driving Forces: The Automobile, Its Enemies, and the Politics of Mobility *Author:* James Dunn (mailto: jadunn@crab.rutgers.edu) *Citation:* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1998 *Summary:* Describes the history of automobility in the U.S. with emphasis on the benefits of autos and campaigns against them. *Quote:* "Ownership of an automobile empowers an individual to make a vastly wider range of choices relating to personal mobility than he or she would have without a car." <http://brookings.nap.edu/books/0815719639/html/R1.html>

Commuting in America II *Author:* Alan Pisarski (mailto: pisarski@ix.netcom.com) *Citation:* Washington, DC: Eno Transportation Foundation, 1996 *Summary:* Provides a statistical look at commuting based on the 1990 census. Pisarski is updating this book using 2000 census data. *Quote:* "The fact that 70 percent of commuting households have two or more workers suggests that living near work is no longer a simple option, and the work trip chain—taking care of household needs—daycare, food, laundry—on the way to and from work is central in contemporary lifestyles." Can be ordered from http://www.enotrans.com/Publications_Order_Form/publications_order_form_.htm

Additional References The University of California Transportation Center has hundreds of reports on autos, transit, and land-use planning plus its excellent semi-annual *Access* magazine at <http://www.uctc.net/> . For an article by Mark Delucchi comparing social costs and subsidies to autos with transit, download *Access* magazine number 16 from <http://www.uctc.net/access/access16lite.pdf> and read pages numbered 14–18. Many more useful reports published by the Reason Foundation may be found at <http://www.rppi.org/surtrans.html> . *Density and Congestion*, http://www.tdanet.com/Density_and_Congestion_Reduction_Oct_2002.pdf . *Traffic Calming*

Politics, http://www.users.qwest.net/~erinard/traffic_calming_politics.htm . The cost of automobile ownership as a share of personal income can be found in tables at <http://www.bea.gov/bea/dn/nipaweb/TableViewFixed.asp?SelectedTable=27&FirstYear=1929&LastYear=2003&Freq=Year> (line 1 is personal income) and <http://www.bea.gov/bea/dn/nipaweb/TableViewFixed.asp?SelectedTable=30&FirstYear=1929&LastYear=2001&Freq=Year> (line 69 is auto ownership cost) Data on auto, bus, and rail share of travel in various nations is available from *OECD in Figures 2002*, <http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/0102071E.PDF> .

Congestion

Urban Mobility Study *Author:* David Schrank (<mailto:d-schrank@tamu.edu>) and Tim Lomax (<mailto:t-lomax@tamu.edu>) *Citation:* College Station, TX: Texas Transportation Institute, 2002 *Summary:* Provides congestion estimates for seventy-five urban areas for the years 1982 to 2000. <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/>

HOT Networks: A New Plan for Congestion Relief and Better Transit *Authors:* Robert Poole (<mailto:bobp@reason.org>) and Kenneth Orski (<mailto:korski@erols.com>) *Citation:* Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2003, 57 pp. *Summary:* Predicts that turning HOV lanes into HOT lanes, and in some areas building new HOT lanes, would both improve transit and allow anyone to travel in major urban areas without having to deal with congestion. *Quote:* "HOV lanes, we believe, could be transformed into a more effective component of the urban transportation system by turning them into premium lanes that would serve as high-speed guideways for express buses, while providing a faster and more reliable travel option to individual motorists traveling in personal automobiles. Buses and vanpools would use the premium lanes free of charge, while other motorists would pay a variable toll." <http://www.rppi.org/ps305.pdf>

Putting the Customer in the Driver's Seat: The Case for Tolls *Authors:* Peter Samuel (<mailto:tollroads@aol.com>) and Robert Poole (<mailto:bobp@reason.org>) *Citation:* Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2000, 66 pp. *Summary:* Because cars have doubled their fuel efficiency, gas taxes can't keep up with highway needs. Tolls should be the payment mode of choice in the twenty-first century. *Quote:* "'Double taxation' can be eliminated by giving rebates to toll road users for the amount of gas taxes they have paid for all miles driven on toll roads. Such programs already exist on toll roads in New York and Massachusetts." <http://www.rppi.org/ps274.html>

End Gridlock Now *Author:* Dr. William Eager (<mailto:beager@tdanet.com>) *Citation:* Seattle, WA: TDA Inc., 2002, 25 pp. *Summary:* Seattle is one of the worst congested urban areas in the nation, but this analysis finds that adding just 6 percent more lane-miles to the region's highway system can both relieve congestion and provide for the next thirty years of traffic growth. *Quote:* "The roadway network will have to carry 26% more trips in 2020 than in 2002. Even with this growth in demand the [proposed] network reduces delay per trip by 30%." http://www.tdanet.com/End_Gridlock_Now_Nov_2002.pdf .

Problems Associated with Traffic Calming Devices *Author:* Kathleen Calongne (<mailto:CalongneK@aol.com>) *Citation:* Unpublished, updated to 2003 *Summary:* Speed bumps and other traffic calming techniques delay emergency service vehicles, leading to far more risks than any safety to pedestrians provided by the traffic calming. *Quote:* “An increase in accidents has occurred after some installations. Experimental speed humps placed on a street at a school in Portland, Maine registered an increase in accidents of 35%. Accidents increased 100% after the installation of an experimental traffic circle in Boulder, Colorado. However, the circle in Boulder and the humps in Portland remain on the street today.”
http://www.users.qwest.net/~erinard/problems_associated_with_traffic.htm .

Transit

National Transit Data Base *Author:* Federal Transit Administration *Citation:* Washington, DC: US DOT, various *Summary:* Provides profiles of individual transit agencies as well as cost, ridership, and other data on all bus, light-rail, heavy-rail, commuter-rail, and other transit lines in the country. <http://www.ntdprogram.com/> . *See also:* Summary data of costs, ridership, and miles for all agencies and modes at <http://americandreamcoalition.org/modeuza.xls>. For a table showing just light rail, heavy rail, and commuter rail lines, download <http://americandreamcoalition.org/rail2001.xls> .

The Future of Mass Transit *Author:* Thomas Rubin (<mailto:tarubin@earthlink.net>) *Citation:* *Veritas*, Summer 2000, pp. 14-25. *Summary:* Transit can provide mobility for people who cannot drive, but it can't reduce traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, shape cities, or stimulate the local economy. *Quote:* “In almost all cases, improved bus transit services can be, at a minimum, extremely competitive with rail transit alternatives and the bus is frequently a clear and convincing winner in any fair competition. The key word is ‘fair’ because many such modal competitions are stacked against all but the preselected winner, which is virtually always rail transit.” http://www.tppf.org/veritas/vol1_issue2/future.pdf

The Illusion of Transit Choice *Author:* Wendell Cox (<mailto:wcox@publicpurpose.com>) *Citation:* *Veritas*, March, 2002, pp. 34-42. *Summary:* Building a transit system that is competitive with the automobile—that is, that can deliver people from any point in an urban area to any other point in no more than 150 percent of the time it takes to drive—would be prohibitively expensive. *Quote:* “The annual capital and operating costs for a comprehensive system providing transit choice to the entire community would be more than the total personal income of the metropolitan area.” http://www.cascadepolicy.org/..pdf/envI_108.pdf

Kennedy, 60 Minutes, and Roger Rabbit: Understanding Conspiracy-Theory Explanations of The Decline of Urban Mass Transit *Author:* Dr. Martha J. Bianco (<mailto:biancom@pdx.edu>) *Citation:* Portland, OR: Center for Urban & Public Affairs, Portland State University, 1998, 21 pp. *Summary:* Though untrue or, at best, exaggerated, the myth that General Motors destroyed transit systems is popular among rail advocates because it makes their rail proposals seem more attractive. *Quote:* “If we cannot cast GM, the producer and supplier of automobiles, as the ultimate enemy, then we end up with a shocking and nearly unfathomable

alternative: What if the enemy is not the supplier, but rather the consumer? What if, to paraphrase Oliver Perry, we have met the enemy, and the enemy is us?"

<http://www.upa.pdx.edu/CUS/publications/docs/DP98-11.pdf>

The Mythical Conception of Rail Transit in Los Angeles *Author:* Dr. Jonathan E. D. Richmond (<mailto:richmond@alum.mit.edu>) *Citation:* Journal of Architectural and Planning Research 15(4):294-320 *Summary:* The popularity of rail among Los Angeles government officials is due to a series of myths, including the myth that trains are faster and more efficient than buses. As one LA transit commissioner is quoted as saying, "Trains are sexy, buses are not." *Quote:* "The train—concrete, sexy, transport of intimate memories and powerful ideas—provides a solid basis for political support. Technologies with negative symbolic connotations cannot do that." <http://the-tech.mit.edu/~richmond/professional/myth.pdf>

Underestimating Costs in Public Works Projects: Error or Lie? *Authors:* Bent Flyvbjerg, Mette Skamris Holm, and Soren Buhl *Citation:* Journal of the American Planning Association 68(3) Summer 2002: 279-295 *Summary:* Reviews of 258 transportation projects worth \$90 billion reveal that the cost estimates for those projects were highly misleading. U.S. rail projects ended up costing an average of 41 percent more than estimated while U.S. road projects ended up costing an average of 8 percent more than estimated. *Quote:* "Underestimation cannot be explained by error and is best explained by strategic misrepresentation, that is, lying." <http://www.planning.org/japa/pdf/JAPAFlyvbjerg.pdf>

Trolley Folly: A Critical Analysis of the Austin Light-Rail Proposal *Authors:* Thomas Rubin (<mailto:tarubin@earthlink.net>) and Wendell Cox (<mailto:wcox@publicpurpose.com>) *Citation:* Austin, TX: Texas Public Policy Foundation, 2000, 31 pp. *Summary:* A proposed light-rail line would cost at least a third of Austin's transportation funds yet carry less than a half percent of regional travel. *Quote:* "The Dallas DART light rail system has been declared a success by Capital Metro. In fact, DART's original projections that were used to promote their ballot initiative have been missed by a substantial margin. Ridership has fallen nearly 90 percent short and capital costs have escalated 60 percent." <http://www.texaspolicy.com/pdf/2000-09-27-transportationaustintrail.pdf>

Transportation in the Balance: A Comparative Analysis of Costs, User Revenues, and Subsidies for Highway, Air, and High-Speed Rail Systems *Authors:* Evelyn Chan, Adib Kanafani, and Thomas Canetti *Citation:* Berkeley, CA: University of California Transportation Center, 1997, 69 pp. *Summary:* Compares prospects for high-speed rail between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area with highways and airlines. Concludes that the social costs (subsidies plus externalities) of rail would be eighty times as much as for roads. *Quote:* "Even under extremely conservative assumptions regarding the estimation of the external costs of noise and air pollution, high-speed rail will continue to require many times the subsidies needed by the other modes." <http://www.uctc.net/papers/363.pdf>

Additional References *Urban Transit Myths* by Randal O'Toole at <http://www.rppi.org/ps245.html> *Myths of Light-Rail Transit* by James DeLong at <http://www.rppi.org/ps244.html> *Busway vs. Rail Capacity: Separating Myth from Fact* by Peter Samuel at <http://www.rppi.org/pu16.pdf> *Does Transit Really Work? Thoughts on the*

Weyrich/Lind "Conservative Reappraisal" by Peter Gordon at <http://www.rppi.org/transportation/ftebrief101.html> More of Wendell Cox's analyses of rail transit are at <http://www.publicpurpose.com/> . More analyses of Portland's light-rail lines are at <http://www.cascadepolicy.org/> . The Los Angeles Bus Riders Union is at <http://busridersunion.org/> . A *San Francisco Bay Guardian* article on BART bias can be read at <http://www.sfbg.com/News/33/46/46transbart.html> . For more, go to <http://www.sfbg.com/searchit.html> and search for BART.

Air Quality

AirData: Access to Air Pollution Data *Author:* Environmental Protection Agency *Citation:* Washington, DC: EPA, 2003 *Summary:* Provides local, regional, and national data about all major pollutants. <http://www.epa.gov/air/data/index.html>

Clean Air through Transportation: Challenges in Meeting National Air Quality Standards *Author:* Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Transportation *Citation:* Washington, DC: EPA/USDOT, 1993. *Summary:* Compares the effectiveness of such actions as traffic signal synchronization, rail transit, congestion road pricing, and land-use planning in reducing air pollution. *Quote:* "The market-based mechanisms (smog fees, congestion pricing, gas taxes and increased parking charges) showed the greatest air quality, reducing mobile source emissions from about 4.5 to 7.6 percent. In comparison, the capital-intensive approaches were much less effective. For example, an expansion of the regional rail system, including an extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (five stations) and the Tasman light rail (12 miles), would reduce HC and CO by only 0.86 percent each." <http://americandreamcoalition.org/cleanairtrans.doc>

No Way Back: Why Air Pollution Will Continue to Decline *Author:* Joel Schwartz (<mailto:jschwartz@pacbell.net>) *Citation:* Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2003. *Summary:* Air quality is steadily improving throughout the United States and will continue to improve under existing rules. *Quote:* "With each new model year, motor vehicles start out and stay cleaner than previous models. This means that we will be reaping the benefits of progressively cleaner vehicles for decades to come." http://www.aei.org/docLib/20030804_4.pdf

Land Use

Is Sprawl Inevitable? Lessons from Abroad *Authors:* Dr. Peter Gordon (<mailto:pgordon@almaak.usc.edu>) and Dr. Harry Richardson (<mailto:hrrichard@usc.edu>) *Citation:* Paper presented at the ACSP Conference, Chicago, 1999, 30 pp. Far from being uniquely American, low-density development and increased auto driving is a world-wide trend, even in places that long ago adopted policies that U.S. smart-growth advocates promote here. *Quote:* "Widespread auto ownership with suburban land-use patterns are evolving in countries such as those of Western Europe and Canada where policies are very different, most of them strongly favoring compact development and blatantly pro-transit." http://www-ref.usc.edu/~pgordon/pdf/LESSON_A.pdf

The Sprawl Debate: Let Markets Plan *Authors:* Dr. Peter Gordon

(<mailto:pgordon@almaak.usc.edu>) and Dr. Harry Richardson (<mailto:hrichard@usc.edu>)

Citation: Publius *Summary:* Federal involvement in the sprawl debate is “undesirable, unattainable, and probably unconstitutional.” *Quote:* “The sprawl debate, at its most fundamental level, hinges on whether one believes that people have the right to choose where they want to live, what they want to drive, where they want to shop, and soon—if they are willing to pay the full costs involved.” http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~pgordon/pdf/PUBL_FINL_10_5_01.pdf

Mandated Density: The Blunt Instrument of Smart Growth *Author:* by Kenneth Dueker

(<mailto:duekerk@pdx.edu>) *Citation:* Draft, 2002, 13 pp. *Summary:* Minimum-density zoning

won’t accomplish the objectives of smart growth, such as getting people to drive less or providing more housing choices. *Quote:* “Use of minimum density requirements in commercial areas is having the effect of under-building and diverting development from those areas....

Preliminary results indicate that small lots (less than 5000 sq. ft.) have a depreciating effect on the price of new, detached single-family houses, controlling for other influences.” In brief, people don’t want to live on small lots and this is a special local political problem when such infill depresses the value of existing housing.

<http://www.upa.pdx.edu/CUS/publications/docs/DP02-2.pdf>

Sprawl and Urban Growth *Author:* Dr. Edward Glaeser

<mailto:eglaeser@kuznets.fas.harvard.edu> and Dr. Matthew Kahn <mailto:matt.kahn@tufts.edu>

Citation: Written as a chapter for volume IV of The Handbook of Urban and Regional

Economics (Elsevier, 2004) *Summary:* “Sprawl is not the result of explicit government policies or bad urban planning, but rather the inexorable product of car-based living.” *Quote:* Perhaps the most interesting finding is that “car-based edge cities have much more racial integration than the older public transportation cities than they replaced.”

<http://post.economics.harvard.edu/hier/2003papers/HIER2004.pdf>

Cities, regions, and the decline of transport costs *Author:* Dr. Edward Glaeser

(<mailto:eglaeser@kuznets.fas.harvard.edu>) and Janet E. Kohlhase (<mailto:jkohlhasse@uh.edu>)

Citation: Cambridge, MA: Harvard Institute of Economic Research, 2003, 55 pp. *Summary:*

Over the past century, the cost of transporting manufactured goods has declined by 90 percent.

This has reduced the need for high density cities, but low- to medium-density cities still exist because people still need or prefer face-to-face contact. *Quote:* “There is little reason for cities to be near natural resources or natural transport hubs. Instead, cities should locate where it is pleasant to live or where governments are friendly. We think that the movement away from the hinterland should best be understood as a flight from natural resources towards consumer preferences.” <http://post.economics.harvard.edu/hier/2003papers/HIER2014.pdf>

Collective Private Ownership of American Housing: A Social Revolution in Local

Governance *Author:* Dr. Robert Nelson (<mailto:rn29@umail.umd.edu>) *Citation:* Adopted from a forthcoming book, *Privatizing the Neighborhood*. *Summary:* Protective covenants monitored

by homeowner associations are an attractive alternative to zoning, bringing governance to a very local level and providing homeowners with security about the future of their neighborhoods. Dr. Nelson proposes a method of transitioning from zoning to such covenants. *Quote:* “In the long run municipal zoning in the United States perhaps is best abolished. The existing functions of

zoning perhaps instead should be served through private neighborhood associations.”
<http://www.puaf.umd.edu/faculty/papers/nelson/Privateneighborhoods.pdf>

Additional References Additional papers on land-use and transportation by Peter Gordon, Harry Richardson, and associates at USC are at <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~pgordon/> Additional papers by Harvard economist Edward Glaeser and associates are at <http://post.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/glaeser/papers.html> The Reason Foundation has papers on housing and land use at <http://www.rppi.org/housland.html>. The 1997 Natural Resources Inventory data are available at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/1997/national_results.html . A summary of 1997 NRI data can be downloaded from <http://americandreamcoalition.org/nridata.xls>. Census data on the land devoted to urban areas, urban clusters, and places can be downloaded from <http://americandreamcoalition.org/censusurbanareas.xls> . More detailed data are available at <http://www.census.gov/> .

Housing

Does Sprawl Reduce the Black/White Housing Consumption Gap? *Author:* Dr. Matthew Kahn (<mailto:matt.kahn@tufts.edu>) *Citation:* Housing Policy Debate 12(1): 77-86 *Summary:* Census data show that low-density (“sprawled”) regions are more affordable and have less of a homeownership gap between blacks and whites. *Quote:* “In sprawled areas, black households consume larger units and are more likely to own their homes than black households living in less sprawled areas.” <http://www.mi.vt.edu/Research/PDFs/kahn.pdf>

The Impact of Zoning on Housing Affordability *Authors:* Dr. Edward Glaeser (<mailto:eglaeser@kuznets.fas.harvard.edu>) and Dr. Joseph Gyourko (<mailto:gyourko@wharton.upenn.edu>) *Citation:* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Institute of Economic Research, 2002, 37 pp. *Summary:* The U.S. is not suffering from a nationwide housing affordability crisis, but unaffordable housing in some regions is strongly associated with the level of land-use regulation in those regions. *Quote:* “If policy advocates are interested in reducing housing costs, they would do well to start with zoning reform.” <http://post.economics.harvard.edu/hier/2002papers/HIER1948.pdf>

Smart Growth and Its Effects on Housing Markets: The New Segregation *Author:* Dr. Randall Pozdena (<mailto:pozdena@portland.econw.com>) *Citation:* Portland, OR: QuantEcon, 2002, 34 pp. *Summary:* If Portland’s growth policies had been applied nationwide for the last ten years, more than a quarter-million minority families who now own their own homes would not have been able to afford to buy those homes. *Quote:* “It is apparent both from theory and the available data that restricting the supply of development sites is bound to raise home prices, everything else being equal. Insidiously, the burden of site-supply restrictions will fall disproportionately on poor and minority families.” <http://www.nationalcenter.org/NewSegregation.pdf.pdf>

Smart Growth and Housing Affordability: Evidence from Statewide Planning Laws *Authors:* Dr. Sam Staley (<mailto:Samuelrstaley@aol.com>) and Leonard C. Gilroy (<mailto:leonard.gilroy@reason.org>) *Citation:* Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2001, 59

pp. *Summary*: Assesses the effects of statewide planning on housing prices in Florida, Oregon, and Washington. *Quote*: Housing affordability “eroded in all three states after 1993 while affordability improved for the nation throughout the 1990s.” <http://www.rppi.org/ps287.pdf>

Issues Associated with the Imposition of Inclusionary Zoning in the Portland Metropolitan Area *Author*: Jerald W. Johnson (<mailto:jwj@johnson-gardner.com>) *Citation*: Portland, OR: Hobson Johnson & Associates, 1997, 13 pp. *Summary*: Inclusionary zoning would reduce housing costs for a few low income people at the expense of raising housing costs for everyone else. *Quote*: “The primary intent of inclusionary zoning is to increase the inventory of affordable housing. The more likely scenario is a reduction in overall housing opportunities for low-income residents.” <http://americandreamcoalition.org/inclzoning.pdf>

The Dynamics of Metropolitan Housing Prices *Authors*: Dr. G. Donald Jud (<mailto:juddon@uncg.edu>) and Dr. Daniel T. Winkler (<mailto:winkler@uncg.edu>) *Citation*: *Journal of Real Estate Research*, vol. 23, nos. 1/2 (2002): pp. 29-45 *Summary*: Analyzed the factors that influence housing price changes in 130 metropolitan areas and found that variations between metro areas were correlated with restrictive growth management policies and limitations on land availability. *Quote*: “Local regulatory restrictions impede housing growth, causing a larger appreciation in local housing prices.” <http://business.fullerton.edu/journal/papers/abstract/past/av23n0102/v23n0102a02.htm>

Government Regulation and Changes in the Affordable Housing Stock *Authors*: Dr. C. Tsuriel Somerville (<mailto:tsur.somerville@commerce.ubc.ca>) and Dr. Christopher J. Mayer (<mailto:mayerc@wharton.upenn.edu>) *Citation*: Vancouver, BC: Centre for Urban Economics and Real Estate, University of British Columbia, 2002, 32 pp. *Summary*: Finds that housing regulation leads to shortages in affordable rental housing for low-income families. *Quote*: “The effects of land use regulation are not limited to raising the price of owner-occupied housing and reducing access to homeownership. It also has a clear negative impact on the most vulnerable.” <http://business.fullerton.edu/journal/papers/abstract/past/av23n0102/v23n0102a02.htm>

Additional References The National Association of Home Builders maintains a large amount of data at <http://www.nahb.org/category.aspx?sectionID=113>. Coldwell Banker has its 2002 report on the cost of a standard, 2,200-squarefoot home in hundreds of housing markets at <http://www.coldwellbanker.com/request/CBDocument?QMLclass=HPCI&mode=full>. The Reason Foundation has papers on housing and land use at <http://www.rppi.org/housland.html>. *Smart Growth, Housing Costs, and Homeownership*, by Wendell Cox and Ron Utt, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/SmartGrowth/BG1426.cfm> *An Overview of Research on the Costs of Housing Regulation*, by Steven Hayward (<mailto:Hayward487@aol.com>), <http://americandreamcoalition.org/housingregulation.doc>

Open Space

The “Vanishing Farmland” Myth and the Smart-Growth Agenda *Author*: Sam Staley (<mailto:Samuelrstaley@aol.com>) *Citation*: Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2000, 20 pp. *Summary*: Contrary to popular belief, urban sprawl does not threaten farm productivity. In fact, the amount of land used to grow crops has remained stable while agricultural productivity

continues to increase. *Quote*: “While urbanization does not significantly threaten the nation’s agricultural industry, current public policies tend to encourage the inefficient conversion of land to non-agricultural uses. Several market-oriented policy reforms can address land development issues and promote farmland preservation.” <http://www.rppi.org/urban/pb12.pdf>

Preserving Virginia's Heritage: Approaches for Protecting Open Space - September 1999

Author: Greg Evans *Citation*: Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy, 1999, 36 pp.

Summary: Can the issue of “urban sprawl” be confronted without destroying the jobs that make our economy function and our standard of living one of the highest in the world? That question must be answered over the next few years as policymakers and decision leaders confront the issue, and this paper - originally distributed to all state legislative candidates - outlines some of the available options for preserving undeveloped land while our economy expands.

http://www.thomasjeffersoninst.org/reports_environment.php

Flawed Federal Land-Use Report Encourages Unnecessary Federal Spending *Authors*:

Wendell Cox (<mailto:wcox@publicpurpose.com>) and Ronald Utt (<mailto:ron.utt@heritage.org>)

Citation: Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 2000, 6 pp. *Summary*: The USDA’s Census of Agriculture revealed that USDA’s 1997 Natural Resources Inventory overestimated the rate of development of farms and open space. The inventory was withdrawn and later revisions reduced the estimated rate of development. *Quote*: “Whereas the NRI survey found that Texas had lost 2,105,400 acres of farmland between 1992 and 1997, the *Census of Agriculture* reported that Texas had gained 421,600 acres of farmland during the same period.

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/EnergyandEnvironment/bg1368.cfm>

Preparing for the Storm: Preserving Water Resources with Stormwater Utilities *Author*:

Barrett Walker *Citation*: Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2001, 57 pp. *Summary*: Shows

how cities can use user fees to protect open space while reducing the costs of dealing with stormwater runoff. *Quote*: “Rather than adopting growth boundaries or other regulatory approaches that put broad areas of private land off-limits to development, this study recommends that a market-based approach integrating economic and ecosystem needs could be implemented.”

<http://www.rppi.org/ps275.html>

Smart-Growth Disasters

Portland The Vanishing Automobile and Other Urban Myths: How Smart Growth Will

Harm American Cities A book available from the Thoreau Institute for \$14.95 (plus \$4 shipping), examines the Portland story in detail. Portions of an earlier version of this book can be read on line. *Author*: Randal O’Toole (<mailto:rot@ti.org>) *Citation*: Bandon, OR: Thoreau Institute, 2001, 540 pp. *Summary*: Examines the Portland story in detail, critiques smart growth and urban planning in general, and proposes an American dream alternative. *Quote*: “When smart-growth planners say they want to give people choices, they mean they want to take choices away. When they say they want to relieve congestion, they mean they want to increase congestion so people will be forced to ride transit.” Portions of an earlier version of the book can be downloaded from <http://ti.org/MetroTofC.html>. The book can be ordered from <http://ti.org/form.html>.

The Mythical World of Transit-Oriented Development: Light Rail and the Orenco

Neighborhood Authors: John A. Charles (<mailto:john@cascadepolicy.org>) and Michael Barton

Citation: Portland, OR: Cascade Policy Institute, 2003, 42 pp. *Summary:* Orenco is the Portland area's most famous transit-oriented development. Yet it required many subsidies and the nearby light-rail line is little used by its residents. *Quote:* "In terms of transit use, Orenco Station has largely proven to be a disappointment. Most people who take the train from the Orenco stop arrive their by car and take advantage of the free Park-n-Ride lot."

http://www.cascadepolicy.org/pdf/env/I_124.pdf

Additional References Numerous additional critiques of Portland's planning can be found at

<http://www.cascadepolicy.org/publications.asp> , <http://www.publicpurpose.com/> , and

<http://www.demographia.com/> .

San Jose Demonstrates the Limits of Urban-Growth Boundaries and Urban Rail Author:

Randal O'Toole (<mailto:rot@ti.org>) *Citation:* Los Angeles, CA: Reason Foundation, 2003, 23 pp. *Summary:* San Jose's 1974 urban-growth boundary has more than tripled the cost of housing, while its light-rail cars carry fewer people than San Francisco cable cars. *Quote:* "Light rail is an obsolete technology that doesn't really work anywhere. But it is especially unsuitable in post-automobile urban areas such as San José, where jobs are spread throughout the area rather than concentrated in a downtown." <http://www.rppi.org/ps309.pdf>

Cincinnati OKI 2030 Regional Transportation Plan Author: Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional

Council of Governments *Citation:* Cincinnati, OH: OKI, 2001. *Summary:* Page 16-10 of chapter 16, the community impact assessment, includes the environmental justice analysis that showed that building light rail would reduce low-income and minority accessibility to the region's jobs. *Quote:* "Accessibility declines for all Environmental Justice groups, particularly the minority target zones, over the planning period." <http://www.oki.org/transportation/2030transplan.html>

V. GROWTH CONTROL ADVOCATES

1000 Friends of Minnesota
1000 Friends of New Mexico

Affordable Housing Development Corp.
Alliance for Transportation Research
American Farmland Trust
American Planning Association
American Rivers
Arizona Center for Law in the Public
Interest

Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin
The Biodiversity Project

California Futures Network
Center for Community Change
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Citizens for Sensible Transportation
Colorado Public Research Interest Group
Congress for New Urbanism
The Conservation Fund
Conservation Law Foundation

EcoCity Cleveland
The Enterprise Foundation
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Environmental Defense
Environmental Justice Resource Center
Environmental Law & Policy Center

Fort Worth Alliance for Responsible
Development
Friends of the Earth

Good Jobs First
Governor's Office of Smart Growth, MD
Great American Station Foundation
Grow Smart Rhode Island
Growth Management Leadership Alliance
Gulf Coast Institute

Idaho Smart Growth

Land Trust Alliamce
Liveable Communities Support Center
Local Government Commission

Metropolitan Planning Council
Michigan Environmental Council
Michigan Land Use Institute

National Center for Bicycling and Walking
National Low-Income Housing Coalition
National Neighborhood Coalition
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Jersey Future
North Carolina Smart Growth Alliance

Openlands Project

Perils for Pedestrians
PolicyLink

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Scenic America
Sierra Club
Sierra Club - CO
Sierra Club – DE
Sierra Club - Midwest Office
Sierra Club - NC
Sierra Club – OH
Sierra Club - RI
South Carolina Coastal Conservation
League
Southern Environmental Law Center
Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse
Surface Transportation Policy Project
STPP- New Mexico
SUSTAIN

TransTexas Alliance
The Trust for Public Land

Upstate Forever
Urban Habitat Program
U.S. Public Research Interest Group

Vermont Forum on Sprawl

About the Author

Dr. David Schnare is an attorney and Senior Environmental Specialist in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (Compliance) at the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He is Vice Chair of the Regulatory Initiatives Committee for the American Bar Association. He is also CEO of Schnare and Associates, Inc., a professional corporation providing legal representation, legal and policy analysis and information brokering services.

Bringing his “balanced” environmental views to his community, Dr. Schnare is the Chairman of the Environmental and Land Use Committee of the Occoquan Watershed Coalition, an organization of 143 homeowners associations in western Fairfax County, Virginia. He has also served as a Member of the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council and on the Citizens’ Advisory Council of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). Most recently, he Co-Chaired the Occoquan Watershed Task Force, a group appointed by the Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to make a thorough assessment on the status of the watershed and to make recommendation on how to ensure its continued protection.

Dr. Schnare’s honors include: Law Review at George Mason University School of Law; Inns of Court (GMUSL); Sigma Xi (Science Honorary); Delta Omega Service Award (Public Health Honorary); National Science Foundation Research Fellowship; LEGIS Fellowship; and the U.S. Public Health Fellowship. He was awarded the EPA Bronze Medal on four occasions, the EPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement’s Personal Recognition Award, the Vice President’s Hammer Award and a U.S. Department of Justice Certificate of Commendation. He is an Honorary Member of the Water Quality Association.

Dr. Schnare earned his JD in 1999 from George Mason University School of Law. While attending law school (and working full-time at EPA) he was the Hogan (Environmental) Essay winner and served on the Law Review and the Inns of Court. He graduated Cum Laude (Order of the Coif). He holds his PhD in Environmental Management from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, a Master of Science in Public Health-Environmental Science from the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, and a Bachelor’s Degree from Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa where he majored in chemistry and mathematics.

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“... a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.”

Thomas Jefferson

1801

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