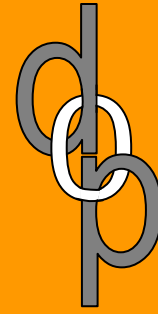


DENSITY



Compact residential development can benefit communities and the environment in the following ways:

- Reducing automobile trips, encouraging biking and walking, and supporting public transit;
- Better supporting the viability of nearby neighborhood retail, thereby further reducing the number of errands that must be run by car;
- Fostering a sense of community and creating safer neighborhoods, because people living at higher densities are more likely to walk, shop locally, and get to know their neighbors;
- Offering the health benefits of a walkable, bike-friendly environment;
- Providing more green space: with denser housing, the same number of units can be clustered in less space on a given site, allowing the remaining land to be reserved for open space as parks, trails, or woods; and
- Providing greater opportunity for mixed-income housing that is within reach of many income levels; such development can be encouraged by offering developers density bonuses.

“Local opposition to proposed high-density housing developments is one of the greatest challenges facing efforts to promote smart growth in the United States. There is strong public support for limiting the excesses of suburban sprawl that cause such problems as environmental degradation, traffic congestion, and loss of open space. Yet, proposals for alternative housing development that could address many of these problems—such as infill development, cluster and mixed-use development, and especially high-density housing (apartments)—often meet intense community opposition.”

ULI/NHMC/AIA Joint Forum on Housing Density, ULI Land Use Policy Forum Report, The Urban Land Institute, Michael Pawlukiewicz and Deborah L. Myerson, February 7, 2002

<http://www.nmhc.org/Content/ServeFile.cfm?FileID=2977>

NOTICE: Staff Commentaries are opinion position papers, and should be considered biased.
Updated 10/24/2005