



WASHINGTON DC

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Nine Takeaways From The Live. Work. Walk. Conference

By **Amy Rose Dobson** | Mar 14, 2013, 3:00pm EDT

Last Monday the [Live. Work. Walk. Conference](#) by the Congress for the New Urbanism brought together urban planners and leaders to discuss how DC is making the city more pedestrian-friendly and reader Andrea was on the scene taking notes. She passed along some of the major themes and fascinating stats about how DC is leading the way in creating walkable urban places—or *WalkUPs*—as it undergoes so many revitalization projects. The future streetcar was one of the stars of the show. Click through to read the most important lessons from the keynote speaker Christopher Leinberger, Professor of Urban Real Estate at GWU School of Business.

1. DC's population surge is like a seismic spike on the Richter scale. The District has been gaining an average of 1,100 residents monthly since 2010. The addition of some 32,000 residents since 2010 amounts to more growth in the past 27 months than in the preceding 60 years.

2. Why DC? A robust job market that attracts highly educated knowledge workers who want the WalkUP lifestyle. According to Leinberger's study, DC's percent of college educated adults is **20 years ahead** of the next five most walkable cities, Seattle, Portland, Denver, San Francisco and Boston.

3. In DC, the **it-address is transcending NW** and spreading into NE and SE. Until recently, NW was the undisputed "favored quarter," in planner parlance. The rising popularity of other areas outside the favored quarter represents a "major social and economic change," Leinberger says. This liberalization of the favored quarter is unique to DC and not happening anywhere else in the US.

3. Not all walkable neighborhoods are WalkUPs. By definition, a WalkUP is a walkable area that has a significant amount of office and/or retail space. It serves a regional, as

opposed to a localized, population. Brookland and Cleveland Park are examples of local serving WalkUPs, as distinct from regionally significant WalkUPs like NoMa, Adams Morgan, Bethesda and Clarendon.

4. WalkUPs are not confined to the city limits and this is what makes them so groundbreaking. The "real distinguishing factor," said Leinberger, is that "we've urbanized the suburbs." City snobs who look down on the suburbs need to "get over it."

5. This is because fewer than half of Washington's 43 WalkUPs are in the District. Beyond DC's 18, the other WalkUPs are concentrated inside the Beltway, but they do stray far beyond to cross seven county lines.

6. Not long ago, walkable urban was a niche market but it is rapidly becoming the market norm. In the present-day Knowledge/Experience Economy, millennials and the creative class are fashioning **a third version of the American Dream** based on the choice of walkable urban or drivable suburban. For this demographic the suburbs grew dull, people maxed out on superstore materialism and the expense of owning a car became burdensome. Experientially speaking, more became less.

7. The streetcar will radically increase mobility. When completed, it will triple the number of people who live within a quarter mile of rail transit placing 72,000 households in easy walking distance from one of its stop. A [study by the DC Office of Planning](#) suggests as many as **12,000 new households** could be built along the streetcar corridor.

8. The green line is the new red line. Uptown, there's Petworth. Southbound, numerous metro stations are surrounded by vast undeveloped land.

9. Keep your eye on the Southwest waterfront, Tyson's Corner, White Flint, Twinbrook, Wheaton, College Park and Prince George's County as up-and-coming walkable hot spots. And keep on biking. The more bikers, the safer biking becomes.

--*Andrea Adleman*

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