

# **Comprehensive Planning and Zoning to Achieve Smart Growth Goals**

**Paul Beyer**

**Director of Smart Growth**

**NYS Department of State**

**Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure**

# What is “Smart Growth”?



- Land development decisions that make efficient use of:
  - land
  - natural resources
  - public resources
    - utilizes existing infrastructure
  - conservation efforts

# NYSDOS Smart Growth principles

- Compact with mixed-use community design
- Re-use & re-development of existing buildings
- Regional planning
- “Green” buildings & infrastructure
- Mobility choices: walking, biking & public transit
- Well-planned & well-maintained parks & public spaces
- Target investments in affordable housing
- Age-integrated communities
- Collaborative, “bottom-up,” stake holder-driven planning

# Smart Growth: opposite of sprawl



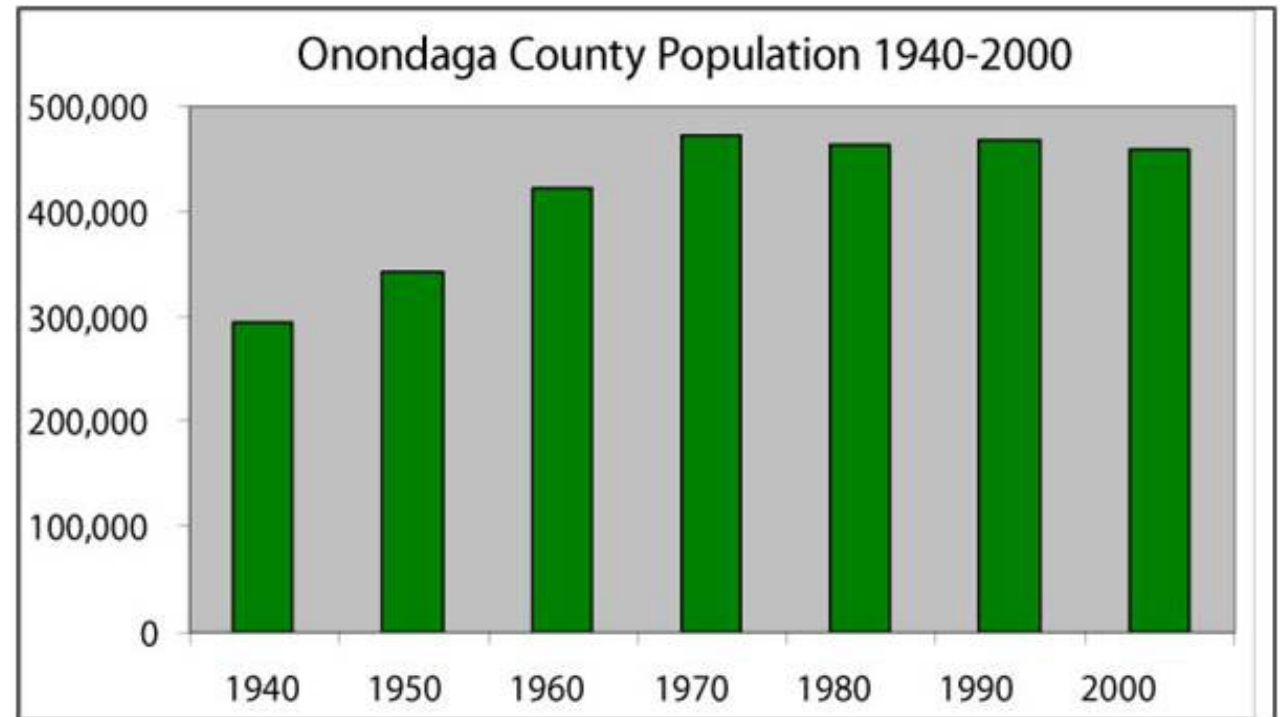
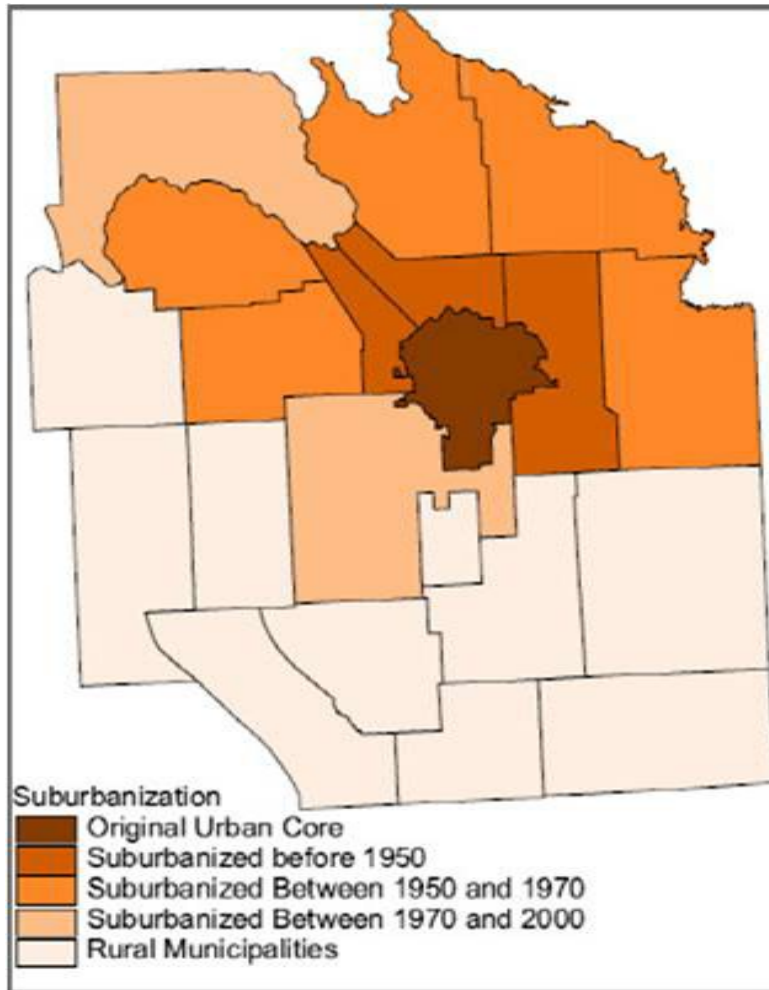
- Sprawl is dispersed, auto-dependent development:
  - outside of compact urban & village centers
  - along highways
- linear
  - in rural countryside



# Characteristics of Sprawl

- Excessive land consumption
- Low densities relative to older centers
- Auto-dependent
- Fragmented open space & leapfrog development
- Lack of choice in housing types
- Separation of uses
- Repetitive one-story development
- Commercial buildings surrounded by acres of parking & other impervious surfaces create heat islands & increased stormwater runoff

# Sprawl Without Growth



# Changing demographics

## Baby boomers

- Post World War II
- 1946 to 1964
- Oldest - 65 in 2011
- Youngest - 50 in 2014
  - 65 in 2030
- Retirement age

## Millennials

- Came of age at the turn of the Century
- 1977 to 2000
- 25 to 34 years old
- Prime working-age
- Place-based decision-making



# Changing preferences

## Baby boomers

- Age in place
- Living longer
- More diverse
- Opting out of retirement communities
- Entering nursing homes later

## Millennials

- 47% prefer mixed-use neighborhoods
- 40% prefer rural or small towns
- 12% prefer conventional suburbs



# Changing demographics

- 1950s
  - ½ of all households consisted of families with children
- 1970 - 2012
  - households comprising married couples with children dropped
    - 40% to 20%



# Changing transportation choices

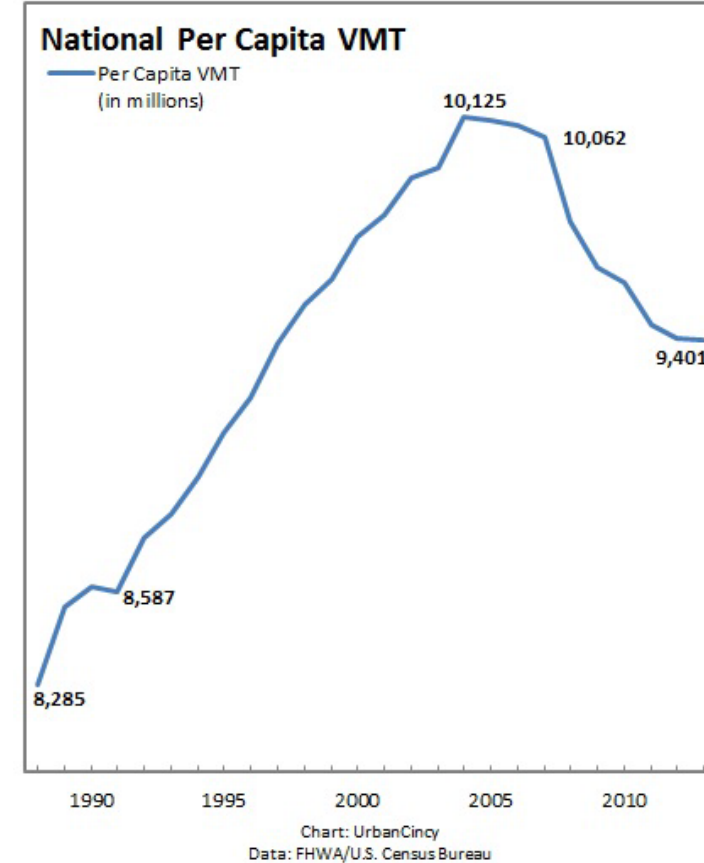
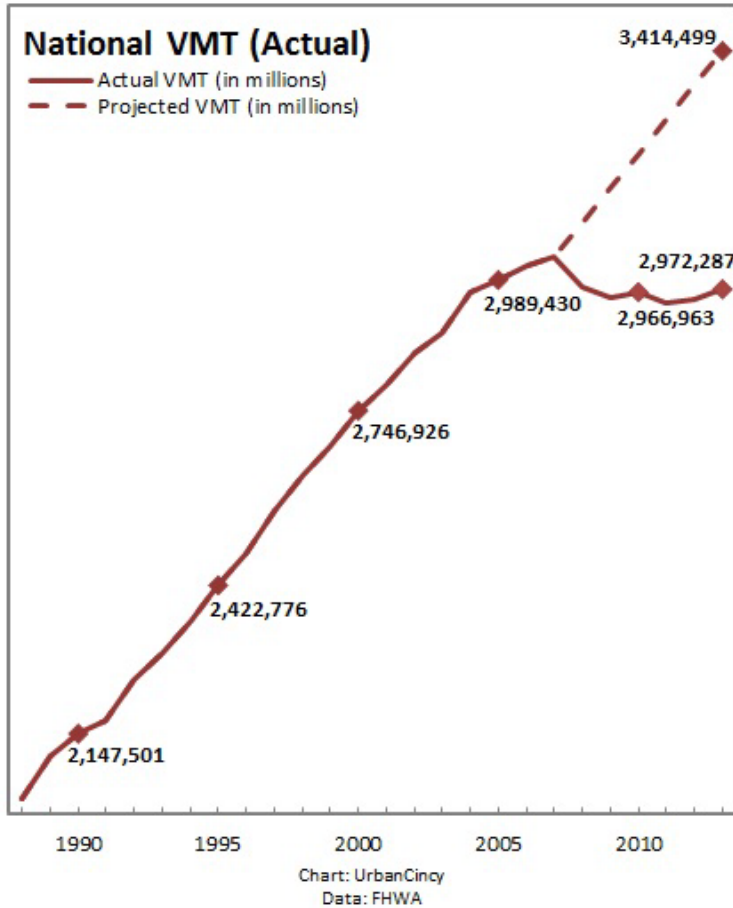
## Baby boomers

- Driving less
- 64% increased bike trips
  - 2001-2009
- Increased public transit ridership

## Millennials & younger drivers

- 23% fewer VMTs in last decade
  - Ages 16 to 34
- High school seniors
  - 27% 2010 without driver's license
    - *Up from 21% in 2000*

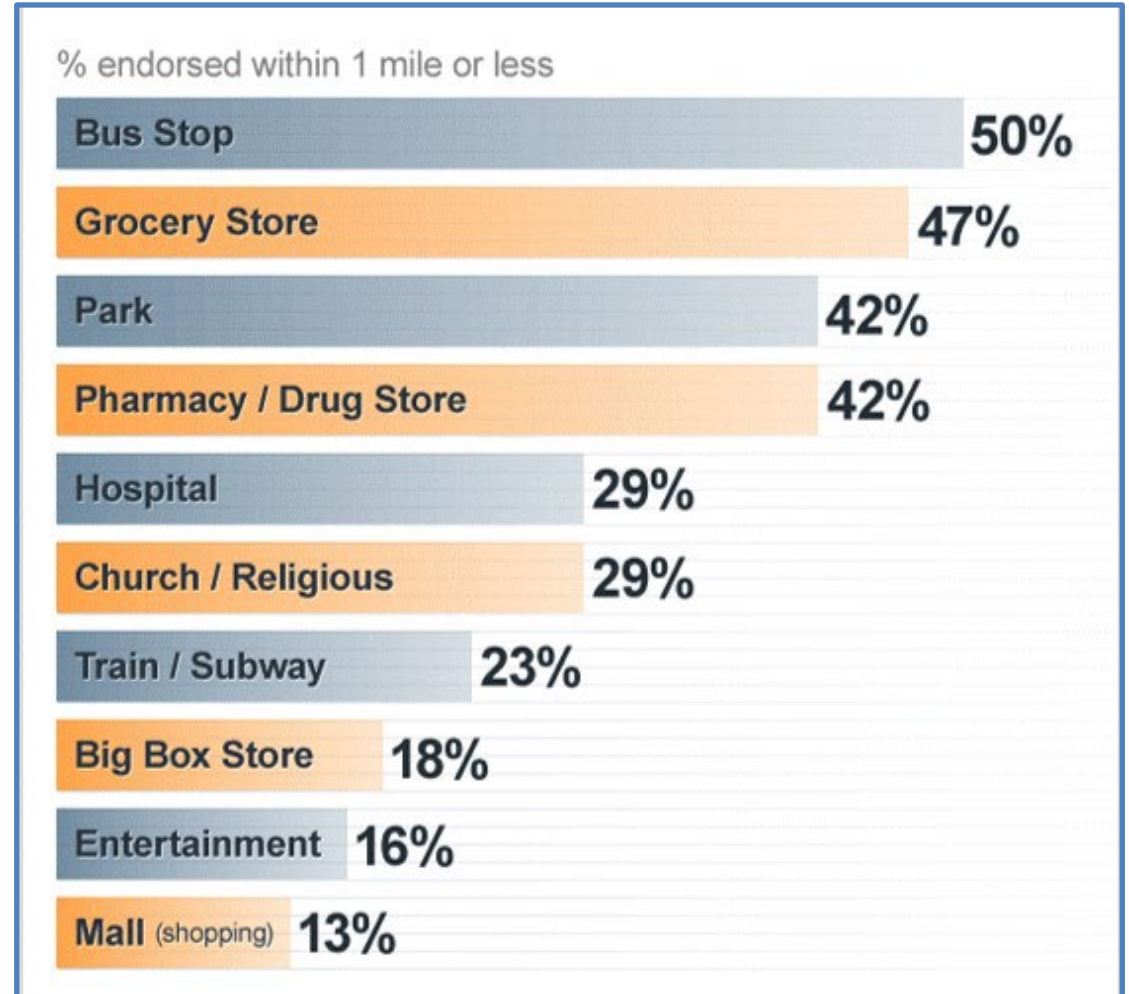
# Americans are driving less



# Community livability

## Community amenities preferred by 50 +

- Important to older Americans is access to:
- Transportation
- Food
- Green Space
  - Recreation



# Complete Streets design

- Sidewalks, crosswalks, raised crosswalks & ramps
- Traffic calming measures
  - Pedestrian control signalization
  - Narrow street
    - Road diet, bump outs ...



Share the road signage, sharrows, striping, bicycle lanes or paved shoulders



# Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act

- State agency spending on “public” infrastructure must align with Smart Growth principles
- Targets spending on roads, sewer & water lines, utilities toward municipal centers
- Modest increases in density can result in millions in savings on infrastructure costs



# Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act

Each State Infrastructure Agency must form SG Advisory Committee to:

- review projects against SG criteria
- prepare SG Impact Statements for infrastructure projects



A Division of the New York Department of State

NY State Infrastructure Agencies:

NYSDEC	NYSDOT
NYSDOS	NYSED
DOH	ESDC
Urban Development Corp.	
Environmental Facilities Corp.	
Housing Finance Agency	
Housing Trust Fund Corp.	
Dormitory Authority	
Port Authority of NY & NJ	
Thruway Authority	
All other NY Authorities	





# Economic/Fiscal benefits of compact design



- Localities get higher property & sales taxes
  - 10 times more per acre
- Save on:
  - Infrastructure costs
    - 38%
  - Delivery of public services
    - 10%

# Economic/Fiscal benefits of compact design

Case study: Village of Pawling NY

- Older one-story buildings with 0 setbacks, connected storefronts, parking in the rear/side
- New chain drug store





# Economic/Fiscal benefits of compact design

- Dutcher House in Village Center
  - Tax assessment: \$3,372,500
- New Building
  - \$1,151,400
- Tax value set at 51%
- Model for future development



# Local Smart Growth Tools

A Division of the New York Department of State



**Division of Local  
Government Services**

# Comprehensive plan

- Expression of goals
- Outline for orderly growth
  - Where & what types of development should occur
- Public engagement
  - Buy in
- Legal defense for land use regulations

Town Law: § 272-a  
Village Law: § 7-722  
City Law: § 28-a



# DOS Smart Growth Planning and Zoning Grant Program

Grants to Municipalities for Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Ordinances that incorporate Smart Growth Principles

Grants for Area Planning and Zoning—such as downtowns, mixed-use centers, TOD

Emphasis on Clean Energy Planning and Zoning/Bonus Points

10% Community Match

Counties and Regional Planning Entities Can Apply to Administer Grants



# Community resilience

*“The ability of a system to withstand shocks and stresses while still maintaining its essential functions.”*



Resilient Communities are:

- familiar with their natural hazards
- prepared for them
- recover quickly when they occur



# Resilience planning

Considers multiple systems to create vital communities:

- A holistic approach
- New neighborhoods & relocations
- Infrastructure modification & backup

Expand, conserve or revitalize natural protective features:

- Storm damage benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Quality of life benefits for residents & visitors



# NYS DEC Climate Smart Program

Climate Smart Communities (CSCs) engage in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience

1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community
2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action
3. Decrease community energy use
4. Increase community use of renewable energy
5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land-use tools
7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change
8. Support development of a green innovation economy
9. Inform and inspire the public
10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action

Adopt or revise land-use plans & regulations to minimize impact of new development:

- Smart Growth Principals
- Resource-efficient site design guidelines
- Green parking lot standards
- Complete streets & alternative transportation options
- Green building codes