

# Building Better

A Guide to America's Best New Development Projects



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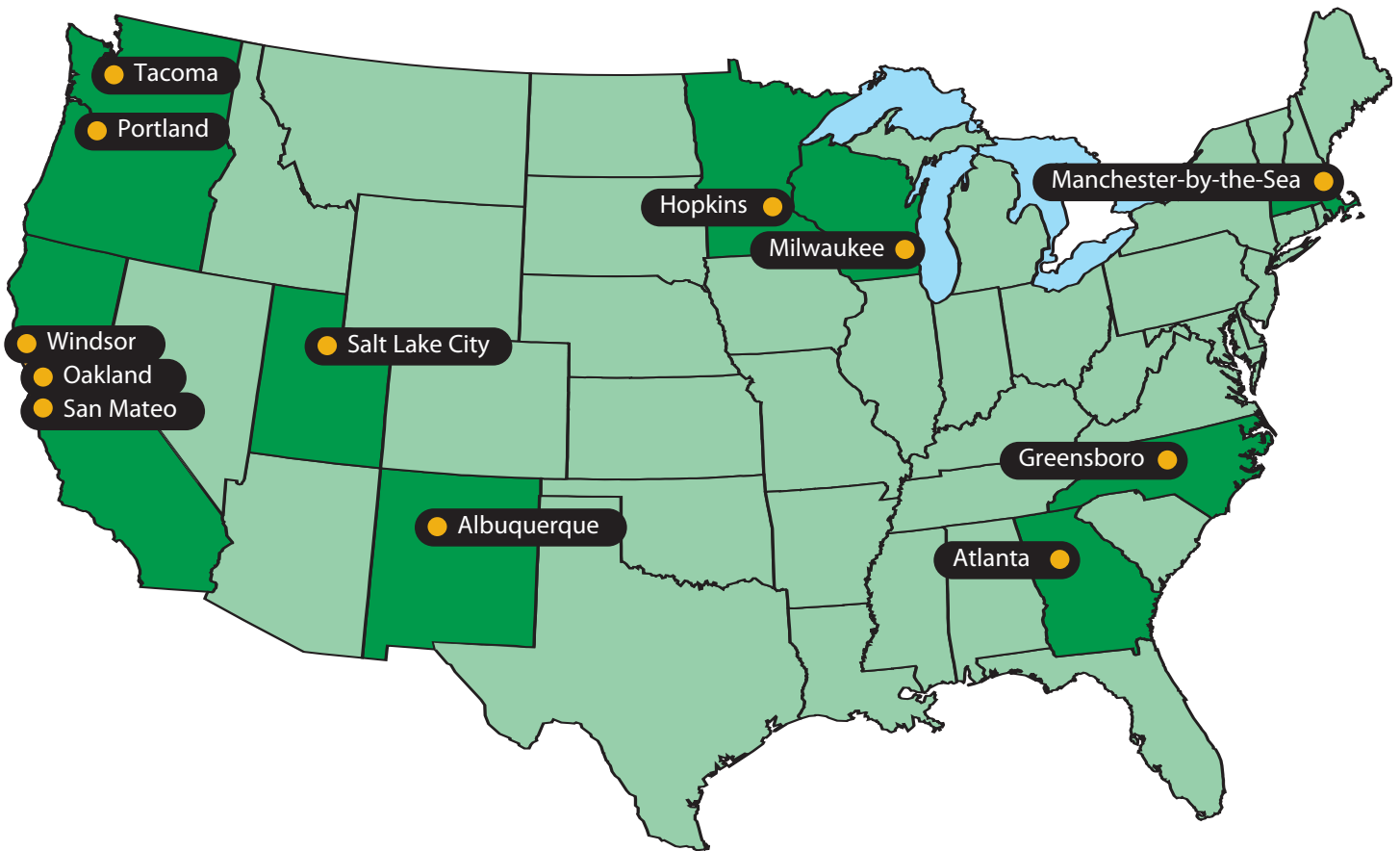
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# Building **Better**

## A Guide to America's Best New Development Projects

This report highlights America's best new development projects, based on their ability to offer transportation choices, revitalize neighborhoods, and preserve local values. It also spotlights some of the movers and shakers—developers, architects, local officials, activists—responsible for making these innovative projects a reality.

### Curbing Sprawl, Building Healthy Communities

Much of the development in the United States today is sprawling, low density, car-dependent “big-box” or “strip-mall” construction, which produces more and more traffic and harms our land, air, and water. The Sierra Club believes there is a better way to build, and in doing so, to produce healthy neighborhoods, and livable communities.

While the Sierra Club opposes poorly planned, sprawling development, built on natural areas and farmland, we support quality investment in areas that already have a history of development to enhance communities and the environment. By reinvesting in existing neighborhoods and creating more walkable, transit accessible places to live and work, a select subset of the nation's development leaders are raising the bar for neighborhood design. By embracing conservation, green building techniques, and affordable housing, and by building on the assets we already have, these developments offer a path to a more sustainable future.

### “Good Development” Criteria

We had several criteria for selecting America's best new development projects. Top candidates had to:

- Offer a range of transportation choices, including walking, biking, and public transportation;
- Redevelop existing areas, rather than developing natural areas, working farmland, or wetlands;
- Locate homes, retail shops, and offices close to each other;
- Preserve existing community assets, by re-using older buildings and protecting rivers, woodlands, and farms;
- Minimize stormwater pollution and handle runoff in an environmentally responsible manner; and,
- Be the product of meaningful input by local citizens and reflect a broad set of local values.

We also considered the use of “green building” design and housing affordability in compiling our list of the best new development.

### Building Large and Small

We arrived at a diverse list of successful projects, from cities large and small, to suburbs, to small towns in each corner of the nation. They involve economically challenged areas like Fruitvale in Oakland and Highland Park in Milwaukee, as well as well-off areas like Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts.

We included massive projects like Atlantic Station in Atlanta, which encompasses 138 acres and includes 12 million square feet of retail, office, residential and hotel, and by contrast, smaller scale projects like 66 residential homes and an industrial building in Hopkins, Minnesota.



BAY MEADOWS LAND COMPANY

**The layout of Bay Meadows** in San Mateo, California. More on page 12.

ERIC OLSON



**A light-rail stop** in Tacoma, Washington. More on page 4.



These model development projects include all manner of housing: single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, and live-work units. They supply low and moderate income housing, public housing, and high-end market rate housing. Retail offerings include large, established department stores, restaurants, and shops, as well as local, independent boutiques and eateries.

With leadership and commitment, as well as neighborhood support, quality redevelopment can be successful in our towns, cities, and our older suburban areas.

## The Players

None of these innovative projects would have happened without the vision and determination of key individuals and organizations. In some cases, the champions were developers like Orrin Thiessen in Windsor, California; Rob Dickson in Albuquerque; and Robert “Nate” Bowman in Greensboro, North Carolina. Each of these developers decided to buck the trend of sprawl. In other cases, the champions of redevelopment were non-profit or public sector advocates like the Unity Council in Oakland, the Housing Authority, City of Milwaukee, and the Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency. Yet others who made these projects happen include the architects, local business leaders, and political leaders. While we have tried to highlight key individuals or organizations for each case study, in each of these examples, it took a host of people working together to make the projects succeed.

We hope these projects and their champions will inspire other communities, developers, citizens and public officials across the country.



BECKY GILLETTE

**A Mississippi resident** stands on the front steps of a house swept away by Hurricane Katrina in Biloxi’s D’Iberville neighborhood.

## Lessons for the Gulf Coast

Restoring the communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina will require the largest rebuilding effort in our nation’s history. The winning projects in this report hold valuable lessons for the Gulf Coast as well. New Orleans, where the storm exposed the fact that thousands of people do not have cars, offers the perfect chance to design neighborhoods to provide many transportation choices. Good design can also make it possible to house people and businesses without destroying the wetlands that are vital for flood protection. Probably the most important lesson is that the best new development projects consistently require strong input from local citizens and are designed to enhance community values, whether that means ensuring affordability or preserving the historic character of the neighborhood.

While plans for rebuilding are still unfolding, there is some good news. In October, Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour invited over 100 of the nation’s top architects, designers, and planners—led by “new urbanism” visionary Andres Duany—to brainstorm with local officials and citizens about options for rebuilding ravaged towns. They offered ideas for downsizing big-box stores, designing walkable communities, and developing high quality and affordable housing. Hopefully, their ideas will inspire state and community leaders to not just rebuild, but to rebuild smarter and better.

BREWERY BLOCKS



**Portland,** Oregon’s Pearl District is a former industrial area that has been redeveloped into a thriving neighborhood.

# WASHINGTON Tacoma



University of  
Washington,  
Tacoma

**D**owntown Tacoma is booming, in large part due to the University of Washington system investing in this historic area for its new campus rather than choosing a suburban location. In 1997, the University of Washington, Tacoma, opened at 1900 Commerce Street in a former warehouse. Now, in 2005, the growing campus boasts 2,000 students studying in a part of Tacoma that had only twenty years before been an empty, blighted, and abandoned former warehouse district.

## History and Historic Preservation

This section of Tacoma, the “Warehouse District,” had been built at the turn of the 20th Century. Located along Commencement Bay of the Puget Sound and served by the Northern Pacific Railroad, Tacoma became a thriving commercial center.

Large, sturdy brick warehouses were constructed along the rail line and close to the Bay. Tacoma’s passenger rail station—an architectural gem—Union Station, was built in 1911 in the same area as the warehouses, at the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

By the late 20th century, the area had become dilapidated and devoid of people or economic activity. Some proposed leveling the area, but local businesspeople and Pierce County’s Director of Economic Development in 1986, Ryan Petty, began promoting the idea of a university in Tacoma.<sup>1</sup> While many in the community thought it would be too much trouble and expense to reno-

vate, this visionary group—especially the downtown businesses—teamed up with state legislators and other leaders to promote the idea of re-using the warehouses for a new state university.

In the meantime, Union Station, which had fallen into disrepair, was purchased by the city for \$1, and renovated to become part of the federal courthouse. A new state history museum was also approved to be constructed adjacent to the train depot. As an incentive to the state to locate a campus downtown, the business community put up \$1 million toward redevelopment at the same time they started buying options on the warehouse properties to protect them for a campus.

The campus core consists of four renovated warehouses and the former Snoqualmie Falls Power Company’s transformer house, which has been converted into the campus library. The campus plan and the renovations of the Power Company house and warehouses, designed by LMN Architects of Seattle, and architect Charles Moore, earned awards

from the American Institute of Architects.<sup>2</sup>

These historic buildings have kept the old timbers and brick exposed, while newer buildings are being constructed in brick, with attention toward blending in with the historic warehouses that anchor the campus' architecture.

## Bringing in the Bustle— Good Planning, Walking, and Light Rail

Good planning and design can have a tremendous effect on the success or failure of a neighborhood. In the case of the University of Washington, Tacoma, the design has contributed toward a thriving area of activity in the streets around campus. There is a seamless transition between campus and the city, and the university even leases out commercial space from the warehouses along Pacific Avenue, which faces Union Station, the State History Museum, and the light rail stop.

Locating retail, coffee shops, eateries and the University bookstore in this corridor has livened up the street considerably with pedestrians. Several other restaurants and pubs are located on the campus, with one restaurant renovating a historic building on campus on its own.

With the University bringing 2,000 students, plus new faculty and staff to the campus, and up to 10,000 students in 10 years, it is adding a large customer base to Tacoma.<sup>3</sup> New condos have been constructed in recent years in close proximity to the school, and several arts and cultural attractions, including Dale Chihuly's Museum of Glass, have opened in this district.

The campus and surrounding areas have become a bustling addition to Tacoma, which only adds to the demand for retail, hotels, housing, and further redevelopment. It is unrecognizable from the empty, crime-filled, and blighted district of twenty years ago.

In 2003, Sound Transit's 1.6 mile Light Rail line opened. It travels in front of the campus, through the warehouse district, and connects with Sound Transit's commuter rail line. Already, it is exceeding the ridership that was projected in 2010.<sup>4</sup> Significant pedestrian improvements were made during the process, such as landscaping medians, utility relocation, new sidewalks, benches, trees, lighting, and shelters. This transit connection makes the University easily accessible from commuter rail as well as from other parts of downtown Tacoma.

## Taking A Chance

Establishing a new campus in downtown Tacoma was an example of local leaders—primarily businesspeople—getting fed up with an eyesore at the city's gateway, and taking initiative to create a vision, put their own resources into that idea, and then working relentlessly to sell the idea to state and local officials and university administrators.

As Bliss Moore, Chair of the Sierra Club's Tacoma area (Tatoosh) Group explains: "The revitalization of downtown Tacoma over the last 15 years shows how a city can turn itself around. The visionary leadership from public officials, the business community and community at-large have made the proverbial silk purse out of a sow's ear. The transportation system touts the first modern light rail system in the region, carrying employers, employees, visitors, and students to the heart of Tacoma from a well-planned major transportation hub on the edge of town just off the I-5 Interstate. This hub accommodates interstate, regional, and local trains and buses with free public parking."<sup>5</sup>

Public institutions like universities have, in the past, often contributed to sprawl, but increasingly, public entities are beginning to see the multiple benefits of reinvesting in existing urban areas. The partnership between businesses, local and state government, and the University of Washington has created a better Tacoma, reduced crime, increased economic activity, protected historically significant buildings, and created an area where it is easy to walk and use public transportation.



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# OREGON Portland



## The Pearl District

SCOTT CHAPMAN

**T**he Pearl District has historically been an industrial area of Portland, Oregon. Today, through redevelopment efforts, this district has been converted into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of housing units, shops, and businesses. Many of the buildings are renovated warehouses and factories that long went abandoned until two decades ago. During the 1980s, the Pearl District slowly became a popular destination for artists who were attracted to the abundance of loft space and affordable rent, and proximity to downtown. By the 1990s, private investors were expressing interest in the older warehouses, and soon restaurants and other entertainment venues were moving into the area.

In urban planning circles, Portland has emerged as a model city, at the forefront of creating a vibrant, quality urban environment, and the Pearl District only bolsters its reputation. Jill Fuglister, Executive Director of the Coalition for a Livable Future describes the area: “The Pearl District is a great example of how we can create a marketable, compact, green neighborhood in an already developed area, preserving greenfields and preventing sprawl in other parts of the metro region. Going forward, we will need to make sure that middle and lower income families will always have a place in the Pearl District.”<sup>1</sup>

## Attractive Housing Options

Currently there is a mix of more than 1,700 condominiums, townhouses, and apartments built since redevelopment efforts began in the area in the 1990s and over 1,500 new housing units planned for the district in the coming years.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, the developments include a mix of incomes, with public investment from the Portland Development Council contributing to a stock of affordable housing units. Over six multi-story apartment buildings, with over 800 affordable units, have been constructed to maintain affordability in the District as well as to balance out the rapid redevelopment underway with a focus on market rate housing.<sup>3</sup>

For now, the demographics of the Pearl District are mostly adults and young couples, however, slowly families are settling into the area, with a few

area schools nearby. There is housing designated for seniors, too, contributing to a more diverse neighborhood. For example, REACH Community Development, a local affordable housing provider recently completed building Station Place, a “green” tower of 176 one and two bedroom apartment units for 55-plus individuals, all with incomes at or 30, 50, or 80 percent below median income.<sup>4</sup>

## Creating a Pedestrian Environment

The first major redevelopment project within the Pearl District began in 1997 when Hoyt Street Properties bought a former 34-acre rail yard, encompassing 30 blocks.<sup>5</sup> Hoyt Street Developers collaborated with the Portland Development



Commission to relocate a highway ramp that would have divided the neighborhood. Relocation of the ramp also helped to encourage transportation options other than cars in the area, making it a more walkable neighborhood. The rail yard has been transformed into a mixed-use neighborhood with nine different apartment and condominium buildings, some with retail space on the ground level.

Multiple transportation options exist for individuals traveling to or within the Pearl District. TriMet, the regional transit authority, offers free fares to ride light rail or bus within a designated downtown boundary, called “fareless square.” This applies to public transportation within some areas of the Pearl District, since part of it overlaps with the downtown zone. In addition, the City of Portland runs a modern streetcar line through the fareless square component of the Pearl District. The District is also extremely conducive to pedestrians, and free walking maps of the neighborhood are available at most shops within the area.

The Pearl District is also home to parks. Jamison Square Park is popular for both residents and those who live elsewhere. Tanner Springs Park celebrated its grand opening in August 2005, and blends the industrial character of the area with natural features. Designed with community input, the park has a wall made of railroad steel, cobblestone paths, and will have a stream running through it. Two additional parks are planned for construction in the Pearl District. Recreational space along the Willamette River is easily accessible from the District as well, with a bridge connecting the Pearl District to the other side of the river in the planning phase.

## Saving History, Saving Energy

In 2000, another large-scale redevelopment project in the Pearl District began on the site of a former five-block brewery, called the Brewery Blocks. Gerding/Edlen Development Company bought the historic brew houses, which are being converted into approximately 1.7 million square feet of retail and office space, and new residential buildings that are under construction nearby. Homeownership opportunities in the Brewery Blocks range from approximately \$200,000 to over \$1 million. Both the historic and new buildings are incorporating environmentally friendly techniques that will provide long-term savings as well as conserve energy. For instance, during the construction phase of the

Brewery Blocks, a recycling program diverted 96 percent of construction waste from going to landfills.<sup>6</sup> The latest green energy technology, including windows, lighting, insulation, and solar power are projected to save between 20 and 30 percent of energy costs per year. It is projected that after three years, the extra expenses to buy the “green” materials will be offset by the savings in energy.

Other historic buildings have been rehabilitated in the Pearl District using green building technology. The Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center, which is an office building located in the Pearl District, is a gold-level certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building.<sup>7</sup> Its eco-roof will reduce storm water runoff by filtering and absorbing rainwater, and also reduce the urban heat island effect.



SCOTT CHAPMAN

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# Windsor<sup>CALIFORNIA</sup>



## Town Green Village Project

Guided by concepts of Smart Growth and New Urbanism, the Town of Windsor, in collaboration with a private developer, Orrin Thiessen and Town Green Enterprises, has engaged in a \$120 million redevelopment project on 10 acres of property to create a new downtown. The new downtown community, called “Town Green Village Project,” began in 2001, and is now in the last phases of development. Phases 1 through 6 of the redevelopment are either complete or nearly complete. The final, seventh, phase is still in the planning stage. A four-acre plaza, serving as a town green for public use, is the focal point for the multiple projects that are taking place in the area.

### A New “Old Downtown”

This development is also referred to as “Old Downtown” because, like other new urbanism projects, its premise is a new community design based on traditional neighborhoods and town centers of the past.

Thiessen’s buildings are clustered around the focal point of a town green and present a mix of uses, primarily residential, retail, and commercial. The building exteriors are designed based on historic photos of the region.<sup>1</sup> Most buildings are three stories, and offer retail and commercial space on the ground floors, with condominiums and apartments on the top floors. One building is designed for disabled and senior residents. As of April 2004, Thiessen’s condos range from \$190,000 to \$439,000 depending on their size and location, however, most are selling in the \$300s. The project includes 250 new residences and 80 to 90 businesses surrounding the plaza.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the City of Windsor has worked with non-profit developers, Workforce Housing Associates, and Burbank Housing Development Corporation, to build

affordable housing units throughout Windsor, many near the green.<sup>3</sup> To enhance the small-town feel of old downtown Windsor, Thiessen has excluded chain stores from moving into any of the retail space. A number of restaurants, clothing, specialty food, music, book stores, and services occupy the store fronts, and—echoing an earlier era—some of the owners live above their businesses.<sup>4</sup>

### Transportation Alternatives

Old Downtown is located on an existing rail line. A referendum in 2006 will determine whether commuter rail will come to Windsor and the region. If passed, commuter rail would use the tracks that follow Route 101, and run through Sonoma County into the San Francisco Bay area. A future intermodal center could be built in Windsor to serve commuter rail, and include a regional bus station, a park and ride facility, and that would enhance carpooling opportunities. Today, local and regional buses serve as the public transportation mode for Windsor.

## Town Leadership and Developer Collaboration

Town officials in Windsor have clearly expressed their desire to preserve natural areas, which was a key reason they turned toward this project's Smart Growth and New Urbanist design concepts. Thiessen specializes in mixed-use projects and downtown redevelopment. He claims, "I can build on 10 acres what would probably require 50 acres if you developed it using a traditional sprawl model with tract homes and shopping centers."<sup>5</sup> This is Thiessen's focus because he notices the popular trend for people who want to live in places that have real downtowns, not "impersonal subdivisions" where "nobody knows their neighbors and you have to get into your car to do anything at all."<sup>6</sup> This is integral to the Village Green as well as the Town of Windsor's overall vision for their community, which contributed partial funding to build and improve infrastructure and construct the green. Windsor's ability to fund the improvements was made possible using open space monies.<sup>7</sup> The Green also helps bring the natural and built environment together. A linear park will serve as a buffer between the freeway and the town, and create recreational opportunities.

## Creating a Better Environment

At the final city council hearing for the seventh phase of the project, the Sierra Club Sonoma Group urged the council to approve the project and countered claims that the project should be reduced in size. The seventh phase, which is located just off downtown, will provide local residents with much needed retail, and will create a mixed-use feel. This is one of the only times the Sierra Club has endorsed a development project like this in Sonoma County.<sup>8</sup>

**"I can build on 10 acres what would probably require 50 acres if you developed it using a traditional sprawl model..."**

—Orrin Thiessen, developer



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# Oakland

CALIFORNIA

## Fruitvale Transit Village Project



**L**ocated in the Fruitvale neighborhood in Oakland, California, this redevelopment—which opened in March 2005—sits on a nine acre parcel that was previously a parking lot serving the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station.

### A Community Demands Better

Plans to improve this area initially began in 1991, after BART proposed to increase auto capacity to Fruitvale Station by converting the parking lot into a multiple-level parking structure. Fruitvale community members—led by activists from the nonprofit Unity Council local development corporation—opposed the proposal as it would have exacerbated traffic and pollution problems in the neighborhood, as well as create a greater barrier between residents and the transit station.

Recognizing that the local BART station was an asset to revitalize and that there was an opportunity to redevelop the neighborhood and economy, the Unity Council took the lead engaging local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to work toward a better plan. The Unity Council is an organization that for four decades has advocated for the Fruitvale neighborhood and its largely Latino,

low-income population on economic and environmental justice issues. In this case, the Unity Council worked with BART and the City of Oakland to facilitate community meetings; the local bus system (AC—or Alameda/Contra Costa—Transit) also became a partner in the discussions, since bus is the essential mode of public transportation for many of the local residents. These meetings led to the creation of a community plan for redevelopment that addresses the needs and concerns of the Fruitvale community in a successful example of Environmental Justice.

### Before and After

In stark contrast to the acres of parking lot that existed, the result of the community-based planning process is an award winning, mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD). The Fruitvale Transit Village consists of 47 housing units, 40,000

square feet of retail and restaurant space, plus a library, a child care facility, and a health clinic, 114,510 square feet of office space, and two parking garages.<sup>1</sup> An important consideration was given to making the area unique and local, which is reflected in its retail. Only twenty percent of Fruitvale Transit Village's retail is open to national chains, in contrast to so many new developments that offer the same retail fare across the nation.

The 47 housing units help address a shortage of quality housing in the Fruitvale neighborhood area. Ten of the 47 units are designated affordable, while the others are rented at market rate.<sup>2</sup> Some are loft units, however, many have been designed specifically for families. The housing is maintained and managed by the Unity Council, which has a long history and strong track record of housing successes.

## Innovative Bicycle and Pedestrian Leadership

Emphasis on pedestrian activity is central to the village, with the community all within walking distance of the BART station. A pedestrian plaza, named Independence Boulevard, runs through the neighborhood, bringing the BART Station and nearby business district together. Restaurants, retail stores, and public art contribute to an attractive streetscape that lines Independence Boulevard. This pedestrian plaza also serves as a public space that hosts a market, neighborhood festivals, and other community-wide events. The Fruitvale community is also served by a dozen AC Transit bus routes, and plans for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on nearby International Boulevard are underway.

Although there are two parking garages on the outskirts of the village, the City of Oakland passed a zoning ordinance to ban construction of additional automobile parking within the boundaries of the Village in order to "maintain the pedestrian-oriented character of the Transit Village."<sup>3</sup> Over 6,000 passengers use the Fruitvale BART station everyday,<sup>4</sup> and the addition of the Fruitvale Bike Station has encouraged bicycling as an attractive way for commuters and local residents to travel into and within the Transit Village. The bike station is a free, indoor bike storage facility for over 230 bikes, which is supervised during commuter hours. Additionally, the bike station, run by an area bike shop, has on-site retail and repair facilities and stresses local youth employment. The Fruitvale BART station is the second largest bike station in the nation,<sup>5</sup> and the only BART station in the system that offers such bike services.

As the Oakland City Council President, Ignacio De La Fuente noted, "The Fruitvale Transit Village was designed to be on the cutting edge of smart growth projects that get people out of their cars and onto alternative forms of transportation. With the completion of the bike station, the last piece will be in place."<sup>6</sup>

## A Model for Others to Follow

This redevelopment at Fruitvale demonstrates the value of community advocacy in local transportation and land use planning. Instead of large scale parking garages surrounding the BART station, the community now enjoys a lively town center that serves residents and encourages bike, pedestrian, and public transportation use. It should be a model for multi-modal development and redevelopment around transit in existing neighborhoods throughout the nation.



BART

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# San Mateo CALIFORNIA

## Bay Meadows



BAY MEADOWS LAND COMPANY

**B**ay Meadows is an ambitious two-part development that contains housing, office, and retail in San Mateo, California—a city of 96,000 between San Jose and San Francisco. The plan for Phase I was adopted in 1997, and the project was built several years later. Now, in 2005, the second phase is going through the local planning process. These sites are convenient to rail and reflect “New Urbanist” design in a region that is experiencing significant growth.

### Bay Meadows I

The first phase of construction—built on a practice horseracing track adjacent to the actual racetrack which is slated for redevelopment as part of Phase II—is a thriving residential, office, and retail community.

This mixed-use redevelopment includes 734 housing units: 579 condominiums, 98 townhomes, 28 single-family homes, and 27 small lot single-family homes. Ten percent of the housing is moderately priced. The retail component is 98,000 square feet and includes a Whole Foods grocery store, two restaurants, several other eateries and coffee shops, a health club, and small stores. The nearly 750,000 square feet of office space is almost all the headquarters of Franklin Templeton, a mutual fund company that employs 1,247 people at this location.<sup>1</sup> There is still room for the office component

to expand by another 340,000 square feet, and a site originally designated for a hotel is likely to instead become a multifamily housing use. The last remaining space in Bay Meadows I, which was slated for a restaurant, is expected instead to become a public use as the site of the City’s new police station.

### Commuter Rail

All of Bay Meadows I is approximately within a half mile walking distance of the Hillsdale commuter rail station, although due to the configuration of the site, some of the areas are a longer walk, 15 to 20 minutes, rather than the typical 8 to 10 minutes to walk to the station. While the development is close to rail, there is recognition that walking routes to the station could have been done more conveniently. There is hope that even better walking and bike paths will be incorporated into



the development in the future.

The Caltrain “Baby Bullet” commuter rail line, which runs between San Jose and San Francisco, stops at both the Hillsdale station and the Hayward Park station. The proposed Bay Meadows II will be located within the 600 acres that lies between the two stations. In fact, the Hillsdale station will be relocated, which will serve the redevelopment even better, and will help improve rail service by adding sidetracks to help express trains bypass slower trains. The “Baby Bullet” service began its commute hour express service in 2004, and now includes 11 morning and 11 evening weekday trips. The trains travel up to 79 miles per hour, and make the trip between San Jose and San Francisco in less than an hour.

This train service makes housing at Bay Meadows extremely popular, as residents can commute easily and efficiently to either major city—indeed it is an ideal commute for couples who each work in one of the cities. Stephanie Schaaf and Rafael Reyes are one such San Mateo couple. Stephanie explains their situation: “With the Baby Bullet train service, San Mateo is convenient for us. In the morning, I head off to San Jose, while Rafael commutes to San Francisco. We can only imagine that couples like us will find Bay Meadows II, with its proposed stores, and its short walk to the train, to be an ideal place to live in the future.”<sup>2</sup>

## Bay Meadows II

In order to meet the Transportation Demand Management requirements, this project depends upon commuter rail. If this proposed development were auto oriented rather than transit oriented, it would fail to meet the planning and zoning regulations.

Bay Meadows II will be built upon 83 acres that is currently a horseracing track. This site is next to Bay Meadows I, and located between the Hillsdale and Hayward Park commuter rail stations.

There will be between 1,000 and 1,500 housing units, including a mix of condominiums, townhomes and single family. Ten percent of these housing units will be affordable, moderately priced dwelling units.

Like Phase I, this project will be a “New Urbanist” design with a mix of uses and an emphasis on creating a sense of place and community, rather than a generic development. The walkability of Bay Meadows II to the train station is exceptional, with eighty percent of the site within a quarter mile of the station, and all of it within a half mile.

The office portion of the project will include

between a million and 1.5 million square feet, while retail at the site is slated at 150,000 square feet. This retail space will be located on a three-block Main Street area, with traditional design of stores at ground-level and housing above. The plan also includes significant green space with 15 acres of parkland.

As of this report’s press time, Bay Meadows II has not yet been formally approved, but it is anticipated. Some of the details that—from an environmental, smart growth perspective—are important for local officials to approve include: building the full 1,500 housing units, ensuring that the parkland will remain at 15 acres, creating more and better pedestrian and bicycle connections (especially those linking Phase I and Phase II of the development), and incorporating more sustainable development methods and efforts to protect water quality.

## Forward-looking Design and Planning by Peter Calthorpe

Bay Meadows I and II reflect the design of Peter Calthorpe, one of the nation’s leading New Urbanist architects. Calthorpe is a founder and the first Board President of the Congress for New Urbanism, which promotes walkability, mixed uses, and traditional neighborhood design for new development projects. Calthorpe has written and lectured extensively on the subject of urban design, and creating more sustainable communities.

Peter Calthorpe has led the way to better community design among architects in the last quarter century, and is leading the way on the Bay Meadows project.



BAY MEADOWS LAND COMPANY

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# Salt Lake City<sup>UTAH</sup>

## Central Business District Extension Project and Gateway Area



**S**alt Lake City has enjoyed—and continues to enjoy—significant revitalization. Part of the City's redevelopment efforts were sparked by the anticipation of the 2002 Winter Olympics, but now, three years later, Salt Lake City continues on a path of smarter growth.

Two areas that have undergone a transformation, and continue to redevelop, are the Central Business District—which is getting extended—and the Gateway area.

### Visionary Leadership

Within the last decade, Salt Lake City has become a leader at creating a vibrant, transit-oriented, livable city. The City opened TRAX, its light rail system, in December 1999, and ridership surpassed all expectations. The Federal Transit Administration estimated that ridership would be 14,000 per day in 2020, but in 1999, there were already 20,000 daily riders on the North-South light rail line.<sup>1</sup> TRAX has been so popular that in 2000, voters approved a tax increase to extend light rail. The City's leadership, non-profit community, business leaders, and environmentalists have promoted redevelopment within Salt Lake City, and a strong public transportation network in order to create a more thriving city.

Several players at the local and state level have made this transformation possible. Envision Utah is a group of business and political leaders, formed in large part by Bob Grow, a local businessman, in 1998. Envision Utah promoted a transparent planning process for the greater Salt Lake City area that looked at different patterns of urban growth, and

brought key leaders into the process. Ultimately, the plans that received the most consensus were: 1) those that promoted light rail and commuter rail over roads; 2) those that concentrated development around transit; and 3) those that would redevelop existing urban areas. This process helped establish a blueprint for how the region could best chart a course for the future.

Mayor Rocky Anderson and the Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency also provided strong leadership and helped focus efforts on revitalizing and contributing toward Salt Lake City's renaissance. The Church of Latter Day Saints is also investing in the city's downtown to the tune of at least \$500 million to redevelop a blighted mall in the Central Business District.

### Central Business District: An Improved Downtown

Many players, including the Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency, sought an expansion of the Central Business District (CBD). This area, consid-

ered the “downtown” of Salt Lake City, is home to many of the arts and cultural centers of the region, it is where many office buildings are located, and it is home to the convention center and hotels. The Central Business District is also an area that is home to the Church of Latter Day Saints, and the downtown also has retail and department stores.

Traditionally, however, the CBD has not included housing. To remedy this, the Redevelopment Agency, among others, has been working to add housing to the downtown mix. These efforts are leading to new housing construction as well as warehouse conversions downtown, and it is helping create a more lively area in Salt Lake City. Adding housing in the CBD means that residents can live, work, and play all within a short radius that is easily accessible by walking or light rail. In this decade, over 2,000 new housing units are expected to be added to downtown—that’s on top of 960 units that were added in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Over 10,000 residents will be living in the Central Business District by 2010.<sup>3</sup> The Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City has been focusing low-interest loans on the CBD for housing, and has a specific program for converting warehouses to housing. The arrival of housing in the CBD creates more business for local restaurants and retailers, and reduces the need of residents to drive, lessening traffic and air pollution.

## Gateway Area: From Warehouses to Urban, Transit Community

A few blocks from the Central Business District is the 650 acre Gateway Project Area. The Gateway Area is becoming a dense, transit-oriented community, anchored by the new Multimodal Hub. This transit station is on the south side of the Gateway district. Today it serves as a station for buses and Amtrak trains, but it will soon also be a station on the TRAX light rail system, as well as for the new commuter rail line, which broke ground in August 2005. The Multimodal Hub was once the site of the “Am-shack”—a storage facility for Amtrak trains, but now the new facility has many transportation functions, connecting commuters to bus, light rail, inter-city rail, and commuter rail.

For generations, the Gateway area, which is adjacent to Salt Lake City’s downtown, was a railyard, warehouse, and industrial area. In recent years, however, the area has been in significant decline. The area was considered a “brownfield” site, with con-

taminants from oil, gas, and creosote, and including pollutants like barium, lead, chromium, selenium and arsenic. The Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency worked with the federal Environmental Protection Agency and developers to alleviate these contaminants and redevelop the site.

After receiving federal Economic Development Administration grants, and federal Housing and Urban Development grants, the local Redevelopment Agency was able to help assemble properties for redevelopment.

Today, the redevelopment includes a refurbished, historic Union Pacific Train Depot, which includes retail; a public plaza celebrating the 2002 Olympics; restaurants, culture and entertainment venues—including an IMAX theater and a 12-screen movie multiplex—and a significant mix of uses. There are 650,000 square feet of office and 650,000 square feet of retail space in the Gateway development. It includes 350 apartments and 150 condominiums. Among these residential units, 135 are affordable housing. Other investments in the district include new curbs, gutters, and sidewalks and improvements to create an attractive streetscape.

During the course of the project, concerns were raised about the project potentially drawing department stores away from Main Street. In response to these concerns, several disincentives were built into the leasing of the Gateway’s retail space to discourage leasing to Main Street stores.

## A Bright Future

Salt Lake City has established priorities and invested in initiatives to create a strong, transit-oriented urban core and a healthy mix of offices, retail, and housing. The City has shown real leadership by making Salt Lake City a livable place.



MARC HEILSON

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# Albuquerque

NEW MEXICO



## East Downtown (EDO) Redevelopment Project

MOULLE &amp; POLYZOIS ARCHITECTS &amp; URBANISTS

### A New, Lively Corridor Again

Many decades ago, the area around Broadway and Central Avenues in Albuquerque was a bustling district, adjacent to the railyard and teeming with activity. Central Avenue, the legendary Route 66, was the main road to California before the interstates came through. Those days had long ago passed this corner of Albuquerque by, and the district had fallen into a strip of budget hotels, odd shops and the vacant buildings of the Old Albuquerque High School campus. But now, Broadway and Central are roaring back, thanks to some visionary leadership and exciting redevelopment.

The redevelopment of the Old Albuquerque High School campus is at the heart of this ambitious project. This area is a short walk from Albuquerque's downtown and only two blocks from the Alvarado Transportation Center. The historic Old Albuquerque High School buildings have been converted to loft-style apartments, condos, and live-work spaces. The original high school building dates to 1914, and several other buildings on its campus were constructed during the New Deal. The school closed in 1974, and historic preservationists are pleased with the adaptation of these grand, brick buildings into productive use.

### Transit-oriented

The Alvarado Transportation Center is a hub of transit activity with the "Rail Runner"—New Mexico's new commuter rail line—opening in the fall of 2005, and Albuquerque's planned new light rail system on its way. The light rail will intersect with the Rail Runner Commuter Rail at Alvarado Center, where a new Amtrak station and Greyhound bus depot are being built. Alvarado Center is the hub for ABQRide, Albuquerque's bus system. Service along Central Avenue, through EDO, includes "Rapid Ride" buses, articulated and diesel-electric hybrid powered, that are equipped with red-light signal changing equipment to give priority and shorten bus rides by 25 percent.

### Urban Redevelopment

There is significant underused urban space throughout the Broadway and Central corridor, making it ideal for redevelopment. For years, these empty streets have seen only limited economic activity, and there have been very few housing opportunities. Now, with infill development including housing, retail and other economic uses, the area is coming alive. Its proximity to downtown Albuquerque creates a strong pedestrian environment. In addition to more expensive loft housing, there will be mixed-income and affordable housing. More new retail and office space will soon be available as well.

## Vision and Community Involvement

In September 2003, Albuquerque put together a five-day planning process for community members and other stakeholders to weigh in with their ideas for the future of the East Downtown area. Several of these meetings were attended by more than 100 to 150 citizens. This process resulted in a common vision for the district, which the Broadway and Central Corridors Association then incorporated into a Master Plan for the area. This was used to develop an Urban Conservation Overlay Zone for the area to enable developers to plan new development that would be what the city and community desired. Part of the strength in redeveloping the East Downtown area has been the involvement and shared vision of stakeholders, making the EDO project as much a product of the community as that of developers.

City Councilor, Eric Griego, discussed the plan for East Downtown: “I think the master plan will promote a dynamic corridor and really encourage redevelopment citywide. I think we will hear from people saying this area is really friendly to pedestrians and local transit ... it’s going to bring people back to live in the heart of the city.”<sup>1</sup>

## Historic Preservation

The East Downtown area is surrounded by the Huning-Highland historic district. Its redevelopment is occurring with a strong effort toward preserving and reusing buildings in a way that enhances the streetscape and creates a welcoming pedestrian environment. Coupled with the conversion of the Old Albuquerque High School into housing as described above, the overall EDO project is a model of historic preservation and revitalization efforts coinciding to make an economically stronger, better, and more vibrant neighborhood.

## Making it Happen

These transformations would not have taken place, however, without the support and vision of the Albuquerque City leadership, citizens, business leaders, and developers. Rob Dickson is the owner of Paradigm & Co., the Albuquerque redevelopment firm that is responsible for the conversion of the Old Albuquerque High School. Dickson saw the future in the high school campus and stuck with it for many years. He is in large part responsible for

bringing together the public planning process and helping rezone the entire area, rather than pursuing redevelopment on a piecemeal basis. Other leaders in the effort to create a vision for the area included Terry Keane, owner of Artichoke Café, and New Urbanist architect, Stefanos Polyzoides, who led the design team for the EDO redevelopment.

These leaders chose to make the right decisions by reinvesting in existing communities, where buildings, infrastructure and transportation choices are already present. Many developers and other local governments choose to instead make the long-term mistake of growing ever farther outward, increasing traffic congestion, the need for new roads, and the consumption of land. Developer Dickson, architect Polyzoides, business owner Keane, and the City of Albuquerque are helping to create a better, more livable community through their efforts on the East Downtown project; it is clear that the neighborhood will thrive well into the future.



MOULÉ & POLYZOIDES ARCHITECTS & URBANISTS

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# Hopkins

MINNESOTA

## Excelsior Tech Center Redevelopment and Regency Project



THE BEARD GROUP, INC.

**L**ocated 13 miles from the Twin Cities, the City of Hopkins is set apart from its sprawling suburban neighbors through extensive redevelopment efforts that began in the mid-1990s. Many of these efforts are a model of smart growth.

### Innovative Land Use

With 98 percent of the town already developed, there is little open space, limiting the options for growth from a “traditional” developer’s standpoint. However, making the best use of the already-developed land has been a priority of the City of Hopkins for many years. What has resulted are numerous award-winning redevelopment projects that ensure community design at a human scale, and individual projects that reinforce the rich historic character of the town, making Hopkins a sought-after, desirable place to live.

One developer, the Beard Group, Inc., has engaged in redevelopment efforts that its founder, Bill Beard, considers “oddball stuff.” Beard says this because he utilizes land that many others might pass by, since it is not considered prime for development.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, the Beard Group transformed a blighted torpedo factory, the Excelsior Tech Center, into a mixed-use business/industrial

center, which consists of a storage warehouse, a juice bottling factory, and office space. All materials in the redevelopment of this building were recycled, which reduced construction costs. In 2004, the redevelopment project was completed and the Excelsior Tech Center was leased at 70 percent. The entire building is 380,000 square feet.

### Financing Redevelopment Through Infill

The financing for the Excelsior Tech Center project was unique because it did not require public subsidies, a request typical of developers when they take on projects to transform a blighted property. Abutting the former defense factory were large parking lots, not necessary to support the new businesses in the center. Making the most of this extra property, the Beard Group partnered with Ryland Homes to develop the old lots to accommodate 66



new homes. The revenues from these townhouses, which were built in the first phase of the project, were then used to finance the renovations of the torpedo factory. The only public funding was used to clean up asbestos floor tiles.

## Creating a Better Environment and a Short Commute

The new town homes were an immediate success, and each unit sold out quickly. The homes were built based on the existing street grid, which helped create a neighborhood of single-family homes and row houses. Local rain gardens in the neighborhood help manage storm water on the site.

Unlike typical subdivisions, the neighborhood, called Regency, is adjacent to the Excelsior Tech Center, and is connected by a well-landscaped street with adequate sidewalks for pedestrians. Many of the offices in the Excelsior Tech Center are staffed by residents of Regency, making for a short commute and reducing the need for a car. With the infill housing occupying the former parking lot, this redevelopment has taken advantage of a great location and created a community of housing and jobs. Additionally, a trail connects the Regency neighborhood to an extensive trail system through Hopkins, which continues throughout the region, the county, and into Minneapolis. It is important to note, however, that the homes sold at an average of \$320,000, so while the homes may be within reach for the tech sector workers, this is not consid-

ered affordable housing.

The Hopkins redevelopment is a model for creating new, vibrant neighborhoods from industrial areas of bygone days. The City of Hopkins' Mayor, Eugene Maxwell, aptly observes, "When a developer and the community come together, the smart growth and environmental rewards are enormous."<sup>2</sup>

**"When a developer and the community come together, the smart growth and environmental rewards are enormous."**

—Hopkins Mayor Eugene Maxwell

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# Milwaukee<sup>WISCONSIN</sup>



## Highland Park: Highland Gardens and Highland Homes

HOUSING AUTHORITY—CITY OF MILWAUKEE

**H**ighland Park—a neighborhood in Milwaukee—is located just northwest of downtown near the corner of West Vliet Street and North 17th Street. Two major projects are taking place in this neighborhood, mainly the dismantling of older housing authority buildings and replacing those dwelling units with better designed Highland Gardens and Highland Homes. Aside from providing better homes for local residents, the revitalization of Highland Park is viewed as an investment aimed at stimulating economic improvements in the city, particularly the commercial district near Highland Park just a few blocks away on West Vliet Street between 11th and 13th Streets.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, 2 blocks south of the neighborhood is Marquette University, which is undergoing a \$100 million renovation.<sup>2</sup> Surrounding Highland Park are revitalization projects that will improve the conditions of the entire neighborhood.

### Highland Gardens

In November 2004, the City of Milwaukee unveiled the city's first "green" public housing facility, Highland Gardens. This 114-unit building has transformed the property of two derelict high-rise apartment buildings, owned by the Housing Authority, City of Milwaukee (HACM), which previously inhabited the 1.2 acre property. The towers, which were built in 1967 were in poor condition, expensive to maintain, and densely crowded, among other problems. After assessing the property, HACM initiated the Highland Gardens project with the goal of replacing the old units in the high-rises since it was determined it would be more cost effective than renovation. This decision was met with strong community support. The towers, which were built for elderly and disabled residents, have been replaced by the completed four story building, which is 120,000 square feet. There are also a number of family units included in the building. The entire building is accessible for residents with disabilities.

### Highland Homes

On the same lot behind the two high-rise towers sat 54 "barracks-style" apartments for large families. Under the same redevelopment scheme as Highland Gardens, Highland Homes are 4 to 5 bedroom homes being built as infill on abandoned and blighted lots donated to HACM by the city. To prevent displacement of the residents living in the "barracks-style" housing, HACM will be constructing 16 low-income rental townhouses and 30 market rate single family homes which have been built on-site, and 40 low-income single family homes within a 3 to 4 mile radius of Highland Park. Of those 40 homes, 18 have been completed and the rest will be finished when the old towers are demolished, so as not to leave anyone without a home.<sup>3</sup> All the new homes will be built for the former residents of the "barracks" and they will have a choice of which plots they would like to live in for the scattered site housing. Additionally, rents will remain at 30 percent of their monthly income, the same as previous rents. Relocation costs

are covered by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

## Environmental Justice

Highland Gardens and Highland Homes are replacing what has been described as a “Superblock” because of its isolation from the rest of the community. Rather than having all dwelling units concentrated within a “superblock,” a popular model during Urban Renewal development of four decades ago, one of the overall goals of Highland Park is to create a residential neighborhood by creating streets to reconnect the neighborhood to the city’s grid system. This helps develop more community interaction, plus it provides more travel options and provides better pedestrian access. Previously there were only two entrance points into the development from the rest of the city,<sup>4</sup> exacerbating social and economic isolation of residents. The new streets serve as connecting points to downtown and a nearby shopping district. Alderman Willie Hines, chairman of HACM, says the new street plan “will do wonders for the neighborhood. It’s a tremendous development opportunity that will integrate public housing into the surrounding community. Before it was an island unto itself.”<sup>5</sup> This development provides a mix of public housing—rental and homeownership opportunities throughout Highland Park.

## Incorporating Environmental Design and Materials

Highland Gardens is one of the first efforts in an environmental initiative the City of Milwaukee is taking to make it a “greener, cleaner” place to live.<sup>6</sup> The windows, cement, wooden gym floors, and other materials from the two high rises were recycled and used in the construction of Highland Gardens. The most prominent environmental feature of Highland Gardens is the 20,032 square foot, modular green roof, “believed to be the largest vegetated roof on any residential development in the nation.”<sup>7</sup> Green roofs are composed of tiles/modules that have plants growing in them to absorb and eliminate the storm water runoff that would otherwise overload the storm and sanitary sewers that eventually drain into Lake Michigan.<sup>8</sup> Other benefits include lower energy consumption since the roof provides strong insulation for the building, and a longer roof life. The green roof is also designed to reduce the amount of heat given off, which helps mitigate poor air quality in the summer months. Two rain gardens that landscape Highland Gardens

will also help to deter water runoff.

Highland Homes have also been designed to be more environmental, with energy efficiency an important component of their construction. Some of the features in Highland Homes include energy efficient heating, ventilation and cooling, and windows; soy-based insulation, rain gardens, and rain water that empties to grade rather than into the storm sewer.<sup>9</sup>

## Good Planning and Design

HACM is implementing good design practices in the remodeling of the Highland Park neighborhood to improve quality of life by strengthening access to other parts of the city. Local residents were encouraged to participate in planning for Highland Homes and Highland Gardens at a series of public meetings. Many ideas from these meetings were incorporated into neighborhood design.<sup>10</sup> Using New Urbanism principles, Highland Park has been designed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhoods.<sup>11</sup> Entrances enter to sidewalks rather than to parking areas, and the neighborhood is developing with Highland Gardens serving as a recognizable center.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, a local bus hub abuts Highland Park at 17th Street with four major bus lines serving the area.

Developing a neighborhood in this fashion contributes toward making the community a better, more attractive place to live, makes public transportation an efficient option, and reduces the pressure on sprawling outside the city.

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# MASSACHUSETTS Manchester-by-the-Sea

10 and 12 Summer Street



AFFIRMATIVE INVESTMENTS, INC.

**L**ocated approximately 30 miles north of Boston, and along the Atlantic Ocean, Manchester-by-the-Sea is an affluent residential community in Massachusetts. On 2.2 acres in the center of town, just a stone's throw from a commuter rail station that travels along the North Shore into Boston, the local housing authority pursued a smart growth project to provide a mixed-income, mixed-use infill project. The affordable housing development is one of the largest ever for Manchester-by-the-Sea, which is among the region's priciest communities.

## Affordable Housing, Ideal Location

The two-phase project began with a \$2 million renovation of a rundown 21 unit apartment building at 12 Summer Street. Eighteen, or 80 percent of those apartments, have been set aside as long-term affordable rental units. The cost for these units is roughly \$962/month for two bedrooms, while the remaining apartments are rented at the market rate of \$1375/month.<sup>1</sup> This is significantly less than a private one or two bedroom apartment in the area which rents for \$1,500-2,000 per month, not including heat.<sup>2</sup>

Residents of the 12 Summer Street building have been able to move back into the renovated units. These apartment units were completed in the fall of 2003. The second phase of the development which

was completed in 2004, is comprised of 18 newly constructed owner-occupied condominiums at 10 Summer Street. Five of these units are set aside for income-qualified first-time homebuyers—the 2-bedroom condos priced and sold for \$145,000, and the 3-bedroom condos at \$155,000.<sup>3</sup> The remaining units are priced from \$325,000 to \$450,000.<sup>4</sup> Resale of the condos by these homeowners must be to other income-qualified first-time homebuyers, which will ensure an availability of affordable housing in the area. Previously, this property was solely commercial, now residential units exist above the commercial space.

## The People Behind the Development

This project was initiated in 2002 by the Manchester Housing Authority, a public housing

entity chartered by the town of Manchester-by-the-Sea. The housing authority bought the two acre site and then gave the land to the newly established Manchester Affordable Housing Corporation as a non-profit to develop and oversee the project. They worked with Mosture & Associates Architects, Inc., and Affirmative Investment, a Boston based development group.

## Traditional Community, Transportation

Like many older New England communities, the village center of Manchester-by-the-Sea is already built on a human scale and is pedestrian friendly. This makes it an ideal setting for a transit-oriented development project. Homes and businesses at 10 and 12 Summer Street are walking distance from the local stores and town services, 1000 yards from the harbor, a mile from a beach, and minutes from public transportation. Though there is adequate parking for the dwelling units, bike riding throughout Manchester-by-the-Sea is a popular mode of transportation. It is also highly encouraged, and there are two volunteer town committees committed to improving the streetscape downtown and to making it more bike and pedestrian friendly.

This project breathed new life into a corner of the town while addressing some of the affordable

housing needs in the community. Just as good urban planning is critical to our environment, so is affordable housing. If our workforce cannot afford to live near work, or near public transportation, a whole class of people is essentially pushed into housing farther out, creating more traffic and more sprawl. This redevelopment project in Manchester-by-the-Sea was accomplished while providing an attractive development within an existing community.

“The whole project is really quite ambitious and needed in town” said Regina Villa, President of Manchester Affordable Housing, “It’s a great location, across from the train station and grocery store. It’s very accessible for people.”<sup>5</sup>

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2. Graves, JoAnne, Manchester Housing Authority, interview with Emily Salomon.
3. *Ibid.*
4. “Project Brings New Affordable Housing Units,” *Boston Globe*, April 11, 2004.
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# Greensboro<sup>NORTH CAROLINA</sup>

## Southside Neighborhood



CITY OF GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

**L**ocated minutes walking distance from the central business district, one of Greensboro's most historically affluent neighborhoods—Southside—experienced increasing disinvestment and decay after World War II. Starting in the late 1980s, the Greensboro City Council addressed the possibility of redeveloping the Southside neighborhood, which was then considered blighted. At the time it was uncharted territory, but the City of Greensboro foresaw the full potential this neighborhood would have if redeveloped using Smart Growth principles. The City's Community Development Director, Andy Scott, said: "We are using the principles of smart growth to protect and enhance our natural environment. By reusing previously developed land; providing more housing and transportation choices; preserving critical natural areas; and developing vibrant places throughout Greensboro, we are protecting our air, water, and land for future generations to enjoy."<sup>1</sup> Targeting many historic homes and abandoned properties for preservation and renovation, rezoning the district for mixed-use development, and creating a master plan for the district has all resulted in the first mixed-use infill development project in the state, which has received wide recognition, including a Smart Growth award by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

### Location, Location, Location

The location of the Southside neighborhood enhances the redevelopment. In the southern part of downtown, the neighborhood is short distance from the city's historic downtown. Two major bus lines run through the 10-acre neighborhood, and it is walking distance from a multi-modal transportation center that has been recently renovated, bringing together the city buses, intercity buses, coaches, taxis, and intercity rail services.<sup>2</sup> Future plans for the hub include light rail, high-speed rail, a farmers market,

and occupied restaurant space.<sup>3</sup> The completion of the transportation center renovation in 2001 was a landmark since it is the first multi-modal transit center in North Carolina, and it marks the city's effort to promote multiple transportation options for Greensboro residents while addressing traffic congestion. A proposed "Rail Yard Park," will run for a mile between the Southside neighborhood and the transportation terminal, creating an easy, safe corridor for pedestrians to travel between public transportation and their residences and work.



## New Residences and Stores in a Historic Neighborhood

Following traditional neighborhood design concepts, the redevelopment of Southside is mixed-use and centered around a new town square which serves as a neighborhood park and host to a rotating schedule of public art and community events. Ten historic residences have been restored, while the new buildings, including 30 new single family homes, 10 two-family homes, 50 townhouses, and 20 live/work units with retail space on the ground floor have been constructed with historic facades to blend in with existing homes and enhance the historic character of the neighborhood. These residences sold out completely upon the development's completion,<sup>4</sup> with residents including a mix of young professionals, young couples, retired adults, and a small but growing number of families.<sup>5</sup>

Neighborhood streetscape improvements, such as the addition of trees, sidewalk improvements, and landscaping have contributed to a pedestrian friendly environment, which makes for a better business environment for local retail shops. Southside is a short, 10-minute walk to downtown attractions, including the Children's Museum, Central Library, Carolina Theatre and City Hall.

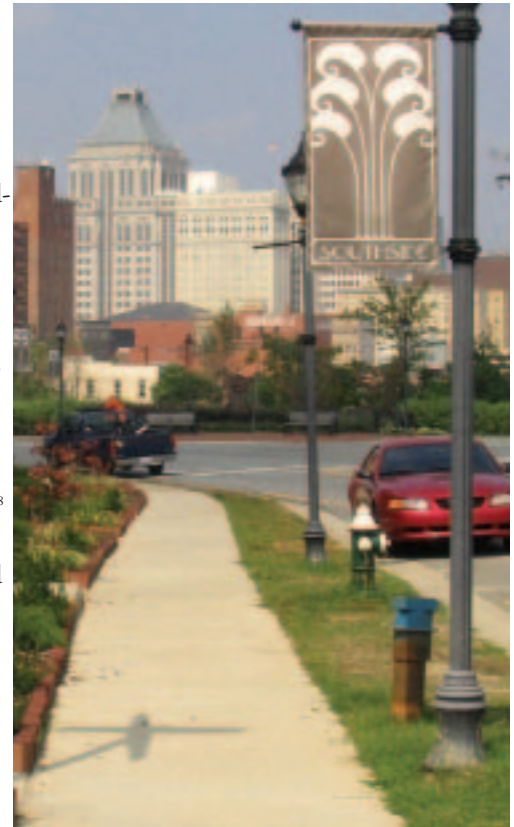
One resident comments on her neighborhood saying, "Southside was the type of neighborhood we had been searching for—it provides us with the sense of community we crave within walking distance of all the services and amenities downtown has to offer. When we built our house two years ago we felt like urban pioneers, but now, with the neighborhood nearly complete we know we made the right choice."<sup>6</sup>

## A Vision for Southside

Revitalization of Southside has been close to twenty years in the making. Discussion began in the 1980s about the potential for the area, and the lack of housing in downtown Greensboro. In 1990, a local redevelopment bond passed to start pursuing work on the neighborhood. A two-year planning process brought together stakeholders including residents of Southside, businesses, historic preservationists, and others. The planning process was completed in 1995, and helped create a blueprint for sensible redevelopment that was acceptable to the community. Construction began in 2000, and today in 2005, the houses have all been sold.

Robert "Nate" Bowman, founder of the

Bowman Development Group, based in Huntersville, North Carolina, was the only developer to respond to the City of Greensboro's request for proposals to redevelop Southside. Bowman notes a growing trend "toward moving back downtown even in smaller cities like Greensboro. There have been restaurants and bars built, a new ball park, and a new library. Our urban housing project both supports and takes advantage of that."<sup>7</sup> To create this neighborhood, Bowman teamed up with land-use planner Thomas Low, director of the Charlotte, North Carolina office of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company Architects and Town Planners, a leading New Urbanist firm. Low specializes in neo-traditional neighborhood design and used his expertise to design the new Southside. From an environmental standpoint there are many benefits to this approach of development. Bowman claims that ensuring walkability for residents is key to a project's success and that "if you design a better place for humans to live, usually by default you're protecting the environment."<sup>8</sup> Bowman has developed other award-winning neighborhood projects, and has been recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Sierra Club for his work in the Vermillion neighborhood in Huntersville, North Carolina.



CITY OF GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

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# GEORGIA Atlanta

## Atlantic Station



### Smarter Development in a Sprawling Metropolis

**T**he Atlanta metro region is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Over 55 acres of open space is bulldozed for development each day in this region, adding to a sprawling metropolis and making Atlanta the least compact metropolitan area in the country.<sup>1</sup> According to a 2002 US Census survey, Atlanta is in the top twenty cities with the longest commutes to work,<sup>2</sup> at an average of 34 miles per day.<sup>3</sup>

While sprawl unfortunately continues, there are also a number of positive development projects taking place within Atlanta's city boundaries. One such project is Atlantic Station, the redevelopment of the former Atlantic Steel Company mill, once the largest employer in Georgia. After almost a century of producing steel on this industrial site, the Atlantic Steel Mill is considered the largest urban brownfield redevelopment in the country, spanning 138 urban acres.

With government encouragement, the master developers of Atlantic Station, Jacoby Development, bought the property in 1997. Since then, efforts have been underway to redevelop the mill into an environmentally sustainable, mixed-use community. Jacoby Development recognized the site of the mill, located in midtown Atlanta near the junctions of Interstates 75 and 85 would be prime for reuse. Observing that desirable urban locations are becoming harder to find, Jacoby has shifted their focus from projects once constructed solely on open space to almost entirely on brownfield redevelopment.

The developers have had to undertake extensive remediation efforts in order to clean up the site for redevelopment. While some have criticized the clean up of the old mill, the developer, EPA, and local environmental groups supported the decision to deal with the lowest level toxic residue onsite, rather than ship it to someone else's backyard.

### Connecting Atlanta by Foot and by Transit

The east and west parts of midtown Atlanta have long been divided from each other, due to interstates 75 and 85 slicing through the city. With the advent of Atlantic Station, however, the developers quite literally bridged this divide. The 17th Street Bridge, which is 130-feet wide, was constructed and is equipped with bike lanes, sidewalks, two High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (HOV), and four single-occupancy vehicle lanes. This bridge is a vital and convenient pedestrian link from Atlantic Station to the nearby Arts Center

Station of the city's subway system known as the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). The bridge itself was constructed with flexible funding made possible due to the project's "smart growth" location. Atlantic Station's developers, Jacoby, collaborated with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the bridge project. Because Atlanta failed to meet federal air pollution standards, this bridge was deemed an important link to public transportation which would take cars off the road and reduce air pollution. Making bridge funding available, the EPA noted that the Atlantic Station development would "produce less air pollution than an equivalent amount of development at other likely sites in the region."<sup>4</sup> A fleet of electric shuttles will also serve Atlantic Station and run a free service between the development and the MARTA station.<sup>5</sup> In the spirit of making this development truly transit dependent, parking is limited and priority for parking spaces is made for vans and shared carpool vehicles. Atlantic Station is among the largest scale transit-oriented development project in the nation.

## A Place to Live, Work and Shop

Calling itself a "live-work-play community," a large portion of Atlantic Station will be composed of residential units. Currently, 56 townhomes, 347 condominiums, and 231 one- and two-bedroom apartments have been completed, and are almost all occupied. The additional six buildings are under construction and are all set open their doors for occupancy throughout 2006.<sup>6</sup> When the project is fully completed, there will be between 3,000 to 5,000 residential units available and it is expected to have a population of 10,000 residents. There are a number of homeownership and rental options, with a variety of condominiums, townhouses, and apartments on the market. Rental units start at \$675/month; some of the ownership condos range from \$100,000 to \$300,000; lofts begin in the \$300,000s, and townhomes range from \$385,000 to \$700,000. There is a waiting list for the many of the new homes that are available now or in the construction phase, illustrating the high demand for urban living in close proximity to other amenities. Residential properties and rentals are varied, and the people moving to Atlantic Station are diverse: families, young professionals, executives, college students, and married couples all live in Atlantic Station.

There is also a retail component to Atlantic Station, which opened in 2004. Approximately thirty national retailers have stores in Atlantic Station, as well

as a dozen or more restaurants. A movie theater is also coming for a total of 1.5 million square feet of retail. Though already functioning, the grand opening for the completion of the retail and entertainment district is set for October 2005. A hotel with 1,000 rooms is expected to open in the winter of 2006. The first commercial tower, 171 17th Street, has been completed, with a 90 percent occupancy rate as of May 2005.<sup>7</sup> It was constructed using LEED standards as a guideline for sustainable design, with a special heat-reflecting roof, water-saving bathrooms, and natural landscaping to conserve water.<sup>8</sup> More office towers are in the planning phase and will similarly be built according to LEED standards,<sup>9</sup> and once completed, Atlantic Station will have 6 million square feet of office space. Additionally, over 2,500 trees have been planted throughout the community, and when the Station is finished there will be 11 acres of green space.

## A Smarter Atlanta

Atlantic Station is not perfect, but it is creating good steps in the right direction that will influence the future of Atlanta. Since the high-density residential units have been wildly successful, it shows the demand for urban living. This sets a precedent that can guide future development to provide more housing units in the city. Additionally, city transportation has improved because of Atlantic Station, at little cost to the taxpayer. Jacoby Development made a commitment to pay for the shuttle that will service Atlantic Station and the closest MARTA station, and has connected different points in the city with a choice of transportation options that were previously not easily accessible. This project started dialogue about transportation access in Atlanta and has influenced changes in the way the Georgia Department of Transportation operates.

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## University of Washington, Tacoma



## Town Green Village Project



## Highland Park



## 10 and 12 School Street



## The Pearl District



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SCOTT CHAPMAN

## Salt Lake City



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MARC HELESON

## Atlantic Station



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