

Report on
**THE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF THE
URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**Prepared by the Building Futures Council
Committee on the Economic Management
of the Built Environment**

BUILDING FUTURES COUNCIL

Dedicated to Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Building and Construction

Building Futures Council

The Building Futures Council (BFC) is an independent, nonprofit corporation composed of senior executives of organizations engaged in all aspects of the building and construction process. Council members represent public and private owners, planners, engineers, architects, constructors, attorneys, financiers, accountants, insurers, investors, and academia.

In fulfilling its mission, the BFC makes use of the varied talents of its multidisciplined and diverse membership to improve the process by which the physical assets of our nation's built environment are created, managed, and cared for.

Members serve as individuals and act collectively as a think tank to identify critical issues encountered in the building and construction process, analyzing, discussing, and advocating guidelines and criteria for improving efficiency in the process and furthering the well-being of our nation.

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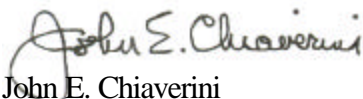
Foreword

At the start of the 21st century, many of the nation's cities face a host of problems, among them deteriorating infrastructure, dwindling population, decline in public services, strapped public educational and health systems, and lack of confidence in city leadership. In some cities these and other problems have become so entrenched that people have come to view them as norms, rather than as aberrations, and not worth the huge public expenditure it would take to revitalize the cities' built environment and their economies. This report sets forth reasons why our existing urban spaces are worth redeveloping, and the most effective approaches to this highly complex, time- and resource-consuming undertaking whose outcome affects thousands, perhaps millions, of people.

Despite its complexity and the large investment required, revitalization of cities is worthwhile. Even cities in need of extensive revitalization are still valuable because of the large prior investment that made them what they are (or were); even if a city's built environment has seriously deteriorated, the cost of redeveloping that environment is small compared to the cost of building it anew somewhere else. Cultural, educational, commercial, and other resources already located in the city can provide attractive starting points for revitalization efforts, the goal of which is to make the urban environment as livable as possible.

Because so many people have a stake in redevelopment efforts, revitalization is best accomplished through a public/private partnership that includes representation of all affected parties and ensures needed support for the plan or project. It is the Building Futures Council's position that those looking to redevelop urban areas take a team approach to ensure success for all parties involved.

The Building Futures Council Board of Directors wishes to thank the Co-Chairs, Dick Coughlin, P.E., and Samuel Hack, Esq., and the members of the Committee on Management and Contracting Alternatives for their work to produce this report. We also thank all others from both within and without the BFC who contributed their time and effort to producing this report.



John E. Chiaverini
Chairman of the Board
Building Futures Council

Acknowledgments

Building Futures Council Committee on the Economic Management of the Built Environment

Co-Chairmen

Richard A. Coughlin, P.E., M.B.A., President
Coughlin Consultant Services, North Scituate, MA

Samuel L. Hack, Esq., Management and Legal Consultant
Potomac, MD

Members

Russell F. Agosta, Partner
Grant Thornton LLP, Southfield, MI

Jack Freidenrich, Executive Vice President
The RBA Group, Morristown, NJ

Gerry E. Higgs, P.E., Consultant, Ret. Chief of Administrative Services
Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC

Rudolph Matalucci, P.E., Ph.D., Architectural and Infrastructure Surety Manager and
Distinguished Member of the Technical Staff
Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, NM

Bruce Miller, Senior Construction Manager
CH2M Hill, Greenwood Village, CO

Paul Peckar, P.E., Partner
Peckar & Abramson, Mahwah, NJ

John H. Strothman, Consultant
Strothman /Associates, Evanston, IL

BFC Member Contributors

Gail Charles, Esq., Assistant General Manager, Administration
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Washington, DC
Chair, BFC Societal Issues Committee

Robert S. Runkle, Midwest Environmental Services Director
STV Incorporated, Chicago, IL
Co-Chair, BFC Environmental Challenges Committee

Charles E. (Chuck) Williams (Ret. U.S. Army Major General), President and CEO
Infrastructure Management LLC, Alexandria, VA
Co-Chair, BFC Environmental Challenges Committee

Derish M. Wolff, President
Louis Berger International Inc., East Orange, NJ
Chair, BFC Operating Committee

Non-BFC Member Contributors

Sven-Erik Kaiser, Environmental Protection Specialist
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington DC

David B. Levy, Brownfields Coordinator
Planning Commission, Planning Department, City of Baltimore

Christopher Reutershan, Principal
Concord Partners, Washington, DC

Board Liaison

Ed Schreiber, President
Construction Consultants Inc., Oak Park, MI

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Part I: Introduction and Overview

Introduction

When asked what city is most identified with Italy, most people would answer “Rome”; with England, “London”; with France, “Paris”; with Japan, “Tokyo”; and with Russia, “Moscow.” Here in the vast and diverse United States, however, cities are often more closely associated with the states in which they are located than with the United States as a whole. Thus we have Boston, Massachusetts; New York, New York; Miami, Florida; San Francisco or Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois; and many others that are known nationally and internationally. Many European, Middle Eastern, and Asian cities have existed since long before the rise of Christianity and experienced both natural and man-made disasters of major proportions, but continue to flourish. Cities of the Western Hemisphere (including those in South and Central America and Canada, as well as the United States), though younger in years, have also experienced significant setbacks (primarily natural), but they have grown so rapidly in population and prosperity that they too must be included in the roster of world-class urban centers.

This report examines how cities achieve greatness and how this greatness can be maintained; it also offers recommendations for restoring greatness to cities that have lost it. It is impossible in but a few pages to deal with all the issues that threaten the vitality of cities throughout the world, so the focus will be on the United States, although much of the material is applicable to international locations.

The Culture of the Urban Environment

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, humans began to populate the earth. Depending on one’s beliefs, the population may have grown from two or from many, many more. Not all agree on the numbers, but most will agree that our earliest ancestors hunted, gathered, and fished for their sustenance, and that they sought protection from the elements and animals, and at some point from each other.

Earth’s earliest inhabitants quickly identified the advantages of combining their efforts and sharing the fruits of those efforts. They also found they could work the land to produce sufficient food to feed the population. For convenience, early farms were located in close proximity to where the majority of people lived.

Before long, however, other less industrious groups found it easier to pillage and plunder the fruits of the farmers and merchants. This encouraged the latter to develop defendable, protective shelters—initially caves, and later fortresses and castles—that might better protect them and their wares. As the population grew and people moved from farming and hunting to other necessary occupations, these shelters expanded into villages, towns, and, in many cases, the cities of today. It is not unusual to visit a major city and find evidence of its early beginnings, e.g., a castle, church, grain storage, or residence several hundred years old. The large urban areas that we know today owe their success in large part to the ready availability of transportation via water, rail, highways, and most recently, airports.

Reasons for Preserving the Urban Environment

Faced with the huge economic and time-consuming challenge of restoring and preserving our cities, one might ask, “Why not simply create new cities and abandon those in need of revitalization?” The case for revitalization is clear:

- Even those cities most in need of revitalization are extremely valuable, because they have often benefited from ambitious prior investment in public facilities and services (e.g., infrastructure, libraries, and schools) not easily replicated. Those assets in need of restoration often represent value to a potential tenant or buyer. Sidewalks, streets, and a subsurface infrastructure that could only be duplicated at considerable expense may still front an abandoned or boarded-up property. A transportation system may exist that with only minor improvements could provide conveniences that would attract people to public transportation, with resultant environmental improvements as a value-added bonus.
- Even those cities in need of significant improvements have a sense of history and a memorable past. These cities were once magnets that offered opportunities for commerce, convenience, security, education, and enjoyment, all the amenities offered by today’s most desirable municipalities. It was probably the loss of one or more of these benefits that preceded the abandonment of many neighborhoods.
- All cities, flourishing and otherwise, offer administrative, police, fire, educational, and medical services. The difference comes in the quality and quantity of those services provided. The population and reputation of the city is often determined by the quality and quantity of one or more of these services. For instance, San Jose and Boston have ready access to high-tech professionals because of their close proximity to excellent educational facilities. New York, Chicago, and San Francisco attract those with an interest in the financial and cultural worlds, and Seattle and Miami draw those with an interest in international commerce. Therefore, if one seeks to make a location more attractive, upgrading these services could well be the place to start. A word of caution here is warranted, however: If a particular service is upgraded to the detriment of another or more than one other service, the negatives of the downgraded services may outweigh the benefits of improved services, and if the focus and financing of improvements is improperly distributed only to the downtown area, outlying areas will most likely suffer periods of decline. Commerce and government may always be centralized. The challenge is to make the urban environment “livable” as well.

Part II: Development Considerations

Establishing Criteria for Development

The first step in developing a strategic plan for the rebirth of a city is to identify the existing problem(s), trace the causes of decline, and identify stakeholders, issues, and concerns. The second step is to establish and review the redevelopment team to assure that all who will be impacted (either positively or negatively) are included and, if necessary, expand it to include those who could have an influence (either positive or negative) on the final results. Once the team is assembled the members can focus on developing alternative plans for accomplishing the mission, testing these alternatives, selecting a final goal, and developing strategies for achieving the ultimate goal. Essential to the team's effectiveness is open-mindedness, lack of detrimental hidden agendas, willingness to listen to others, and commitment to the overarching goal.

Identifying the Issues

Retired U.S. Army Major General Charles E. (Chuck) Williams, who has extensive experience in working with urban-environment restoration and revitalization in New York and Washington, DC, identified six factors that contribute to the decline of a city or neighborhood:

- **Negative Public Perception.** It is often said that “perception is reality,” and this is true of cities and neighborhoods. If the general public feels that an area is unsafe, unclean, inconvenient, and/or lacking in desired services and an effective school system, people will avoid it and take their business and dollars elsewhere. In any effective relationship, mutual trust must exist and city administrations must demonstrate the ability to meet promised expectations in order to attract people.
- **Fractured Politics.** Nothing is more damaging to a city than divisive government. The end result of self-serving, special-interest representation is a stagnation that ultimately forces even the most ardent supporters of a community to throw up their hands in futility and abandon the cause, at the same time “voting with their feet” and relocating from the city.
- **Aging and Lack of Maintenance.** Aging in and of itself is not necessarily damaging. Most people appreciate the work of those who came before. Such outstanding testimonies to history, art, and architecture as Ellis Island, the Alamo, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Sears Tower actually add to the positive image of a city. Aging and lack of maintenance, however, cause buildings and infrastructure to deteriorate to a point where they become unsafe, unattractive, inefficient, and uninhabitable, and serve only to blight their immediate area and discourage investment and occupancy. Deterioration of public facilities and services is often caused by declining revenues or changing priorities, such as a high city payroll and a low or nonexistent maintenance budget, which result in lack of public interest and pride, tourism, and revenue production.
- **Regulatory Oversight or Lack Thereof.** As in the case of fractured politics, if those responsible for administering the various service functions fail to create a workable environment, either by too much or too little diligence in the exercise of their responsibilities, negative results will occur. If protective services (e.g., police and fire) are not sufficiently funded, people will not feel safe. By the same token, if sufficient funding is provided but employees do not provide their best efforts, the results will again be negative. If laws, rules, and regulations are unfairly prohibitive, growth will be stymied. If the demands of the

general population are excessive, investors will be unwilling to assume what they might consider an unfair burden. It goes without saying here that even the perception of dishonesty or corruption in city administration will quickly dissuade potential investors and developers from considering opportunities in that urban location. Once the reputation for corrupt government is established it takes years to remove that blemish.

- **The Media.** The media often play a major role in the success or failure of a city or neighborhood. The thirty-second sound bites offered on the evening news paint a lasting picture of a location to the viewer. Areas shown as dangerous will be avoided; examples of government corruptness or incompetence, though atypical, may taint all city government; even traffic reports, if not properly described and explained, may discourage attendance at desirable events within the city and frustrate well-intentioned initiatives. Conversely, failure to paint an accurate picture of activities in and around the urban area will serve to deceive the message recipient; when the deception is revealed the result will be a cynicism that causes all positive statements to be viewed with a jaundiced eye if they are not dismissed altogether.

Local, State, and Federal Participation

A major issue that must be recognized and dealt with early in the revitalization process is the role of local, state, and federal regulatory bodies, appropriate and otherwise. When well-planned and manageable support for the redevelopment plan is provided, the probability of success increases exponentially, as in the case of Baltimore's renewal efforts. Failure to enlist and receive this support results in expensive, time-consuming wheel spinning that often dooms the redevelopment effort before it can get off the ground.

It is essential; therefore, that a sufficient amount of time and effort be devoted to identifying those authorities, both formal and ad hoc, that have an influence on the project, regardless of their size and position. Particular emphasis should be placed on community residency groups that have the most to gain (or lose) from redevelopment; such groups might challenge a project that may be beneficial to the metropolis but does not offer sufficient benefits to the local community. (Generally it is the community, not the development agent that determines the definition of "sufficient benefits.") Elected officials depend on these groups to gain or remain in office.

Another major player in the process is the responsible environmental agency. Many of these organizations have in recent years moved from rigidly enforcing rules and regulations to being willing to work toward positive redevelopment that is consistent with the spirit, rather than an uncompromising interpretation, of the laws.

On a project of any significance, one should expect to interface with twenty to thirty representatives of local, state, and federal bodies; failure to do so will impede the project. A willingness to seek out those with an interest in the process and final outcome can only be beneficial. It should be recognized that a willingness to listen and compromise when appropriate can very often change an adversarial position to one of support.

Financial Considerations

The rebirth of most cities in the recent past has been a result of providing a significant incentive

for businesses to operate there and for people to live, visit, or work there. That incentive might be economic, as in the case of the so-called “enterprise zones,” or social as in the case of the Baltimore waterfront restoration and ballpark. It might be the availability of skilled or semi-skilled labor, as in the cases of Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Boise, and Tampa, or securities agencies, as in the cases of New York City and Boston. Providing these incentives requires considerable investment. Competition for these funds requires that the planners who go to the appropriate “Wall Street” present viable, well-thought-out plans that not only address the positive aspects of the proposal, but identify the possible risks and how they are to be dealt with. Additionally—and of significant importance—the plans must provide an opportunity for reward in order to attract investors.

The plan sponsors must respond to several questions that a typical investor might ask:

- What is the form of ownership? Is it private, public, or mixed, and where is the accountability and security? Is there seed capital in the form of land or other physical assets? Is the partnership legal and time-tested? Has such a venture been tried before with success? Will local funds be mobilized?
- What are the long- and short-range incentives? Will there be long-term business attraction, increased employment, restoration of neighborhoods in disrepair, and an increase in tax dollars?
- Who controls the necessary properties? Are they easily obtainable? Is eminent domain required? Will court proceedings delay the project? Are community groups, labor, and local representatives on board and in favor of the plan? Is permitting a problem? Is zoning? What about lease terminations?
- Are the properties environmentally secure? Do they require clean up? Are wetlands and bird and animal sanctuaries protected? Is the waterfront endangered? What is the impact of traffic? Is noise a factor? Is air quality an issue?
- What are the social benefits? Will the quality of life of current city occupants improve? Does the proposed plan offer opportunities for relaxation, education, and enjoyment? Is safety improved? Is the project consistent with the city’s cultural identity?
- What is the makeup of the redevelopment team? Are the members experienced? Are they representative of the community and a broad cross section of community interests?

Selecting the Private Partner

Based on recent successful redevelopment efforts, it is the opinion of many, including the Building Futures Council, that these efforts are best accomplished through a private/public partnership, with a strong experienced private partner taking the lead in moving the project forward. Designing and implementing a plan for restoration and revitalization of an urban area is an incredibly complex undertaking that involves dozens, if not hundreds, of people and takes years from initial team formation to completion. The various agencies that come together on the public sector side very often serve diversified interests, and although they are supportive of the concept, they are also obligated to protect the interests of their constituency. The same is true to a large degree of the private partners on the redevelopment team.

It is therefore essential that the private partner have a proven track record in the kind of development proposed. Additionally, the company should have a reputation for organizing,

scheduling, dealing effectively with ambiguity, understanding and working with regulatory bodies including legislative bodies, and most importantly sensitivity to the environment and the neighborhoods involved in and impacted by the development.

Securing financial resources and having a plan for optimizing those resources to deliver reasonable qualitative and quantitative gains to the projects are also essential. Above all, the private partner should possess the highest levels of personal integrity, have a talent for perceiving and understanding the needs of the other team members, and bring leadership and a “can do” attitude to the project that will carry the team to a successful completion of its mission.

Part III: Societal Considerations

Identifying the Stakeholders

Strategies in developing community-outreach plans with the goal of achieving full participation of stakeholders should include:

- Training
- Support for community groups
- Technical assistance grants
- Community advisory groups and others
- Public meetings

Once the stakeholders have been identified, having them become involved early in the process is key to the plan's success. Public hearings must be structured to include the issues that impact the community and surrounding area. Opportunity to voice concerns and timely resolutions of issues equates to acceptances of the stakeholders and serves to minimize Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI discrimination issues.

“Turfism” is an often-difficult barrier to overcome and it should be minimized as much as possible. One must recognize that people live in urban areas for different reasons: young professionals look for entertainment and physical activities; working-class people look for economic benefits, child care, and medical access; families look for child safety and schools; seniors look for ease of travel and the arts. As plans are being developed, it is important that a lead agency and community consortium are designated. The support of key stakeholders and community leaders is critical to the success of any project.

Developing a Plan Together

Urban environment revitalization and redevelopment must be coordinated with broader strategies of job creation, training, and career development that will produce demonstrable benefits for the community. Coordination and cooperation among government, business and industry, community-based organizations, labor unions, faith groups, and the community at large are mandatory to leverage resources and promote maximum benefit. When community leaders and public and private partners are committed to developing a plan together, the community as a whole gains. It is equally important to explore the interaction of social equity, environment, land use, economic development, and transportation as we seek to restore and revitalize our communities. In short, some of the benefits of coordination are:

- Opportunities for maximizing resources
- Improved cost efficiency
- Creation of job opportunities for the community

Public Forums

To reiterate, as plans are being developed they must involve the community at large and include several community public forums—a minimum of three, and more depending on the complexity of the project—at accessible sites at various locations in the community being impacted. (Keep

in mind that accessible sites can include sites on the World Wide Web.) The planning and implementation efforts should continually involve all sectors, including the voluntary civic sector and others traditionally left out of the public planning process. Forums should be held during the day and also at night to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to attend.

The purpose of the initial forums should be to brief the community on the project and elicit comments and concerns, and to assess specific needs and community values.

The second level of forums should present any alternatives, elicit comments, and respond to the community's concerns. It is critical for maintaining the support of the community that members are able to identify the results of their direct or indirect involvement and that they are allowed to voice concerns about those that have not been addressed.

The third set of forums should present and elicit comments on the project design and schedule. The goal here is to seek additional input on the final coordination, keep the community involved, and continue to build consensus and support for the project.

An Integrated, Coordinated Approach

The redevelopment plan's success requires an integrated, coordinated approach that involves government, business, education, and the community working together to create a revitalized local economy. Information relating to various aspects of that integrated, coordinated approach—training/education, job creation, business development, partnering, housing, and child-care initiatives—follows.

Training/Education

The United States Department of Transportation and various other federal and state agencies have established On-the-Job Training programs. The primary objective of these federally funded programs is to increase the overall effectiveness of approved support-service programs while creating training opportunities for minorities and women.

Job Creation

Urban-revitalization and brownfields-redevelopment projects help create jobs and are putting people back to work. In its January 1998 *National Report on Brownfields Redevelopment*, the U.S. Conference of Mayors indicated that 236,000 jobs could be created if the brownfields in 112 cities were redeveloped. The cities included in the report cited increased local tax revenues and job creation as the most important public benefit of brownfields redevelopment, followed by neighborhood revitalization.

The Brownfields Job Training and Demonstration Pilots will each be funded up to \$200,000 over two years. These pilots will bring together community groups, job-training organizations, educators, labor groups, investors, lenders, developers, and other affected parties to address the issue of providing environmental employment and training for residents in communities impacted by brownfields.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 1999 budget provided for a flexible new tool to help states and communities meet the challenge of moving welfare recipients into jobs. Specifically, the budget proposes to provide 50,000 new welfare-to-work vouchers at a cost of \$283 million. These vouchers would be targeted to welfare recipients who need housing assistance to get or keep a job. Individuals could use the vouchers to move closer to new jobs.

Business Development

Since industries, transportation, land uses, natural resources, and other key elements of a healthy economy are regional in scope, communities and the private sector should cooperate to create regional structures that promote a coherent metropolitan whole that respects local character and identity.

Communities should have an appropriately scaled and economically healthy center focus. At the community level, a wide range of commercial, residential, cultural, civil, and recreational uses should be located in the town center, or downtown. At the neighborhood level, centers should contain local businesses that serve the daily needs of nearby residents. At the regional level, regional facilities should be located in urban centers that are accessible by transit throughout the metropolitan area.

Having a distinctive identity will help communities create a quality of life that is attractive for business retention, future residents, and private investment. Community economic-development efforts should help to create and preserve each community's sense of social diversity, and include public gathering places and a strong local sense of place. Each community's most valuable assets are the ones they already have, and existing businesses are already contributing to their home communities. Economic-development efforts should give first priority to supporting existing enterprises as the best source of business expansion and local job growth. Luring businesses away from the neighboring communities is a zero-sum game that doesn't create new wealth in the regional economy.

Communities and regions should identify specific gaps and niches their economies can fill, and promote a diversified range of specialized industry clusters drawing on local advantages to serve local, regional, national, and international markets.

Enterprises should work as civic partners, contributing to the communities and regions where they operate, protecting the natural environment, and providing workers with good pay, benefits, opportunities for upward mobility, and a healthy work environment. To minimize economic, social, and environmental costs, and to efficiently use resources and infrastructure, new development should take place in existing urban, suburban, and rural areas before targeting more agricultural land or open space.

Partnering

Partnering with Welfare-to-Work and Job Access programs offers benefits to the potential employees and employers. The federal government is encouraging employers to take advantage of Access to Jobs, a new program for Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants funded for fiscal years 1999 through 2003 that has two purposes: 1) to develop services to transport low-income individuals and welfare recipients to and from jobs, child-care and human-service resources, and

job-training facilities, and provide guaranteed ride-home programs for second- and third-shift workers; and 2) to develop services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to take advantage of employment opportunities.

The Environmental Protection Agency, other federal agencies, local job-training organizations, community colleges, labor groups, and others have established partnerships to develop long-term plans for fostering workforce development through environmental training; to ensure the recruitment of trainees for socio-economically disadvantaged communities; to provide quality worker training; and to allow local residents an opportunity to qualify for jobs developed as a result of urban-revitalization and brownfields-redevelopment efforts.

At all levels of the partnership efforts should be targeted to reducing poverty by promoting jobs that match the skills of existing residents, improving the skills of low-income individuals, addressing the needs of families moving off welfare, and ensuring the availability of quality affordable child care, transportation, and housing in all communities.

Housing

The rebuilding of communities must include a certain percentage of affordable housing. One of the most important roles of HUD is to increase home-ownership opportunities for all Americans. For single mothers, home ownership means having a place to live and raise children while gaining both self-sufficiency and an asset that can grow in value and help finance future family needs. For more than sixty years, HUD's Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has provided mortgage insurance to help low- and moderate-income families buy their own homes. The FHA is especially important because by law it helps people who may not be served by the private market, particularly women, minorities, and city residents. FHA's low down payment requirements make it attractive for women and people of color lacking savings accounts. The recent increase in FHA's maximum loan limit to \$197,621—up from \$170,000—is expected to help even more women and people of color buy a home.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) recognizes that revitalizing older suburban and inner-city markets and encouraging infill development is universally accepted as good public policy. On February 4, 1999, Vice President Al Gore, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the NAHB jointly announced a goal to construct one million additional market-rate housing units in the nation's cities and inner-ring suburbs over the next ten years. The NAHB recommends that one way to accommodate some of the nation's housing demand without expanding urban cores is by building within those cores, replacing vacant and unattractive lots with vibrant new communities.

According to the NAHB, to reach this goal the Administration and the nation's cities will have to work closely with the housing industry to overcome major impediments, such as aging infrastructure that makes redevelopment costly and difficult, and federal liability laws that increase risk for builders involved in the redevelopment of brownfield sites. Making cities safe from crime, improving the quality of schools, and creating employment opportunities are prerequisites for rebuilding the nation's inner cities and for encouraging people to return to them. (Source: *Smart Growth: Building Better Places to Live, Work and Play*, National Association of Home Builders, 2000)

It is equally important to mention the benefits of housing on the economy. The complete impact of residential construction on a local community is documented in a model developed by the NAHB. The model estimates the economic power of home building in the initial construction phase, the ripple effect as that new money spreads itself throughout the local economy, and the ongoing effect as new residents spend some of their income locally, generating further economic activity (see chart “The Economy That Housing Builds”).

The Economy That Housing Builds

The construction of 100 single-family homes and 100 multifamily homes in a typical metropolitan area benefits the local economy with new income, jobs, government revenues, and property taxes:

	<i>Single-Family</i>	<i>Multifamily</i>
Initial Year Impact		
Local income*	\$10,755,000	\$5,234,000
Local full-time jobs	257	122
Local taxes**	\$ 1,159,000	\$ 579,000
Ongoing Annual Impact		
Local income*	\$ 2,915,000	\$1,798,000
Local full-time jobs	75	46
Local taxes**	\$ 472,000	\$ 308,000
Residential property taxes	\$ 177,000	\$ 106,000
Other	\$ 295,000	\$ 202,000

**Income generated by workers and businesses, and the ripple effect of workers and businesses spending this added income in the local economy.*

***Revenues generated by local taxes from traditional sources such as property taxes, fees, and revenue from local, government-owned enterprises.*

Source: NAHB Local Economic Impact Model

Childcare Initiatives

As we seek to rebuild our communities, an important aspect that must be properly addressed is childcare. Recent statistics have revealed an increase in the number of working mothers in full- and part-time positions. Mothers taking advantage of Welfare-to-Work programs have stressed the need for childcare.

President Clinton's fiscal year 1999 budget proposal includes \$20 billion in new funding over five years for childcare. It is the single largest national commitment to childcare in our nation's history. It is a comprehensive plan to make childcare more affordable and accessible, to raise care quality, and to ensure safety of care for millions of American children.

Highlights of key components of the president's proposal are:

- Doubling the number of children whose parents would receive childcare subsidies by adding \$7.5 billion in funding for the Department of Health and Human Services-managed Childcare and Development Block Grant.
- Increasing the federal Child and Dependent Childcare tax credit to help working families pay for childcare.
- Creating a new federal tax credit for businesses providing childcare facilities, operating existing facilities, training childcare workers, reserving slots for employees' children at childcare facilities, or providing childcare resources and referral services to employees.

The proposals highlighted above are important for leaders and residents of Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) neighborhoods. Accessible and affordable childcare is an important component of healthy and successful communities. The child-care industry also provides meaningful jobs for residents. Quality childcare helps children become better prepared for school and increases their academic achievement.

Benchmarking the Process

In order to determine how well your plan is working it is important to monitor the results. Performance benchmarks or goals and objectives must be established during the assessment stage. The success of the project depends on public/community acceptance, and monitoring the results and sharing them with the public can help foster that acceptance.

Meeting Public Requirements

A community-involvement program that stimulates increased participation by community organizations and residents (including minority and low-income residents), small and minority-owned businesses, persons with disabilities, and the elderly is essential to adequately consider land use and the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of redevelopment and related transportation decisions.

Summary

The successful planning and implementation of a redevelopment project can best be accomplished by following four basic principles:

- **Study the environment thoroughly.** More than one project has failed because the team failed to understand and recognize the needs of the neighborhood, the physical environment, or the many proactive groups whose purpose is to support only those projects that make a positive impact on the narrow and parochial interests they represent.
- **Form a public/private development team.** Each group will bring necessary assets and expertise to the team that the other may lack. The different sectors will also provide a united response to problems and issues as they arise. Each group will benefit from the credibility and reputation offered by the others on the team.
- **Seek changes in restrictive rules and policies where appropriate.** Projects often get bogged down by antiquated rules and regulations (although those rules and regulations may have been promulgated for good reasons in the past) that have become outdated or protect long-abandoned interests. Most regulatory bodies are flexible if the required change is positive and will enhance quality of life for the public at large. This effort should be undertaken early in the project/program cycle, when some interaction is desired by most stakeholders, positions are still fluid, and the initiative or project is still free of polarizing specificity and details.
- **Ensure support is in place.** Look before you leap. Do the homework. Do not move into implementation until you have ascertained that the required support of all kinds is in place. A project delay that takes place after groundbreaking results in expenses and frustrations far greater than would a delay and redesign in the planning stage; a delay that occurs after groundbreaking can also easily end up in litigation. Too often the project sponsors, though full of good will and encouragement and with the best of intentions, fail to identify and prepare for potential pitfalls.

Finally, when the project is successfully completed, be sure to recognize *all* who made a contribution. You may want to work with them again, and properly recognizing them will help make them willing to work with you again.

Appendix

Research Sources for Part III

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