



Made for Walking: Density and Neighborhood Form

Julie Campoli

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In this era of high energy prices, economic uncertainty, and demographic change, an increasing number of Americans are showing an interest in urban living as an alternative to the traditional automobile-dependent suburb. Many people are also concerned about reducing their annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a way to lower greenhouse gas emissions affecting climate change. But providing transportation options is complex and demands a shift in land use patterns and the way we locate and shape future development. Density is often defined in terms of population per square mile, but such a crude measure makes it difficult to understand the relationship between density and city life. We need to think about urban density by including the density of jobs, schools, and services such as retail, transit, and recreational facilities. Fitting more amenities into a neighborhood within a spatial pattern that invites walking will create the type of built environment that offers real transportation options. Landscape architect and urban designer Julie Campoli challenges our current notions of space and distance and helps us learn to appreciate and cultivate proximity. In this book, developed as a follow-up to *Visualizing Density* (2007, co-authored with aerial photographer Alex S. MacLean), she illustrates urban neighborhoods throughout North America with hundreds of street-level photographs. Researchers delving into the question of how urban form affects travel behavior identify specific characteristics of place that boost walking and transit use while reducing VMT. In the 1990s some pinpointed diversity (of land uses), density, and design as the key elements of the built environment that, in specific spatial patterns, enable alternative transportation. After a decade of successive studies on the topic, these “three Ds” were joined by two others deemed equally important—distance to transit and destination accessibility—and together they are now known as the “five Ds”. Added to the list is another key player: parking. The Ds have evolved into a handy device for defining and measuring compact form and predicting how that form will affect travel and reduce VMT. They share the characteristics of compact development often described as “smart growth.” Lowering VMT by any significant measure will require integrating the D attributes at a grand scale. While thinking big is important, this book visualizes a low-carbon environment in smaller increments by focusing on 12 urban neighborhoods of approximately 125 acres each—a comfortable pedestrian walk zone. Some are in familiar cities with historically dense land use patterns, intertwined uses, and comprehensive transit systems; others have emerged in unexpected locations, where the seeds of sustainable urban form are taking root on a micro level.

- LoDo and the Central Platte Valley, Denver, Colorado
- Short North, Columbus, Ohio
- Kitsilano, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Flamingo Park, Miami Beach, Florida
- Little Portugal, Toronto, Ontario
- Eisenhower East, Alexandria, Virginia
- The Pearl District, Portland, Oregon
- Downtown and Raynolds Addition, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York
- Little Italy, San Diego, California
- Cambridgeport, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Old Pasadena, Pasadena, California

These places were selected because each offers choices: travel options, housing types, and a variety of things to do and places to shop. Their streets are comfortable, attractive, and safe for biking and walking. They all show how compact development can take shape in different regions and climates. Six specific qualities make them walkable: connections, tissue, population and housing density, services, streetscape, and green networks.

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