

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2014

Where America is sprawling and what it means

New national study examines metropolitan development and the connection to resident's health, quality of life and prosperity

CONTACT: Craig Chester, cchester@smartgrowthamerica.org, 202-215-8858

Washington, DC—People in compact, connected metropolitan regions are more likely to move up the economic ladder, have lower household costs, enjoy more transportation choices and lead longer, safer, healthier lives according to a new report out today by Smart Growth America and the University of Utah's Metropolitan Research Center.

[Measuring Sprawl 2014](#) evaluates development in 221 major metropolitan areas in the United States, and ranks these areas based on how sprawling or compact they are. The report also examines how sprawl relates to life in those communities, based on factors like economic mobility, the cost of housing and transportation, life expectancy, obesity, chronic disease and safety.

"Smart growth strategies are about making life better for everyone in a community," said Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. "If policymakers are looking for ways to lower costs for their constituents, improve public health and support their broader economy, they need to be thinking about how to improve their development."

"This is the most extensive study to date to define and measure the costs and benefits of sprawl development," said Reid Ewing, Director of the University of Utah's Metropolitan Research Center and primary author of the new research. "We found that in areas with less sprawl—several quality of life factors were more positive, including greater economic mobility, lower combined costs of housing and transportation and higher life expectancies. This research demonstrates the many ways our development decisions may impact us every day, and informs how better development practices may improve our quality of life."

"This report will have a strong influence on the next decade of research concerning relationships between the built environment, urban planning, and health both in the US and worldwide," said David Berrigan of the National Institutes of Health, which sponsored the research. "Dr. Ewing's focus on urban sprawl as a modifiable environmental factor correlated with obesity, physical activity and environmental exposures is an important example of renewed efforts to align changes in planning with public health goals and to place these decisions on a stronger and more evidence based footing."

See the rankings and download the full report at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/measuring-sprawl.

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring better development to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

###