

# Freedom Matters

We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. We dedicate this paper to saving and preserving our freedom.

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## Sprawl vs Congestion vs Freedom

by Bob Bowman

In the *Wisconsin State Journal* for September 24, 2004 is a letter to the editor which complains about the proposed development of high-rise condominiums in the Madison central city. The writer is concerned that the gracious ambience of tree-lined streets and single family homes that dominates most of Madison will be lost. To prevent this, and to prevent "sprawl" as well, without however defining "sprawl," the letter writer suggests that the city hire a planner like Andres Duany. We will come back to Duany at the end.

County Executive Kathleen Falk, and Mayor David Cieslewski, do not share that letter writer's vision. Falk in particular has proposed (in *Farms & Neighborhoods*, July, 2000) that the population **density** of Madison be **doubled**, at the least. That goal of our political leaders encourages developers to propose high-rise residential housing in Madison. A major political reason for greater density is to support commuter rail. For that, even doubling the density is not enough. Without tripling or quadrupling the population density of Madison, commuter rail terribly wastes resources and solves nothing.

So, if the above letter writer, and all like folks, want to keep Madison gracious with tree-lined streets and single family homes, especially homes on lots big enough to garden, they are going to need a different set of political leaders than the present ones. In the next election, Spring, 2005, they will need to ask the candidates: "Do you intend to densify Madison?"

Then, beware the sound-bite answer: "Of course, because I'm against sprawl. Aren't you?"

You see, in the Madison-uber-alles world of Katie and Dave, the alternative to sprawl is **congestion**. Read *Vision 2020*, the land use and transportation plan drawn up for Dane County by the manipulations of the anti-sprawl political agenda. The **explicit** policy set

out in that agenda-driven document is to **congest** the streets of Madison. *Vision 2020* was prepared as part of the Federal government's **transportation** policy. Yet, instead of seeing transportation as an infrastructure designed to service land-use, the anti-sprawl folk saw it as an instrument for **manipulating** land-use. The reason for congesting the streets was to drive people out of automobiles and into mass-transit rail.

Thus, the Katie and Dave charade proposes to pile all economic development into Madison, to "prevent sprawl" and "preserve" the environment, which are their code words for keeping and converting the rest of Dane County into Madison's nature park. Economic development proposed outside of the urban area is fought tooth and nail, aided by ramping up restrictive regulations on farming, and by ossifying land use via planning and zoning laws that stultify and confiscate.

The linchpin political tool in Katie and Dave's Malthusian agenda is the demon of "sprawl," the unreasoned mantra of the Sierra Club. Spacious living is bad. Congested living is "smart growth." Government must take over all land, for "smart growth."

The Madison-uber-alles agenda is a house of cards. Madison sits on the most environmentally sensitive land in Dane County. As the city grows, it relentlessly pumps down the ground water, ever more transforming the natural hydrology of its watery environment.

Andres Duany, the letter writer's hero, co-founded **New Urbanism**, how to plan congested cities. Then, Duany escaped his handlers on a tour of the Portland Oregon planned morass of urban congestion, and saw a new light. He now preaches the **Transect**, how to **plan** for density that goes from urban congestion to rural dispersion; i.e., he advocates a diversity of living styles. Thus, if one thinks outside the box of Madison, one can save Madison's tree-lined streets and single family homes by letting other urban and rural areas develop, and there will still be open land, and all of it while leaving people free to choose. Ah, freedom. Let's elect people who believe in it.

Property rights web sites: < <http://www.fairnessinlaw.org/> >  
< <http://www.takebackwisconsin.com/> >  
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