



# The Land Use Bulletin

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## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: STEPHEN GOLTRY

Experiencing youth while growing up on a 2,000 acre wheat and cattle farm in south-central Kansas along with nineteen years of 4-H Club activities infused in me the principles of land stewardship and community involvement.

Being a part of 1000 Friends of Iowa has been my first experience as a nonprofit organization board member. I hold a B.S. in horticulture-landscape design from Oklahoma State University and a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Kansas State University. I completed my double master degree at Iowa State University in Community & Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture in 1996.



Professionally, I am a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards, the American Institute of Certified Planners, as well as being a licensed landscape architect in Iowa. I have had the opportunity to plan, design and manage projects involving parks, transportation corridors and new towns throughout the U.S. and abroad.

My experiences in southern California and in Arizona in the late 1980s and early 1990s taught me that land use changes have long-term and near irreversible effects on a region by depleting its natural resources, to the extent that a region becomes dependent on an adjacent area for their support and resources.

Serving with the board of 1000 Friends since its 1997 inception, I have come to appreciate the skills, commitment and resources necessary to create a new nonprofit organization. Americans are unique in that we have formed a society that allows and depends on the volunteer spirit of its community members. Jon Van Til in "Philanthropy in its Historical Context" offers this: "[volunteerism] includes interests and concerns of all income classes for environmental protection, historic landmark preservation, disease prevention, educational improvement and art enhancement" (Gurin and Van Til, 1990).

Iowa is a rich state with some of the best soils, rivers, streams, food production technology, and collective community spirit in the world. For these resources to remain an integral part of our quality of life, citizens must take stock of the issues of growth and land tenure in their community. It is imperative that we and future members of 1000 Friends of Iowa continue to find ways to bring this message to a multitude of urban and rural residents so that they, too, become "citizens united for responsible land use!"

*Stephen Goltry is a landscape architect and planner residing in Ames.*

*The mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa is to educate the citizens of our state about the long-term benefits of halting urban sprawl, conserving and protecting our agricultural and natural resources, and revitalizing our urban neighborhoods.*

## 1000 Friends of Iowa


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## CAUCUS PROJECT A SUCCESS

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, as Iowa basked in the national spotlight, nearly 300 resolutions supporting responsible land use were read in Republican and Democratic caucuses in 38 counties across the state. We've since received calls, letters, e-mails, and face-to-face reports from 40 supporters. About two-thirds of those reporting were Democrats. In all but one case—a Republican caucus in Muscatine—the resolutions passed, usually without much effort. One Republican caucus in Cedar Rapids accepted all five, and there was little dissension.

The next step is to assure that land use issues are addressed at as many county and district conventions as possible, and that supportive language finds its way into both the Iowa Republican and Democratic party platforms. If you plan to go to your county or district convention and would like to push for inclusion of responsible land use in your party's platform, please consider bringing the following suggested plank along with you, or give it to a delegate who plans to attend. A party's platform can have quite an influence on the debate during upcoming elections.

### Resolution de Sprawl



*"We support coordinated land use planning between cities and counties that prevents urban sprawl, minimizes the loss of farmland and natural areas, targets programs for growth and development into existing urban areas, and most efficiently uses taxpayer dollars."*

## HISTORIC TAX CREDITS BILL STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF PASSAGE

There is a bill struggling to move through the Iowa House Ways and Means Committee that could be a real boon to historic preservation and urban revitalization. House File 482 by Grundberg, Houser, Martin, Fallon, Boggess, Bradley, and Dolecheck provides an individual or corporate state income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Commercial buildings, barns, and individual homes built before 1935 would qualify. The credit would be equal to 25% of the qualified rehabilitation costs made to the eligible property and could be carried forward for up to seven years or back for three years.

An eligible property must have been constructed prior to 1935 and be located in a HUD eligible area. If the property is located outside of a HUD area, it must meet at least one of these criteria:

- It is listed on the national register of historic places.
- It has been designated to have historic significance to a district listed in the national registry of historic places.
- It is located in an historical preservation district.
- It has been designated by a city or county as a local landmark
- Any barn constructed prior to 1935.

## Conservationist to speak in Ames April 12<sup>th</sup>

*By Peggy Murdock*

The Story County Water Quality Coalition has invited Wayne Peterson, an urban conservationist and advocate of no-run-off urban planning, to speak in the auditorium at Ames Public Library at 7 p.m. April 12th. The public is welcome to attend.

For more information, contact Peggy Murdock at [murdock.peggy@mcleodusa.net](mailto:murdock.peggy@mcleodusa.net).



# WORK ON COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING BILL CONTINUES

**AS WE GO TO PRINT**, the 2000 legislative session in Iowa has reached the halfway mark. So far, the budget has been the primary focus of discussion. But lawmakers are beginning to turn their attention to land use issues. A number of ideas are receiving discussion, and bills have been introduced to address tax increment financing, historic tax credits, land value taxation, annexation, condemnation, and comprehensive planning. A bill (SSB 3178) requiring cities and counties to plan cooperatively continues to be refined in the Senate.

- The "Land Development Management Act" seeks to preserve agricultural, natural, cultural, and historical areas, provide for the orderly development of cities, preserve private property rights, encourage economic development, and control urban sprawl.
- State agencies providing development incentives are required to target incentives to areas that have been designated for growth in local strategic development plans.
- The bill sets up a state land use strategic development council, composed of the heads of various state agencies, which will oversee and coordinate state sponsored development projects. It also establishes the state land management planning board to sort out local plans where one or more local governments fail to agree with a proposed strategic development plan. The board will also approve all boundary adjustments, including both voluntary and involuntary annexations.
- The real estate transfer tax is increased from \$5 to \$9 to help fund the costs of implementing this act. A fiscal analysis by legislative staff indicates that more money will be needed to accomplish all the tasks set forth in the bill.

- Iowa State University will continue collecting and updating land use inventories.
- The most important sections of the bill deal with local planning, and require every county and all cities within each county to cooperatively assemble a strategic development plan. Plans must identify a unified physical design, encourage compact and contiguous high-density development, provide a variety of housing choices, protect non-replaceable farmland and natural areas, encourage in-fill and redevelopment of existing urban sites, and prevent the occurrence of urban sprawl.

Plans must identify territory that can accommodate growth for 20 years and must avoid farmland with a corn suitability rating of 60 or higher, except as a last resort. The bill sets up a process for public hearings and a dispute resolution and judicial review process.

## **1000 Friends Public Policy Update**

This and other legislation could change dramatically...and quickly. Your best bet to stay informed is to call in your e-mail address at (515) 288-5364 or e-mail us at [kfoi@kfoi.org](mailto:kfoi@kfoi.org). We'll e-mail you our Public Policy Update on a regular basis.

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## **CHECK OUT OUR ENCLOSURE**

No one has ever accused us of re-printing enclosures that were consistently lopsided on one side of the issue. But if that should ever happen, we will only have to point to this issue's enclosure. From *REALTOR Magazine's* October 1999 issue, "Selling Smart Growth in Portland" looks at the urban growth practices of Oregon's largest city from a realtor's point of view.



## PROJECT RESTORE SEEKS TO SAVE HISTORIC CHURCH

by Tom Smull

Many of you will remember the burning of All Saints Byzantine-style Catholic Church in Stuart in 1995 by an arsonist, who lit the fire as a protest against the Catholic Church. Since then, a group called Project Restore has been working to keep the historic structure standing in the hopes of restoring it as a community cultural center and Institute of Religion and Peace. The parish decided not to restore the historic church, but rather to build a new church on 90 acres at the east edge of town.

If Project Restore succeeds, the restored building will be a major draw to downtown Stuart, which is seeing more and more of its economic base move toward I-80, less than one mile south of downtown. The beauty of a restored All Saints Church combined with the activities of the Institute would act as a major attraction, drawing people off the interstate to downtown Stuart.

The Institute would feature an interactive series of videos designed to help people understand the world's religions. To achieve its long term goals, Project



*All Saints Church, before the fire.*

Restore must first save the structure from further deterioration. Funding and volunteer help is needed to keep the project alive. To offer assistance, or for more information, please contact Project Restore via its web site, [www.restoreallsaints.org](http://www.restoreallsaints.org), or call Tom Smull at (515) 280-7234.

*(Note: A video is available that shows the beauty of the original architecture, the fire and devastation, and the hope that the educational project now offers to the community.)*

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## DES MOINES VIDEO PREMIERE A SUCCESS



On December 16<sup>th</sup>—amid Christmas shopping, an outbreak of the flu, and the first snowfall of the year—over 80 people showed up at the Iowa State Historical Society to view 1000 Friends of Iowa's new video, "Cornerstones." Funded by

the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and produced by the Boddy Media Group, the short documentary examines how urban sprawl affects Iowa cities and towns.

Besides the Des Moines event, "Cornerstones" has premiered in Waterloo and Davenport. Ames holds a premiere at 7:00 p.m. on March 16th at the Ames Public Library, and Iowa City on April 8th. Dubuque, Burlington and Council Bluffs are all considering a similar showing.

**Ames holds a premiere  
at 7:00 p.m. on March 16th at  
the Ames Public Library**

The audience at the Des Moines event also heard a lively debate from five panelists: Gary Lozano (a planner with the City of Des Moines), Waukee Mayor Don Bailey, Indianola Mayor Jerry Kelley, Leslie Gearhart (a developer with Metropolitan Properties), and LaVon Griffieon (a local farmer and president of 1000 Friends of Iowa's board of directors). One point of contention was over whether or not rural water systems encourage urban sprawl.

As the video continues its jaunt around the state, it will be interesting to see what other issues become hot buttons. Anyone wishing to purchase it can do so for \$5 from our office.



## IOWA-GROWN GROCERY STORE MOVES FORWARD

Two recent meetings in a Des Moines neighborhood proved very fruitful as 1000 Friends continues to hammer out details of a neighborhood grocery store featuring Iowa-grown food. Residents in the River Bend neighborhood of Des Moines are very positive toward the idea, and support continues to build outside of the neighborhood, as well.

City officials, however, continue to court any "viable" offer, including a possible Walgreens. Residents indicate they support a store, but want it to be small to medium in size and fit in aesthetically with the historic nature of the neighborhood. They are especially supportive of the idea of linking rural producers with urban consumers by providing a market for farm-fresh eggs, meat, milk, fruits, vegetables and other products.

Of course, since the project is still in the brainstorming phase, the sky's the limit. Other ideas

that have been mentioned include a delivery service, drive-up service for call-in orders, cooking classes, a community kitchen to actually process extra produce and supply baked goods, an underground parking garage, and an adjoining outdoor restaurant.

Architectural renderings will soon be available as we search for the right developer. 1000 Friends has hired a person to write a business plan and to identify the structure of the entity that will run the store. Individuals have already pledged over \$40,000 in investment money, and a network of farmers is being organized.

This project has taken on a life of its own and we will soon be looking for a project manager. 1000 Friends is pursuing every avenue to insure that Iowa's capital city will have a sustainable model for neighborhood groceries that also feature Iowa-grown products at competitive prices. If you have expertise to offer, input, investment money, or ideas about this project, please call our office at (515) 288-5364.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE: 1000 IN 2000

Our membership drive is gearing up to make our name a reality. We're at nearly 600 members right now in 60 Iowa counties. By the end of this year, we hope to have 1000 \$100 Founding Friends. 1000 members and an operating budget of \$100,000 will put us in a solid position to move forward on our

work. If you would like to be a Founding Friend but can't afford a lump sum donation of \$100, we have developed a monthly pledge program for \$8.75 a month. Of course, we gratefully accept annual memberships at \$20 and up, as well. Contact us for details.

Please clip and mail with your check, payable to 1000 Friends of Iowa. Help us reach our goal of enrolling 1000 Founding Friends by the end of 2000. A donation of \$100 or more designates a Founding Friend, but any donation is welcome! Your contribution is tax-deductible.

### 1000 Friends of Iowa

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student/Senior	___ \$20	Patron	___ \$250
Individual	___ \$35	Silver	___ \$500
Family	___ \$45	Gold	___ \$1000
Organization	___ \$100	Steward	___ \$2500
Founding Friend	___ \$100	Other	___

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City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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**1000 Friends of Iowa**

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# SLIDESHOW, ANYONE?

*by LaVon Griffieon and Ed Fallon*

## OUR ALL-TIME "FAVORITE" GIG

Public speakers always have great stories to tell...but not all choose to tell these on themselves. Ask us about the "baddest, worstest" presentation ever and we will chime in unison, "December 13, 1999!"

It was the Iowa Engineering Society's conference on urban sprawl and land use. Arriving early to set up for our presentation, we were awed by the assemblage of electronic equipment, wires, cords, plugs and remote controls. We breathed a sigh of relief knowing that all we required was a simple slide projector and video player. Leave the Power Point gadgets for the more technologically sophisticated and better funded presenters who would follow us, we concurred.

Any self assurance we had was soon shattered when a hotel worker dumped the contents of our carousel (110 slides!) on the floor 15 minutes before our presentation. We frantically regrouped and slid every single slide back into its slot (six or seven were shown upside down). As our presentation started, the absence of a slide projector bulb was immediately noticed by all 180 members of the audience.

Seven minutes later, with a new bulb installed, the remote control went on the "fritz." (None of this was our equipment, we are pleased to report.) As we approached the moment in our presentation when we switch from slide show to video, it became apparent that while hooking up various Power Point projectors, workers had totally overlooked the VCR (which has now become the ugly stepsister of audiovisual equipment).

But all in all, the Engineers put on an excellent conference. We thank them for their efforts and for inviting 1000 Friends to share its voice and perspective.

## PRESENTERS TURNED CIRCUIT PREACHERS

Always eager to lend a helping hand, we found captive audiences one Sunday when we agreed to fill in for a vacationing minister. We preached from the pulpit to three small Methodist congregations in rural Warren County, and even got to spontaneously deliver one children's sermon. It was enlightening to "walk a mile"—actually drive five to ten miles very quickly between churches—in a country pastor's shoes. We

agreed it would be a tough job to hurry from one church to another like that every single Sunday, especially in inclement weather. We also discovered that three sermons combined with innumerable hymns can put a bit of wear and tear on the old vocal chords. By the time we were done at the last church, the organist was surprised at how much one sermon can change over the course of a morning, and how we had added a children's sermon since our first service.

But the bottom line is, our message was very well received. From our perch in the pulpit, it appeared that not a single weary farmer slept through our sermon. As presenters, that's really all we ask: don't stone us and stay awake while we babble.

## WE GET TO LECTURE THE IDOT

It was very encouraging to be welcomed into a meeting of department heads for the Iowa Department of Transportation in Ames, who listened to our presentation in its entirety. Mark Wandro, the new director, was gracious enough to grant us an audience. (Actually, we met Mark when he accompanied us and several others to Oregon in 1998 on a land use fact-finding mission.) Many land use issues are directly related to airstrips, highways and light rail. Though there's a long way to go before our transportation system becomes an ally in the battle to end urban sprawl, it is good to be building a healthy working relationship with the Iowa DOT.

## WE ARE NOT ALONE

From the stronghold of the IDOT headquarters in Ames to the pulpits of Warren County Methodist churches, from the community centers of Decorah to the quaint restaurants of Council Bluffs, we continue to spread the word about responsible land use in Iowa. During the months of November and December, approximately 1,150 individuals heard our spiel.

When it comes to land use presenters, we may have the biggest mouths, but we're certainly not the only mouths. Our Speakers Bureau now includes 12 presenters covering every corner of the state and a variety of land use topics—from transportation to agriculture, from biodiversity to sustainable development. If you know of a group that would be interested in a presentation, please call our office at (515) 288-5364 or e-mail us at [kfoi@kfoi.org](mailto:kfoi@kfoi.org).

## VAN BUREN COUNTY UPDATE

1000 Friends of Iowa received a grant from Vision 2020 to conduct a series of study groups in Van Buren County concerning land use challenges facing the county. Every household in the county will soon receive a questionnaire and a notice about the opportunity to participate. They will also be asked to fill out a survey about their views on the county's land use assets, challenges, and potential solutions to those challenges.

Residents will be invited to join in small groups to discuss land use in Van Buren County and propose solutions to local problems. Each group of 8-12 people will meet approximately four to five times. These facilitated discussion groups will address the advantages and disadvantages of living in Van Buren County, things they would like to see stay the same, and things they would like to change.

The groups ultimately will recommend the issues they feel need to be addressed by city and county elected officials. These recommendations will be brought together from all the groups and a list of guidelines will be presented to the county board of supervisors and leaders from each village, town and city. The work will likely be finished sometime this fall.

### QUOTE THIS:

"We cannot build our way out of sprawl. Building new roads will not solve our traffic problems—just as buying bigger pants will not help you lose weight."

*(Sierra Club spokesperson Daniel Silverman, in a recent article picked up on the Internet and published by Environmental News Network.)*

## THINGS WE NEED

Before you "garage sale" your discarded earthly treasures, please note that our Speakers Bureau could use a Kodak projector and a 19" (or slightly larger) self-contained VCR and TV unit. You get to claim them as a tax write-off!

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Would you like to help? Our volunteer needs include:

- \* Assembling mailings
- \* Data entry
- \* Making phone calls for events and activities
- \* Organizing events
- \* Fund-raising
- \* Serving on committees
- \* And probably a dozen other things





# 1000 Friends of Iowa

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## PROPOSED LANDFILL THREATENS WOODS, CEDAR RIVER

*by Norm McCoy*

The City of Cedar Rapids and the Bluestem Solid Waste Agency have recently condemned a stunningly beautiful 450-acre site in order to build a new dump. Botanically and geologically, it couldn't be a worse choice.

The Hennessy woods is one of Linn County's largest intact stands of mature hardwoods, harboring rare and unusual species. The terrain is steep and erodable, generally characterized by a thin layer of soil over permeable rock substrata. There are two spring-fed streams draining the woods, running directly into the Cedar River which lies within 1000 feet of the proposed dump.

The surrounding area on the south side of the river is rural and low-density residential, with at least 60 homes which would be directly affected by the proposed landfill, and over 250 homes within a 2-mile radius. The popular Sac and Fox Trail and Greenbelt are directly across the river to the north, and the renowned Indian Creek Nature Center is across the river to the northeast (downwind of the prevailing summer winds).

Are there other options? Yes, there are environmentally good ones that may actually turn out to be economically responsible, as well. At city council meetings discussing the proposed landfill, there have been over five hours of five-minute speeches from concerned citizens in opposition to the project. Not one single citizen has spoken out in favor of the site at those meetings.

We need help changing people's minds. Please contact your local 1000 Friends of Iowa board member or the Cedar Rapids-area residents below for more information:

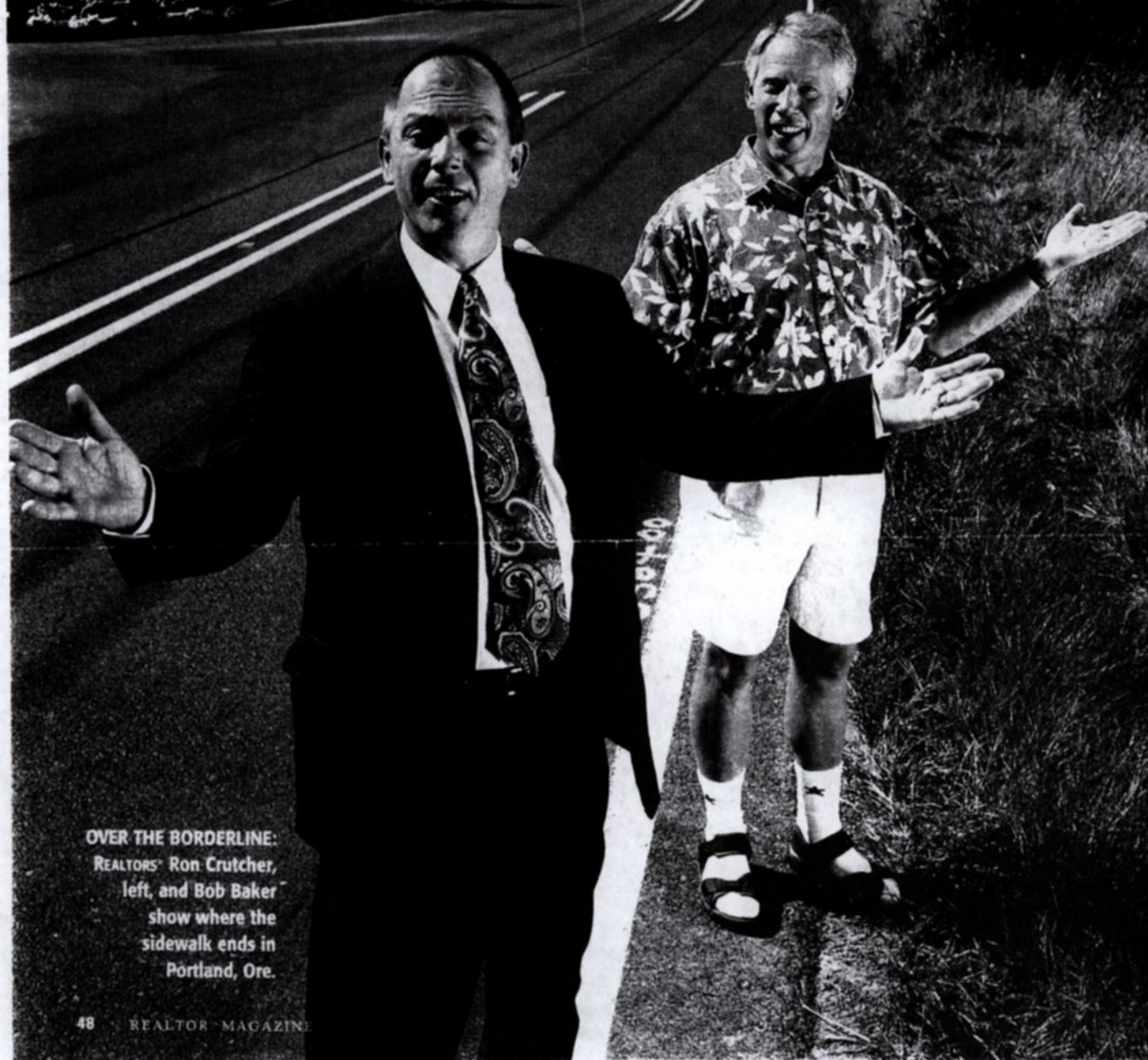
Marilyn Keller  
3700 Otis Road SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403  
319-364-6496

Pam Prochaska  
5730 Honey Grove Road  
Ely, IA 52227  
319-848-7303  
pampro@juno.com

*(Norm McCoy is a member of the board of directors of 1000 Friends of Iowa.)*



## CASE STUDY



**OVER THE BORDERLINE:**  
REALTORS® Ron Crutcher,  
left, and Bob Baker  
show where the  
sidewalk ends in  
Portland, Ore.



# SELLING SMART GROWTH in Portland

**In the antisprawl capital, the holy grail is a 10,000-square-foot lot.**

BY ROBERT SHAROFF

When Vice President Al Gore announced earlier this year that one of his presidential campaign themes would be smart growth—aka limiting urban sprawl—he turned up the heat on an issue that has been gathering steam in many parts of the country for most of this decade.

Antisprawl bills have been enacted or are being proposed in a number of states, and it's safe to say the country is heading into an era when new residential development will be more closely scrutinized than at any other time in the last half century.

There are few issues that more directly affect the real estate industry than sprawl. In some ways, REALTORS® are caught in the middle. The upside of sprawl is that there's generally lots of product to sell in markets with few controls on development. The downside is that uncontrolled sprawl undermines the stability of existing neighborhoods and con-

tributes to a whole host of environmental and aesthetic problems.

What's life like for real estate salespeople in an antisprawl environment? What changes and what stays the same? In this regard, no city is as closely associated with limiting sprawl as Portland, Ore., where tight controls on growth have been a fact of life for more than 20 years.

Back in 1973, alarmed by the uncontrolled growth around many California cities, the Oregon Legislature passed an innovative land-use bill that required all the state's municipalities to create urban growth boundaries.

The purpose of the boundaries was to contain development and prevent the wholesale destruction of farmland and wilderness areas. When creating the boundaries, cities were asked to include enough land for 20 years of projected growth.

Strict zoning laws established by the bill also made it nearly impossible for development to occur outside the metro area. In most cases, the only way to build a new house outside the boundaries is to tear down an existing one.

In the case of Portland, a wavering line was drawn around the city and its suburbs—24 communities in all, covering 364 square miles—and a new layer of regional government created to administer the plan.

In many ways, the legislation has been successful. Portland has grown dramatically over the past two decades—from a relatively sleepy lumber and agricultural center to its current status as a manufacturing and high-tech mecca led by such companies as Intel and Nike.

See **SMART GROWTH** on page 50





# CASE STUDY

## SMART GROWTH

Continued from page 49

The population has also zoomed—from 1.33 million in 1980 to 1.84 million today—and almost all of it is contained within the original boundary area.

There's no shortage of positive urban statistics: Downtown office space has tripled since the boundary was put in place; more than 40 percent of downtown workers use mass transit (the highest percentage of any city outside the Northeast); property values are up; and residents are never more than a half hour's drive from some unspoiled corner of nature.

So what's the problem? Affordability, for one. "The price of housing has gone through the roof," says Bob Baker, an associate broker with Tri-Star Properties in suburban North Plains. "We're now one of the least affordable cities in the country." According to the National Association of Home Builders, out of 181 communities around the country, Portland ranks 174th in terms of affordability.

"The boundary has driven the price of land to \$100,000 an acre and up, depending on the zoning," says Scott Leeding, office manager and sales associate for Ken Hoffman Inc., REALTORS®, in suburban Clackamas.

Several years ago, Baker did a study that tracked price increases on new-home components in one fast-growing suburban community over a five-year period. "I looked at everything you need to build a house—land, materials, labor—and found that most of the components went up by an average of 15 percent to 20 percent," he says. "Two items went up more than that. System development charges—such as permit fees—went up 30 percent, and land went up 310 percent."

Other studies report considerably lower numbers for the city as a whole, but there's no doubt that land costs have increased dramatically.

Detached single-family housing in many parts of metro Portland now starts at about \$150,000, say salespeople, which is out of the range of many first-time buyers. (According to data from the local MLS, the average sales

price of a home in Portland is \$187,700 and the median price \$161,000.)

"It's an odd situation," says Ron Crutcher, vice president of government affairs for the Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® and an associate broker with John L. Scott Real Estate in suburban Beaverton. "The bottom is rising to meet the top. By that, I mean that entry-level prices are rising far more steeply than those in the middle range and at the top end. The result is that there's a shortage of entry-level product, whereas houses in the middle range are just sitting there."

Leeding adds that "the \$250,000 to \$300,000 houses aren't turning as fast as they should" because of pricing problems. "A lot of those houses are in that price range not because of the house but because of the cost of the land."

The tight restrictions on growth are also changing the very nature of many neighborhoods. Lot sizes are getting smaller—the average is now about 6,000 square feet, and 2,500-square-foot lots are not unusual—and density is projected to double in some areas over the next two decades.

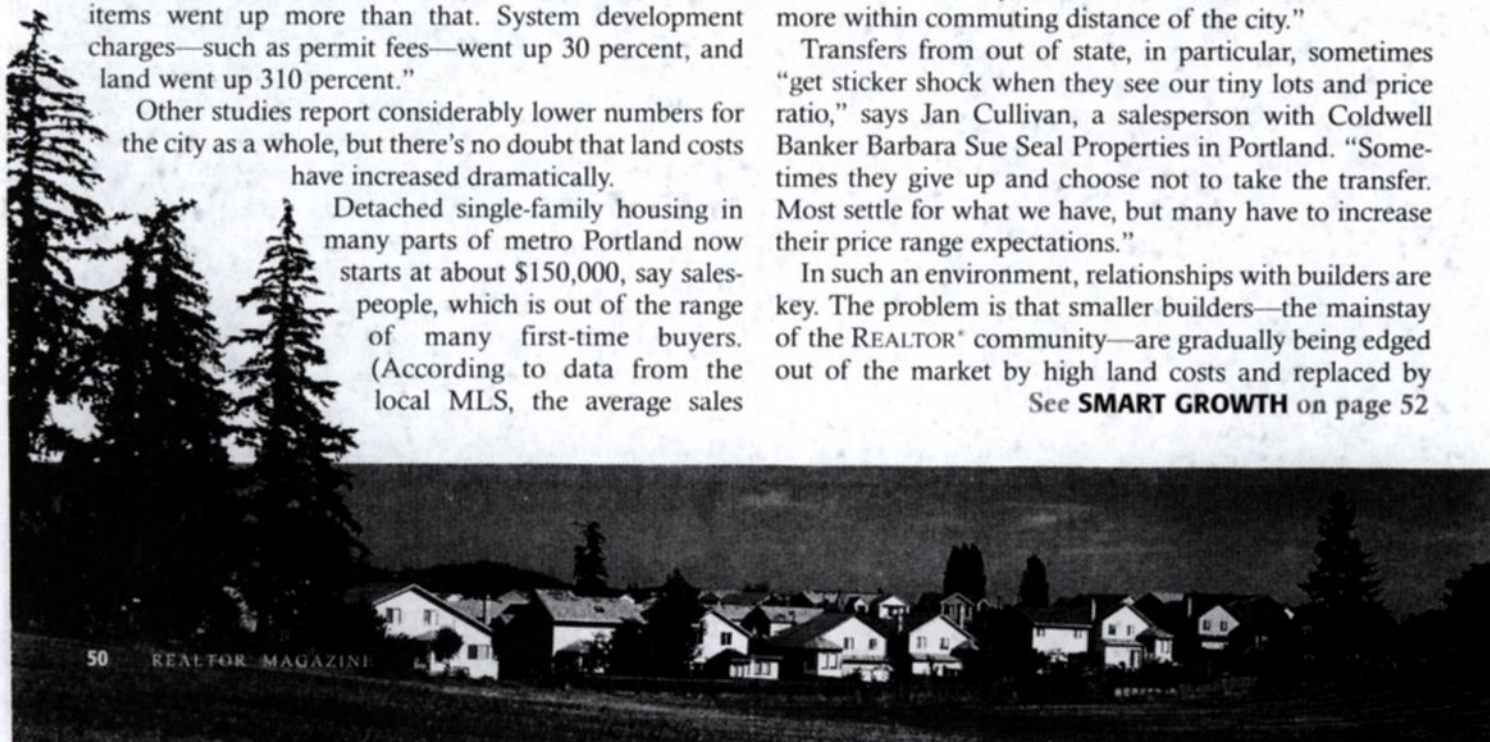
That level of density, though not unusual in many large Eastern cities, is new in the West, and many salespeople say they have trouble selling the idea.

"We have a lot of inventory," says Paul Buss, an associate broker with Oregon Realty Co. in suburban Clackamas. "But let's not mistake inventory for selection. There are certain kinds of homes people want that we just can't offer them—namely, new homes on lots of an acre or more within commuting distance of the city."

Transfers from out of state, in particular, sometimes "get sticker shock when they see our tiny lots and price ratio," says Jan Cullivan, a salesperson with Coldwell Banker Barbara Sue Seal Properties in Portland. "Sometimes they give up and choose not to take the transfer. Most settle for what we have, but many have to increase their price range expectations."

In such an environment, relationships with builders are key. The problem is that smaller builders—the mainstay of the REALTOR® community—are gradually being edged out of the market by high land costs and replaced by

See **SMART GROWTH** on page 52





# CASE STUDY

## SMART GROWTH

Continued from page 50

deep-pocket national companies such as Centex and U.S. Home, which "typically come to town with their own in-house salespeople," says Leeding.

This is not to suggest that REALTORS® aren't making money in Portland. They are. But the strong economy of the past few years has, to some degree, glossed over what some say are fundamental problems with the urban growth boundary.

The main one, say salespeople, is that Metro, the government entity that administers the urban growth boundary, has been slow to bring in new land. "We're supposed

to have a 20-year supply of developable land, but we don't have it," says Baker. The issue is a political football in Portland, with builders and REALTORS® often squaring off against environmentalists and other antigrowth activists, and is nowhere near being resolved.

The Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® has no formal position on sprawl but at times has sided with different groups that have legally challenged certain aspects of the way the boundary is administered.

"Everyone wants Portland and Oregon to retain their rural feel," says Crutcher. "There's no disagreement about that. But the urban growth boundary has become an iron curtain rather than a growth tool." RM

## OUR SPRAWLING NATION

NAR recognizes that sprawl is an important issue for its members and is formulating a position on smart growth. NAR President Sharon A. Millett appointed a Presidential Advisory Group earlier this year to study the issue. The group's report is due in early fall. In the meantime, NAR analysts have been studying how the issue is playing out at the state and local levels. Here's a status check on the 10 largest new-housing markets.

**Phoenix** Arizona Gov. Jane Dee Hull's Growing Smarter Commission conducted a statewide series of citizens' forums earlier this year to gauge public reaction to a list of growth management proposals. Attendees in Phoenix were particularly vocal about the need for regional planning and the preservation of open space. The commission's full report is due this fall.

**Atlanta** Gov. Mike Barnes of Georgia recently created the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRETA) to help manage the city's explosive growth. GRETA has broad powers to approve or deny transit systems and highways, restrict development, and pressure cities and counties to raise taxes.

**Washington, D.C.** Maryland enacted a strong smart growth law in 1997, but Virginia has yet to stake out a position on the issue. Traffic congestion is a hot issue in a number of northern Virginia counties, and many public officials and activists are demanding better integration of transportation and land-use planning.

**Chicago** A recent study predicted that the metro area will double in size by 2028 if the current low-density development patterns continue. In response, voters last April approved a \$200 million bond issue to be used to preserve open space. The governor of Illinois, George Ryan, also recently signed a \$160 million bill to help communities buy or improve land for conservation or recreation.

**Dallas and Houston** The governor of Texas, George W. Bush, recently signed a law requiring all cities to adopt three-year annexation plans. Land not annexed within that time may not be annexed for another five years. Other than that, there are few restrictions on growth in the Lone Star State.

**Las Vegas** The Nevada Legislature recently passed several bills to improve regional planning, including one that requires developers to pay for a growth impact analysis of subdivisions of 500 homes or more. In addition, the mayor of Las Vegas, Oscar Goodman, is advocating a \$2,000 impact fee for all new houses.

**Minneapolis** Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota recently endorsed smart growth principles and pledged to incorporate them into future legislation. Since 1997, counties have been encouraged to prepare and implement community-based comprehensive land plans.

**Detroit** The Michigan Legislature recently formed a bipartisan group to promote urban development and regional reform. Also, the mayors of the state's 12 largest cities have formed an alliance with the State Farm Bureau to discuss growth management and farmland preservation.

**Riverside-San Bernardino** The governor of California, Gray Davis, recently signed what smart growth advocates are calling the best budget in 20 years, with major allocations for open land purchases, land conservation funds, and the building and maintaining of new and existing parks.

**Editor's note:** Markets are ranked by annual single-family home permits.

Source: NAR and the National Association of Home Builders

