

Density will follow abortion and homosexual marriage

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By [Randy W. Bright](#)

Zoning codes that are being pushed today throughout the country are fixed upon the greatest prize that government and urban planners seek to achieve - density.

Like the term "sustainability" - which has a different meaning depending on who you ask - density also is a key word intended to force something undesirable upon the majority by selling it to different people for different reasons. As examples, local governments like it because it means more tax revenues, and environmentalists want to keep people out of their cars.

Joel Kotkin recently published an article entitled, *Countering Progressives' Assault on Suburbia*, that makes the case that density is being sold as the preferred living situation, when in fact the majority of Americans have always preferred living in the suburbs over living in crowded housing.

After pointing out the statistics that bear this out, he wrote, "Yet, it has been decided, mostly by self-described progressives, that suburban living is too unecological, not (to) mention too uncool, and even too white for their future America. Density is their new holy grail, for both the world and the United States. Across the country efforts are now being mounted - through HUD, the EPA, and scores of local agencies - to impede suburban homebuilding or to raise its costs...The obstacles being erected include incentives for density, urban growth boundaries, attempts to alter the race and class makeup of communities and mounting environmental efforts to reduce sprawl."

Appearing on Kotkin's website [newgeography.com](#), Ed Braddy writes in an article entitled, *Smart Growth and the Newspeak*, "Smart Growth advocates are among the most effective practitioners of *Argumentum and Populum*, urging everyone to get on the bandwagon of higher densities, compact mixed-uses, and transit orientation because all the "cool cities" are doing it. Smart Growth advocates also claim this is what people prefer, even if it is not how they currently live."

He, like Kotkin, cites studies that show that the majority of Americans prefer to live in the suburbs or rural areas over living in dense urban cores.

Their fears about policies forcing density on us all are not unfounded. Recently, the Obama administration and HUD released the *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH)* rule, that according to HUD, "the purpose of the proposed rule is to end the deep-rooted pattern of segregation in communities across the country".

Kotkin states in his article, "This undermines absurd claims that the suburbs need to be changed in order to challenge the much detested reign of "white privilege". In reality, African-Americans have been deserting core cities for years, largely of their own accord..."

Why do we need to be concerned about density in regard to Tulsa's new zoning code? I have been assured that the new code is not going to promote density and that it centers mostly upon leaving Tulsa's family-oriented, single-family residence lifestyle intact.

However, I cannot ignore some of the things I have seen in the draft that lead me to believe that density is indeed the goal. In addition, I cannot ignore the statement published on the PlaniTulsa website that said, "PlaniTulsa recommends policies that promote a more livable, pedestrian-friendly and cost-efficient city. One way that zoning can support this is by making it easier to increase development density that follows standards for urban design and appropriate location."

I agree with virtually everything Kotkin states in his article, but cannot allow his opening statement to go unchallenged:

"The next culture war will not be issues like gay marriage or abortion, but about something more fundamental: how Americans choose to live. In the crosshairs now will not be just recalcitrant Christians or crazed billionaire racists, but the vast majority of Americans who either live in suburban-style housing or aspire to do so in the future."

There are not a lot of things more fundamental than standing against gay marriage and abortion. He calls Christians "recalcitrant", meaning that we resist authority, when in fact Christians are commanded in scripture to obey the law. It is only when man's law violates God's law that we are called to resist human authority. In regard to the great battle we are about to fight over density, Kotkin and I are on the same side. However, I find it paradoxical that he was himself being recalcitrant to the government's attempts to force it upon him. He spoke out against it, just as we Christians speak out against that which we know is wrong.

Despite his prejudices, I would encourage you to read his article and others he has written. Density has its place - where appropriate and where the free market suggests it. But it is not a policy that should be forced upon us, and Tulsa should not be a participant.



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