Template for a Toolkit:
Community Growth Options for Farmington and Rosemount

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For the cities of Farmington and Rosemount
In partnership with CURA, UCGO
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The contrast between the benefits of growth and the costs are most pronounced at the urban-rural edge, where civic leaders and planners struggle in a transitional environment to build local capacity and community support for more sustainable forms of development. With support from CURA’s Community Growth Options program, we developed a template for a toolkit, aimed at assisting in building that local capacity within the communities of Farmington and Rosemount. The template suggests incorporating a GIS model for envisioning and creating comprehensive, flexible, and sustainable land-use map overlays, and a model for educating and interacting with communities to build support for plans that include walkable and livable communities and more affordable housing. Our work focuses on two specific rapidly growing edge communities, but we foresee wide application of the toolkit template within the Twin Cities metropolitan area and elsewhere in the United States.
Introduction

In metropolitan areas throughout the United States the benefits of growth contrast with concerns about the costs; fiscal, environmental, and quality of life. The default setting for a majority of new development in the United States is the standard suburban model, which is low in density and automobile dependent. The U. S. Census noted that 81-percent of the new privately-owned housing units completed in 2007 were single-family residences (SFRs), the housing type that characterizes the suburban model. This model is consistently applied to development at the edge where it amplifies many of the costs of growth such as the need for new infrastructure and the loss of open space. Replication of the suburban model continues, in part, because of standardization in finance, planning, development, real estate, and resource production practices. After more than seven decades of suburban development the model is also embedded in the daily lives and imaginations of U. S. populations. While practices and imaginations maintain support for the suburban standard, attempts to foster support for alternative forms of land-use remain limited in their success. Proposals for higher-density, mixed-uses, and compact neighborhoods are met with opposition, especially in peripheral communities, despite the potential to reduce many of the costs associated with the default standard suburban model of development.

Market downturns historically impact the periphery to a greater extent as prices decline and inventories increase throughout the metropolitan area, and buyers find they no longer have to ‘drive to qualify’. The recent and dramatic downturn in the housing market therefore suggests the time may be right for more, and deeper, conversations about alternative forms of development at the Twin-Cities edge. This research project was established with an aim to provide civic leaders and planners with tools to facilitate productive conversations with members of their communities about more sustainable development practices.

The GIS model for comprehensive land-use map overlays suggested in this toolkit offer alternative ways of envisioning future development that will result in a reduced footprint, and thereby, reduced fiscal, environmental, and quality of life costs. The alternative visions also creates a greater variety of housing types and sizes, which will help mitigate affordability concerns.

The constructive community education and interaction model demonstrates ways to educate community members about the actual costs associated with the standard suburban model of development, and dynamic and interactive ways to engage them in envisioning a multiplicity of alternative forms of development.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

**Research Methods and Goals**

- The market downturn provides a respite from the growth frenzy that more than doubled the populations of Farmington and Rosemount in just under two decades. Moreover, the respite provided us the opportunity to analyze how well past growth plans and outcomes meet the needs of each city’s existing populations, and how well the goals for future development will meet the needs of this and future populations, especially in light of recent shifts in the real estate market and changes in household demographics.

- We began our discovery by gathering federal demographic data, county foreclosure and transit data, and the long term growth plans for each community. We met with the lead planners from each city to discern their understanding of development successes, and their main concerns about each community’s needs in relation to future growth. We also conducted fieldwork to gain an understanding of how things looked on the ground.

- We conducted an extensive review of the literature about alternatives to the standard suburban model of development. We also conducted an analysis of the Twin Cities metropolitan housing stock, seeking local examples of alternative forms of housing provision in the region.

- We analyzed all of this data with two questions in mind:

  Where there problems produced as a result of the rapid growth of the past two decades in Rosemount and Farmington, and cognizant of the dramatic shift in the national, regional, and local economies, are these problems mitigated by the development projections proposed in each city’s newly created long term plans?

What follows is an introduction to the two cities based on our interpretation of the data we gathered and analyzed. We present our conclusions about how well present needs are being met, and how well future plans will perform based on our analysis.

We then provide recommendations in the form of a toolkit template in an effort to assist each city navigate, in a more sustainable fashion, what portends to be a very different future of growth activity.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

**Rosemount and Farmington: The Peripheral Cities Today**

- Rosemount and Farmington draw on their ‘room-to-grow’ appeal in order to market their cities on their web pages. Rosemount boasts a community rich in undeveloped land, while Farmington notes the possession of new growth housing areas.

- Each city participated enthusiastically in the sustained national economic growth era and experienced dramatic increases in their populations and tax revenues. Data from the federal census and each city indicates that Rosemount grew by 134% and Farmington by 250% in just under two decades.

- To accommodate the increase in population Rosemount added over 4,500 housing units during the same time period, and Farmington over 4,800. The majority of growth was accommodated in single-family homes in suburban styled subdivisions. Moreover, this was very low-density development. In both cities, homes have roughly a mean square footage of about 2,500, and they rest on large lots of about 1/3 of an acre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Rosemount</strong></th>
<th><strong>Farmington</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rosemount</strong></td>
<td><strong>1990</strong></td>
<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Units</td>
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<td>7,431</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SFR Percentage of total</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFR Percentage of total</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farmington</strong></td>
<td><strong>1990</strong></td>
<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>5,940</td>
<td>20,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Units</td>
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<td>6,991</td>
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<td>Unit Type:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SFR Percentage of total</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFR Percentage of total</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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Data compiled from federal census and Rosemount and Farmington 2030 Community Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Rosemount</strong></th>
<th><strong>Farmington</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 Housing: Mean Square Footage</td>
<td>2,247</td>
<td>2,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Acreage</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from parcel data
Rosemount and Farmington: The Peripheral Cities Today

- According to the 2000 census, Rosemont and Farmington’s populations were 93 and 96-percent white. Family households comprised 93 and 91-percent of the population, respectively, and 88-percent of households were owner occupied in each city. Median incomes in both cities were above the mean for the county and well above the mean for the nation.

- Rosemount and Farmington are largely commuter communities. Although the cities are surrounded by agricultural fields, only about 2-percent of each community’s population is employed in agriculture, according to the 2000 federal census. Approximately 76-percent of each city’s respective working population has over a 15-minute commute to work, indicating a majority of residents are leaving the area for their place of employment each day.
Rosemount and Farmington: The Peripheral Cities Today

- To gain greater insight we spoke to senior planners in each city. Both note the efforts to increase the number of multi-family units in the past decade, but both still see a dearth in housing inventories that appeal to all generations and household types.

- They express concern about the imminent increase in their aging populations. They also expect declines in family households, and are unsure if empty nesters will choose to age in place. Another common concern; the inability to attract young single professionals to their cities.

- In summary, there were problems produced as a result of the development that took place over the past two decades in each city. Rosemount and Farmington’s 2020 comprehensive plans, which guided this growth, were more readily adapted to the standard practices of suburban subdivision development as opposed to smart growth practices. For example, 72-percent of Rosemount’s land designated for residential development in their 2020 plan was zoned as 2.75 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Mixed uses, a very compact and pedestrian friendly alternative form of land-use was defined as “not yet…supported in the marketplace”.

- The adherence to the suburban model of development created each city’s monochromatic landscape, which is comprised predominantly of family households residing in owner occupied SFRs. Yet this landscape now lacks the diversity perceived necessary to withstand future demographic and economic shifts.
2030 Comprehensive Plans

- Our review of each city's demographic, housing, and transit data, in conjunction with our conversations with the planners indicated a series of problems resulted from the rapid and suburban styled development which took place over the past two decades.

- Based on the goals of smart growth planning, which advocates for a greater variety of housing types and sizes in more compact settings, each city's desires for population diversity and housing affordability could be achieved by shifting the trajectory of housing development from the suburban model to a more sustainable alternative.

- We examined the draft 2030 Comprehensive Plans for Rosemount and Farmington to determine if the existing problems would be mitigated, and if the needs of future populations would be met based on projections contained within these updated plans.

- Rosemont estimates multi-family units comprised 31% of their total housing stock in 2007. In Farmington, multi-family units totaled 28%. According to the 2030 draft plans, Rosemount's multi-family units will increase to 45% of the city's housing stock, and Farmington's will increase to 32%.

- While an improvement over the 2020 plans, the diversity outcome is still limited. Of the proposed 8,830 and 5,509 units for each city, the majority will still be SFRs. In Rosemount, where there is a higher expectation of multi-family development, the units are proposed for construction in the later decade of the plan.

- Finally, although the effort to increase densities through multi-family unit development sounds ambitious, it reflects densities that are still considerably low when compared to nearby cities such as Minneapolis.

- A low density designation in Minneapolis constitutes 8 SFR du/ac or 4-8 Duplex du/ac. In Rosemount, low density is defined as 1-5 du/ac, and in Farmington, 1-3.5 du/ac. High densities, which are described in terms of low, mid, and high-rise complexes in Minneapolis, range from 16-100+ du/ac. In our study cities only a low-rise option of 10-24 or 12+ du/ac is envisioned.

- Provided the low range of each zoning category is applied in future development in Rosemount and Farmington, there is little chance of achieving meaningful housing diversity.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

Developing GIS Models for Alternative Forms of Development

- Our goal in this project was to enable civic leaders and planners in these peripheral cities to overcome limitations in envisioning and implementing plans for more sustainable forms of development. Our discovery indicates a need for a greater diversity in housing types and sizes to create a higher level of housing affordability, appeal to a more diverse and changing population, and withstand future economic shifts that impact economic development timing and activity.

  - Smart growth planning demonstrates that diversity in populations and greater housing affordability is achieved through changes in land-use zoning; creating zones for a greater variety of housing types and sizes through higher density ranges, mixed-uses zoning in areas near commercial corridors, and zoning for more compact neighborhoods comprised of a mix of lot sizes and housing sizes and types.

- We incorporated smart growth principles in a series of land-use models, which re-envision future housing development in each city. The models themselves are imagined as overlays that can be incorporated into the existing draft 2030 plans of Rosemount and Farmington as economic and demographic trends dictate. If the existing plans produce the desired outcomes, the overlays need not be enacted. Flexibility can be realized, however, should desires to foster population diversity or housing affordability, or even, economic growth fail to materialize under current 2030 plans.

  - Creating the overlays in advance and enacting them as needed avoids the problem of trying to make quick changes to a longer term plan, something most civic processes do not allow. Moreover, because zoning districts for alternative forms of development are embedded in the overlays, developers are encouraged to consider producing these projects when asked since the case-by-case exception process is eliminated with enactment of the overlay.

Using the land-use designations established in each city’s 2030 plan as a base map, we proposed three alternative scenarios for each city which could be incorporated as possible overlays. Examples follow:
Community Growth Options for Farmington and Rosemount

Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

Developing GIS Models for Alternative Forms of Development

- In **Scenario One** we adopted the idea of infill first, which suggests that each city frontload and increase their higher density projections in already developed areas in order to produce housing that will appeal to young professionals and aging populations. Areas zoned for medium density development near industrial or commercial land, along major corridors, or in the downtown area was converted to higher density designations. Note: This will not produce high-rises as it could in Minneapolis, but instead low-rise complexes with 10-24 du/ac.

- The residual land, no longer needed as a repository of units to meet a certain housing number goal, was re-envisioned as open space reserve in our model. In the Rosemount example below, the residual land enabled the elimination of a proposed leapfrogging residential development in the eastern portion of the city.
In Scenario Two we enhanced the conversions proposed in the Scenario One by scaling out from the newly designated higher density zones near industrial and commercial land-uses, traffic corridors, and downtown areas.

- In Farmington, we converted the areas surrounding the new higher density zones from low density to low-medium density and from low-medium density to medium density.
- In Rosemount, we applied this same pattern, converting low density to medium density when it adjoined our new higher density zones proposed in the first scenario.
- Our achieved objective in Rosemount in this scenario was to reduce development in their transitional zone, as represented in the map overlay below.
Developing GIS Models for Alternative Forms of Development

- In **Scenario Three** we reverted back to each city’s proposed 2030 land-uses, but re-envisioned their actual zoning descriptions. Instead of a range, we redefined each zoning category as the maximum du/ac described in the existing range. For example, in Farmington the low density range of 1-3.5 du/ac was converted to a zoning category defined as 3.5 du/ac.

- In this scenario we used the residual land created by achieving the maximum du/ac in Farmington to eliminate the proposed leapfrogging residential development in the northeastern portion in the overlay map example below.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

A Community Education and Interaction Model

- The disbenefits of sprawling suburban development and the benefits in our proposed land-use overlays are intellectually and visually clear to civic leaders and planners familiar with urban development and planning practices. It is important for community members to also comprehend the impacts of existing development practices in order to embrace the benefits proposed in each overlay.

- In a 2005 study by Baker, Addams, and Davis for the journal Public Administration Review the authors note that community education is a critical factor in the success of public meetings, facilitating symbiosis, a meeting of the minds between groups with differing priorities and interests. Symbiosis produces projects and plans that all participants can support.

- The authors suggest that interactions with the community be frequent and employ a variety of media resources for outreach and presentation.

Drawing on the central idea of education and symbiosis, and recognizing the value of frequent interaction (imbued with a variety of media resources) we developed a five step model aimed at fostering community understanding - in advance of envisioning or recommending plans for future development.

Five Steps:
1. Community Education Meeting
2. Community Education Meeting
3. Community Education Meeting
4. Community Charrette:
5. Incorporating Community Input
A Community Education and Interaction Model

The aim of the first three ‘educational’ steps in the five step model is to demonstrate clear links between built form and costs, and to inform citizens about alternative land-uses and their benefits. For each of these first three steps we suggest a general theme of discussion and an associated demonstration activity.

In step four, we suggest conducting a charrette; an interactive community envisioning process whereby participant’s ideas about future growth planning are encouraged through the use of maps and discussion sessions.

In step five planners set to the task of drawing up comprehensive plans with input from an informed community.

The suggested themes proposed for the first three steps in cities of Rosemount and Farmington are:

- True costs: A community meeting focused on the economic, environmental, and quality of life costs of suburban development, demonstrated through infrastructure cost comparisons and a review of foreclosure data.
- Housing alternatives: A community meeting focused on alternative forms of housing production, demonstrated through examples (national and local) and visualizations.
- Residual land-uses: A community meeting focused on the various ways residual land (land ‘left-over’ as a result of practicing smart growth land-use practices) can translate into economic and quality of life benefits for a community.

Five Steps:
1. Community Education Meeting: True Costs
2. Community Education Meeting: Housing Alternatives
3. Community Education Meeting: Residual Land-uses
4. Community Charrette:
5. Incorporating Community Input
Community Education Meeting: True Costs

- In order to have productive discussions about alternative forms of development, community members need to comprehend the costs associated with the standard suburban model of development.

- The first phase in the educational process should clearly define municipal costs for producing new, and maintaining existing infrastructure such as roads, sewers, sidewalks, parks, and schools. Emphasizing that maintenance is associated with all infrastructure (old and new) planners can help the community understand how tapping into existing infrastructure for infill development, or the more limited resource investment needed for compact development, differs from the major new resource investments necessary for that of low-density sprawling development. Civic leaders and planners can work together to prepare some local infrastructure cost examples. There are also numerous studies that provide cost comparisons between infill and suburban greenfield projects (e.g., distant versus close-in sewer hook-ups). These types of studies can be introduced to the community as well.

- This frank ‘dollars and cents’ presentation can be followed by a discussion about costs to the environment. We suggest enrolling a non-profit group such as 1000 Friends of Minnesota to describe how environmental degradation is linked to both economic and quality of life costs.

- The ubiquity of foreclosures in Rosemount and Farmington provides an additional framework for a discussion about costs. We argue that a lack of variety in housing types and sizes imperils affordability at a cost to the entire community. Inaffordability is demonstrated by younger generations who must move from the area when they wish to start their own households, and likewise, by aging households who find the community’s housing does not fit the needs of their changing lifestyle and financial reality.

To comprehend the impacts of a monochromatic housing landscape on affordability we examined foreclosure data for the cities of Rosemont and Farmington. We began by mapping foreclosures in each community for the years 2006, 2007, 2008. We also performed logistic regressions to determine if the estimated market value, lot size, finished square footage, property age, or housing type represented a significant factor for consideration in the inventory of foreclosed homes. What follows on the next few pages are the results of this analysis, which can be presented to community members during the ‘true costs’ education step.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

The Current Housing Market: Foreclosures

- An effect of the market downturn in many places throughout the United States has been the dramatic increase in the number of homes falling into foreclosure. We argue that in some communities, this is an effect of the monochromatic suburban residential landscape which offers a limited variety of housing choices and therefore, a limited range of home prices.

- Until the recent downturn much of the foreclosure activity, and the literature about this activity was focused on inner-city neighborhoods where lower-income and minority groups have been targeted for mortgages with undesirable terms. Recent industry reports note, however, that there has been a shift in foreclosure activity from the inner city to the suburbs. The economic crisis has extended foreclosure activity to middle, and even upper-income homeowners in all types of communities.

- According to reports compiled by HousingLink, a local source for affordable housing-related data, information and resources, foreclosures in largely exurban Dakota County where Rosemount and Farmington are located, began to increase as early as 2006. Sheriff’s sales increased 92% that year, and the upward trend has continued. By 2008, Dakota County was in the top three Twin Cities Metro counties based on the number of foreclosures. Data supplied by Dakota County shows that our study cities have each seen successive annual increases in foreclosure activity since 2006 as well. The planners we interviewed noted problems related to vacant foreclosed homes, such as unkempt lawns, graffiti, loitering, larceny, and lowered area home prices. They also indicated the decline in new construction is related, in part, to the inventory of foreclosed homes in each city and throughout the metropolitan area.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

The Current Housing Market: Foreclosures

Rosemount, MN Residential Foreclosures, 2006-2008

Farmington, MN Residential Foreclosures, 2006-2008

Source: Foreclosure data provided by Dakota County GIS
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

The Current Housing Market: Foreclosures

- Many of the studies about recent foreclosure activity highlight the role of sub-prime and near-prime mortgages, recent job loses, and speculative over-exuberance. We also discern a link between the lack of housing diversity in many communities and problems with affordability, and suggest that there is a link between lack of diversity, lack of affordability, and foreclosure activity.

- The residents of Rosemount and Farmington; white, middle-income householders, do not fit the minority or low-income profile targeted by unscrupulous sub and near-prime lenders. Job loses are a more recent trend, yet foreclosures in these communities have been rising since 2006. There is also a high level of owner-occupancy in each city, indicating that speculative purchases by investors is not a common practice.

- Another type of over-exuberance is more likely at play in Farmington and Rosemount. In an upward trending home price atmosphere buyers fear missing out on the chance at homeownership. Exurban prices tend to be a bit lower since they reflect the disamenity of distance. Buyers ‘drive to qualify’, seeking financing that will get them into a property before prices trend up further. Easy credit and slightly lower home prices in peripheral communities have provided an avenue for some homeowners to get into the market, but this does not suggest that the housing stock in peripheral communities is affordable. Buyers are still constrained by a supply, throughout the metropolitan region, that requires them to finesse their budget to fit the product, rather than find a product that fits their budget. Moreover, in the periphery the household budget must also accommodate the cost of commuting, and studies now show that this cost often negates any savings garnered in home price.

- We argue that the limited supply of housing (a majority SFRs with a mean square footage of 2,500) is implicated in Farmington and Rosemount’s foreclosure activity. To rule out the possibility of unique factors, we interrogated the foreclosure data provided by Dakota County, leveling for several important characteristics. We performed logistic regressions to determine if the estimated market value, lot size, finished square footage, property age, or housing type represented a significant factor for consideration. We found none of these determinants to be significant. Moreover, after linking the 2006, 2007, and 2008 foreclosure data with the parcel data for each city and mapping the results we determined that the foreclosure activity was fairly evenly distributed throughout each city and not tied to a specific development area. Therefore, it appears that the fairly evenly distributed foreclosure activity is no more likely to impact one neighborhood over another.
Community Education Meeting: True Costs

- Larger SFRs are represented throughout each community, as are foreclosures. The results of our foreclosure analysis (mapping and logistic regressions), when considered in the context of each city’s homogeneous housing inventory imply a simple affordability problem exists due to a lack of diversity in housing types and sizes.

- Planners in each community noted their present housing stock (primarily larger SFRs) appealed to family households. They also expressed concern over greater regional competition for this shrinking demographic, and within their own communities they recognize there are an increasing number of empty nester households and a lack of young professional households.

- The reality of changing regional demographics, economic shifts, and the ubiquity of foreclosure activity in the area indicate that issues of housing affordability are tantamount to successful future planning.

- In summary, the ‘True Costs’ educational meeting demonstrates that it is important for the community to consider the costs of maintaining a development trajectory that limits the diversity in the housing stock, stretches municipal budgets through the need for new and extended infrastructure, and degrades each city’s quality of life and economic future through further degradation of the environment.
Community Education Meeting: Housing Alternatives

The second recommended step in the community education and interaction plan is another community education meeting; this one focused on presenting community members (who are now aware of the costs of the standard suburban model of development) with examples of the various forms alternative housing development might take.

We propose taking the opportunity to present both national and local examples of varying unit types, sizes, and assemblages to the local community. Further, we recommend fostering a discussion among community members about who these alternative products might be targeted to; noting again, the shift in the demographic make-up of households in the region.

The discussion can start with a brief history of housing provision in the United States to demonstrate to community members how dramatically house size, lot size, and home price has increased and become standardized over time.

We also suggest leading a visually enhanced discussion about how each city’s density descriptions compare with those in other communities. A clear understanding of the level of difference can assuage fears about proposals for ‘higher-density’ projects in the future. For example, the table that follows contrasts Farmington and Rosemount’s zoning categories with those of the city of Minneapolis, dramatically demonstrating how much lower the density is each peripheral city. This suggests there is room in which to consider change while still maintaining lower-than-urban densities in each city. This discussion will act as a reference point for visual examples presented later in the session.

After the historical and density discussions, planners can introduce the concepts underpinning the most commonly discussed alternative models of development such as new urbanism, mixed-uses, and transit oriented development. We recommend employing media to project images of completed projects from around the country as planners describe these types of projects and discuss the amenities and benefits these models provide.

The discussion can be supplemented with a dialog about how communities alter their zoning codes to accommodate such projects, drawing details from the adopted plans described and available for review on the Congress of New Urbanism’s website [http://www.cnu.org/search/projects](http://www.cnu.org/search/projects).
### Density Comparisons

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<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
<th>Rosemount</th>
<th>Farmington</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Residential</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitional Zone</td>
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<td>SFR 8 du/ac Duplex 4-8 du/ac</td>
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<td>1-3.5 du/ac</td>
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<td>Low-Medium Density</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>3-5.6 du/ac</td>
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<td>Medium Density</td>
<td>Four-plex 10-24 du/ac Side-attached 12-35 du/ac Stacked-townhouse 25-45 du/ac</td>
<td>5-10 du/ac</td>
<td>6-12 du/ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>Low-rise 16-80 du/ac Mid-rise 26-120 du/ac High-rise 100+ du/ac</td>
<td>10-24 du/ac</td>
<td>12+ du/ac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Education Meeting: Housing Alternatives

- We suggest providing images of local examples of alternative types and sizes of housing. We explored the Twin Cities metro area and found many new projects displaying smart growth principles. Images of these local projects can reassure a community by suggesting that others are ‘trying’ out the new models. The existence of alternatives in the local landscape reduces the perception of risk for a community by implying ‘standardization’. We also recommend broadening the list of alternatives under review to include housing found in older existing communities, and not just newly built projects. We searched parcel data for the city of St. Paul and found lovely neighborhoods where house size along a single street ranged from 588 square feet to 2700 square feet. Providing images of these well established and charming neighborhoods of mixed-size homes can assuage community fears about the sustainability of property values in diverse compact neighborhoods. Older neighborhoods can be mined for examples of other housing alternatives such as accessory dwelling units, bungalow courts, and rowhouses, as well. This will demonstrate that ‘variety in housing provision’ does not have to translate as the either/or of large SFRs and apartments.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

Community Education Meeting: Housing Alternatives

Planners can also employ visualization tools; incorporating a rendering of an infill or higher-density project into the community itself. We utilized design software to render projects on two sites in Farmington. We suggest that such renderings help community members envision possibilities in a non-threatening way (no project is imminent; just imagined). Viewing the renderings creates the opportunity for a more open dialog about future development plans.

Based on our suggested map overlay, Scenario One: Infill first

The rendering suggests the addition of a two-story mixed-use development in the downtown area, adjoining an existing one-story retail building already on the block.

Based on our suggested map overlay, Scenario Two

For Farmington we converted the areas surrounding higher density zones from low density to low-medium density and from low-medium density to medium density. The rendering suggests a medium density project with a lot of open space on an area previously zoned for low-medium density.
Community Education Meeting: Housing Alternatives

- We suggest ending the second education session by engaging the community in a discussion about the demographic groups they envision occupying the types of alternative housing units that were described through the course of the session. We propose asking community members to begin this envisioning process by focusing on members of their own household (including themselves) or neighboring households.

- For example, because a bungalow court home or a condominium in a mixed-use development downtown is described as appealing to a young professional just getting started in their career, a parent may be able to envision their grown child occupying this type of residence and remaining in the community.

- The smaller size and lower maintenance requirements of a townhome are features that might appeal to senior. A community member may therefore envision this type of property as an avenue for keeping an aging parent nearby. The same could be true to a single family homeowner if they are able to construct an accessory dwelling unit on their property.

- In summary, provided an historical understanding of home building practices, a clearer conceptualization of density, and comprehension of what form alternative models of housing development can take, community members are better prepared to envision who might benefit from altering their community’s current development trajectory to include more higher-density and compactly designed projects.
Community Education Meeting: Residual Land-Uses

- Step two in the community education and interaction plan demonstrates to community members how a variety of housing types, sizes, and prices can become an amenity. Step three will demonstrate another facet of the re-envisioning process; how to re-envision use of the land that will be preserved as a result of practicing smart growth planning principles.

- This third educational meeting is aimed at introducing community members to the possibility of realizing additional amenities within their communities. Once residential land-uses are reconfigured and residual land is created (as is demonstrated on the proposed map overlays) community members have the opportunity to envision a whole host of alternative land uses for this ‘leftover’ land. We suggest utilizing one of the GIS map overlays to demonstrate to community members how areas once zoned for very low-density residential development, when reconfigured, produce the amenity of residual land that can be utilized to meet a variety of community needs, or used to create new community assets such as a public park or an ecological preserve.

- An exemplar of compact design in a park-like setting exists in Farmington and this subdivision represents a local example that community members can be encouraged to visit. Developed based on a University of Minnesota master-plan, the subdivision is constituted by homes laid out in a compact fashion with connecting backyards, that allow for open storm water conveyance. The compact design enabled residual land, ensuring in perpetuity the existence of an adjoining reserve that includes a large pond and walking trails. Mini parks also dot the community. A real estate flyer for a home listed for sale in the community highlights sound of ‘croakers’ in the community’s ‘backyard pond’, noting that the mini parks, reserve, and open space are amenities which benefit the homeowner and create a unique sense of place in the subdivision. Moreover, the community assets also positively impact property values, as is noted in numerous studies* which can be presented to community members.

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Community Education Meeting: Residual Land-Uses

- Numerous smart growth oriented city plans can be found on the Congress for New Urbanism’s website (http://www.cnu.org). The plans provide examples of how residual land can be used to produce pocket parks in more densely populated neighborhoods, or to produce greenbelts and major nature preserves surrounding newly developed subdivisions in lower-density communities.

- Although open and recreational space represent top tier amenities, other uses can be considered as well, based on the needs of individual communities. For example, residual land may be reconsidered as space for schools or other community service oriented development in an effort to more equitably distribute such services within a city. While these are important amenities, their presence may also reduce the need for community members to drive to other parts of the city for these services; making them quality of life amenities.

- A good demonstration activity that can be conducted with community members during this educational meeting involves working with the actual planning maps of cities that have adopted smart growth planning principals. Planners can select a series of maps from other cities and ask community members to review them, noting the location and amount of open and reserve space found on these maps. This should prompt discussions about how community members feel their city’s compare. Is open and reserve space as abundant and accessible in their community? Is abundance and accessibility an asset the community would like to see, and would it improve community member quality of life? Is this an asset that would add value to properties within the community?
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Summary: Community Education Meetings

- Combined, the themes for the community education meetings we recommend are aimed at fostering a knowledgeable community that can confidently participate in the planning process. As a result of these community education meetings, community members will better comprehend the actual costs of lower density, automobile oriented suburban development. The reality of these costs (infrastructure, environmental, quality of life, affordability) will help community members appreciate the benefits of alternative forms of development from a fiscal perspective.

- They will also have insight into the history of housing provision and will better comprehend the concept of density. Having been introduced to a vast variety of alternative housing types, they will better envision how these homes will fit into their community and who they will benefit.

- Finally, indoctrination into re-envisioning the possibilities of residual land, they can better comprehend the value of this asset, which results from adopting smart growth planning principals.
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Community Education and Interaction Model: Charrette

- The community education process should maintain a high level of interaction. We recommend continuing to meet with community members after the three educational meetings are complete, however, in a different format. A meeting can be planned for shortly after the educational meetings with the goal of providing community members the opportunity to apply their knowledge of costs, alternatives, and envisioning to a framework building exercise aimed at comprehending how they would like their community to look in the future. This framework can be developed via a charrette.

- According to the National Charrette Institute, the term charrette defines a creative and intense collaboration between community members and decision makers. As part of the charrette process, community visions for long term or project specific plans are incorporated into a feedback loop during a day, or several day long workshop(s). Civic leaders and planners provide immediate responses to the community input, initiating discussions about the role this input will play in the planning process.

- The intimate and engaged environment of a guided charrette will enhance the level of community input and cooperation with regard to planning for the future, and the charrette itself should prove more productive following the educational meetings. These meetings will have fostered a sense of trust amongst community members based on their frequent interactions with civic leaders and planners, and the openness of the discussions about costs, alternatives, and envisioning. Community members will also approach their tasks during the charrette process with a higher level of confidence, developed as a result of their introduction to and comprehension of the various aspects of the planning and development processes. Furthermore, as a result of the interaction during the educational phases, civic leaders and planners will have garnered insights into the needs, concerns, and the desires of the participating community, enabling them to consider this input as they prepare materials for the charrette, and ultimately the presentation of the final plan or project.
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Community Education and Interaction Model: Charrette

- Each community can decide whether its planning staff is experienced with and able to conduct a charrette, or if a consultant should be brought in to facilitate the charrette process. Regardless, the charrette process will provide valuable input from the community which will inform a sustainable plan for future development.

- The charrette represents the fourth step in the Community Education and Interaction Model. It provides important insights into how an informed community envisions the future and brings planners to their final step; creating the plan.

- The framework future plan, developed by educated community members during the charrette process provides planners and civic leaders with valuable insights as they proceed with plan updates, and because planners and civic leaders work side-by-side with community members as they developed the framework, some of the work of developing plans and plan updates is reduced. Moreover, the framework reduces the risk of plan rejection because a plan that incorporates community input is much more likely to be accepted by that community.

Suggested charrette resources:
- *Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities (2008)* by Patrick M. Condon
- *Designing Community: Charrettes, Masterplans, and form-based codes (2007)* by David Walters
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

Summary

- As we noted, market downturns historically impact the periphery to a greater extent as land and housing inventories increase and prices decline in other areas of the metropolitan region. We suggested the time might be right for a deeper conversation about alternative forms of development at the Twin Cities edge.

- After examining data for the cities of Rosemount and Farmington, and conducting interviews with their lead planners we determined that several problems resulted from the dramatic growth which took place in these cities over the past two decades. We tied many of these problems to the fact that rapid development in the past took the shape of a suburb; creating a monochromatic landscape of housing prices and choices.

- In light of present concerns such as the expected shifts in household demographics, the dramatic downturn in the national economy, the attendant downturn in the local housing market, and the rate of foreclosures in the periphery, we proposed the creation of a municipal toolkit that civic leaders and planners could employ to garner the capacity to apply more sustainable development practices to present and future plans for each community.

- Our toolkit includes a model for developing flexible, smart growth oriented land-use maps utilizing GIS, and a model for constructive community education and interaction.

  - The overlay maps produced in the GIS model offer each city three ways to envision future development with a reduced footprint, and reduced fiscal, environmental, and quality of life costs. The alternatives represented in the overlay maps also portend a greater variety of housing types and sizes, which will help mitigate each city’s concerns about serving a wider range of household types and creating affordability to ensure the future economic viability of each community through continued attraction of populations and investment.

  - The constructive community education and interaction model demonstrates ways to educate community members in a five step process. Engagement in this process ensures the capacity civic leaders and planners seek in order to implement a vision for a more sustainable future. Although our toolkit elements are applied to the cities of Rosemount and Farmington, and their place specific goals and concerns, we project applicability of this municipal toolkit in other peripheral communities as well.
Template for a Toolkit: Community growth options for peripheral communities

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