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Study: Decatur's Walkability is Linked to Economic Success

Urban sprawl will be replaced by walkable communities.

By Péralte Paul, Patch Staff (https://patch.com/users/peralte-paul) Oct 5, 2013 2:18 am ET

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George Washington University's School of Business released a study this week that highlights Decatur's walkability as a model #https://

promotes economic activity.

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"WalkUPs," as they're called, will drive tomorrow's national real estate industry trends and the economy, Leinberger predicts.

Decatur and metro Atlanta, he said, is the bellwether of what's to come: Urban sprawl will be replaced by walkable communities,

"During the second half of the 20th century, the dominant development model was the familiar drivable suburban approach, and few places have done it better than metro Atlanta," said Leinberger.

"However, the pendulum is swinging back toward building walkable urbanism, the dominant pattern prior to the Great Depression. It's only a matter of time before most of the region's policy makers and real estate professionals catch up with this new reality."

From 1992 to 2000, roughly 13 percent of real estate investment in the region went into what he called "Current" and "Emerging" WalkUPs. From 2001 to 2008, that number doubled to 26 percent. And since 2009, it more than doubled again, reaching 60 percent.

Current WalkUPs inside I-285, besides Decatur include:

- Inman Park
- the Sweet Auburn District
- Centennial Olympic Park
- Georgia State University-Government Center

"We are pleased to see thriving, walkable urban places emerging throughout metro Atlanta," said Tad Leithead, chairman of the Atlanta Regional Commission.
"It's evident that the market favors the kind of development that offers new community vitality and real mobility choices. Greater walkability, housing and retail options are key to our future economic growth."

The report demonstrates that WalkUPs significantly impact economic growth and development in the Atlanta region and across the nation:

- Current and Emerging WalkUPs account for 1/200 (.55 percent) of the region's land area and 1/5 (20 percent) of the region's office, retail and other commercial real estate.
- Current and Emerging WalkUPs contain 22 percent of the region's jobs.
- Average rent for all development types in Current WalkUPs is 112 percent higher than in drivable suburban areas.

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