

Ten Principles for Revitalizing Inner-Ring Suburbs

The following principles summarize findings from two Urban Land Institute symposiums on inner-ring suburbs and four meetings of ULI's Urban Neighborhood Revitalization Forum.

excerpted from William H. Hudnut, III's, *Halfway to Everywhere*, Appendix 3

"The job of revitalization is one of creating demand where there isn't any." -Charles Buki

1. Empower Local Leadership

- Encourage community dialog and grass roots involvement in decision-making
- Forge coalitions and partnerships among the for-profit, nonprofit, and public sectors
- Build leadership and consensus through local neighborhood based organizations
- Have a stated and shared goal
- Create a rational and exciting vision of the future; provide dramatic and extensive visual, physical, and verbal portrayals of the future

2. Be Competitive

- Build on "location location location" as a key asset
- Remodel aging housing stock
- Make your community clean and safe

3. Find a Niche/Attraction/Market/or Purpose

- Build from strengths and be what you are. Use the competitive advantages of location and exploit any special characteristics
- Explore transit-adjacent development projects
- Use historic preservation strategies to advance economic development
- Consider heritage tourism as a magnet

4. Create Opportunity, Stability, and Diversity

- Homeownership strengthens community. Facilitate homeownership and business ownership so that interests are deeply vested
- Promote mixed-income housing in exurbs to take some of the burden away from inner-ring communities
- Encourage infill that fits with the architectural context of neighborhood
- Create affordable housing opportunities

5. Strengthen Schools to Achieve Balance

- By whatever means necessary, provide the best schools and the best teachers
- Work with the local real estate board to counteract "steering" and adopt a fair housing ordinance that legally requires an open community
- Devise ways to attract and retain middle-income families
- Consider school district tax base sharing
- Help schools from outside

6. Incentivize the Private Sector

- Recruit multiple participants: one person, one agency, one project is rarely enough
- Government should assist in land assembly
- Political will must be strong to withstand local objections
- Use inducements such as training grants, favorable zoning, tax abatements, and tax increment financing (TIF) districts to reduce the private sector's risk
- Eliminate bureaucratic red tape; expedite development through "green tape"
- Relax some development controls
- Lead in building public support and consensus

7. Maintain and Strengthen Infrastructure

- Sewers, power lines, bridges, roads, and highways must be kept in good repair, costly though this is
- Provide extraordinary public safety

8. Embrace Smart Growth Principles

- Build mixed-use, mixed-income communities that are less automobile dependent
- Establish growth zones with incentives to develop in the zone
- Encourage higher density through policy and practice
- Make places and spaces where people can congregate

9. Think and Act Regionally

- Consider pooling property and sales tax bases among neighboring communities
- Promote sharing of resources through some form of tax base sharing to ensure equitable distribution of larger regional assets throughout a region
- Form governance structures that support cooperation for inner-ring suburbs to solve issues together
- Work toward regional approaches to affordable housing and economic development policy
- Participate in regional visioning processes and develop a plan that stakeholders buy for coordination of land use and transportation policies

10. Be Results Oriented. Ask:

- Has the quality of life been improved?
- Will the deal pencil out and prove financially sound so that the return on investment pays off?
- Has the public sector properly set the stage for private investment to help minimize the risk?
- Is the revitalization sustainable? Does it possess permanence and is it self-supporting?

"Ultimately, a project is economically sustainable only if beneficial private investments are made."