

Densification jeopardizes life in America as we know it

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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Last week I wrote about the fact that people are beginning to realize what a mistake it is to advance the concept that the only happy society is one in which everyone lives in dense urban “walkable” environments, the so-called “liveable” or “smart” cities, where social justice and equity will be made available to all. (Who can argue with anything labeled smart?)

Don’t get me wrong; there are still plenty of people who still promote that idea, primarily urban planners, city leaders, and other progressives. As one Canadian urban planner wrote recently, “as North America struggles with self-imposed fiscal cliffs, irrational gun control ideology, patterns of urban sprawl virtually bankrupting cities, and an irresponsible lack of action on climate change, we city-builders can focus on where real success, real progress, has been occurring for a while – in cities and city-regions.” He also made a New Year’s resolution, “we resolve to not just increase density, but to do density better!”

But density comes at a high societal cost – poverty, gentrification and the breakdown of the family – just to name a few and none of which are acknowledged by progressives to be problems caused by progressive policies.

Joel Kotkin, in an article on [newgeography.com](#) entitled “Is America’s future Progressive?,” quotes the words of a progressive: “...progress means density, urbanity, apartment living and the decline of the suburbs.”

Kotkin’s reply? “The Holy Places of Urbanism such as New York, San Francisco, Washington DC also suffer some of the worst income inequality and poverty of any places in the country...the now triumphant urban gentry have their townhouses and high-rise lofts, but the service workers who do their dirty work have to log their way by bus or car from the vast American banlieues, either in peripheral parts of the city...or poorer close-in suburbs.

This progressive economy works from the well-placed academics, the trust funders and hedge funders, but produces little opportunity for a better life for the vast majority of the middle and working class.”

More simply put, as an urban area becomes more densely developed, the cost of land and housing necessarily skyrockets. The result is that if working class people are going to be able to live where they work (the walkable community), they must make other concessions in life, including living in much smaller quarters and giving up having more than one child, if any at all. This essentially creates a society of poor and rich, but eventually no middle class. Factor in the extraordinarily high tax rates being ushered in by Obama and the progressives, and we will soon replicate Europe, whose declining birth rate has led to a virtual invasion of foreigners bringing their own version of government unlike those of the land they are inhabiting. It’s a perfect formula for destroying what is inarguably the most successful and admired country to have ever existed in human history – America.

Joel Kotkin wrote in another article, “Demography As Destiny: The Vital American Family,” “If birthrates continue to decline, Western nations may devolve into impoverished and enervated nursing homes. And without strong families, children are likely to be more troubled and less productive as adults.” Of progressives, he wrote that they “also embrace urban density – a residential pattern that discourages child-rearing. Unlike the wave of immigrants or rural migrants who flooded the American metropolises of the early 20th century, urbanites today are not raising large families in cramped spaces.

Instead, in virtually all high-income societies, high density today almost always translates into low marriage rates and fertility rates... many urban centers today are among the most “child-free”...”

No one is talking about other dangers of urban density. Crime rates are higher in areas of dense populations (according to FBI statistics), diseases spread more rapidly and widely, and higher death and casualty rates are likely in any terrorist attack.

So what makes a society, or a city, “liveable”? In opposition to the Canadian planner’s comments, our nation’s debts are real and debilitating; more gun control is not the answer to select group of people who have no moral conscience; urban sprawl is not the cause of the financial woes of cities, irresponsible management and spending is; and climate change is natural, not man-made, and should be accepted as something we reasonably learn to live with, not control.

What makes for “liveability” are strong families, strong faith in God, strong churches, and freedom to choose how to live without fear of having the fruits of our labors taken from us in the name of “progress”.

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