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ENVS 664

Berman – Sustainable Design

Smart Growth – Dallas Uptown & Houston, Texas

When comparing two cities that utilize smart growth concepts, it's important to understand that these cities weren't always that way. As with Dallas Uptown, Houston Texas used to be a dilapidated city where you would never dare walk around after dark. Smart-growth is important in revitalizing communities and neighborhoods. In terms of Dallas uptown, the city was in such disarray, that land prices were at its lowest point in almost 20 years.



Dallas Uptown - 2005

Noticing this opportunity, Columbus Realty Trust bought eight properties in the Dallas Uptown area and began revitalizing the area with lofts, apartments, townhomes, cafes and restaurants, all within walking distance of each other. Before this time in the 80's and 90's, Dallas and Houston both were considered urban nightmares. Riddled

with crime and empty buildings, no person would ever be caught in those areas during the night. In 1993, Columbus merged with a company called Post Properties and their dedication was to urban revitalization through building high-end rental properties.



Dallas Uptown 2006

This new smart-growth design made the Dallas uptown area more aesthetically pleasing to look at. As you noticed, once smart-growth ideas become intertwined within the communities, it is very hard for it to go back to the way it was when the area was run-down and abandoned. Attractive places attract people who are willing to spend money to keep the area up.



Dallas Uptown 2007

Each and every year, the smart-growth process seems to become bigger and more revitalized than the year before. That's usually because once a community gets involved in smart-growth; it becomes a change in lifestyle and not just appearance.

In 2008, Dallas Uptown is planning on completing an upscale living high rise to compliment the surrounding smart-growth amenities.



Dallas Uptown 2009

With this continued revitalization of Dallas Uptown, the area of value and the happiness of its residents can only go up from here.

The Second city that I am comparing with Dallas Uptown is my hometown of Houston, Texas. Downtown Houston used to be a barren wasteland of crime and drugs and homeless people. Just like Dallas, nobody dared to walk down the streets of Downtown Houston after dark. There were no stores open or shops to visit. The city literally shut down after five o'clock.



Downtown Houston – 1995

Similar to Dallas, developers jumped at the chance of the lowered land values and decided to revitalize Downtown Houston using smart-growth techniques. The developers, Smith and Barney Properties came in and tore down all of the old dilapidated and fallen apart buildings. Tore up old useless train tracks that longer were functional and decided to put in a light-rail system straight down the center of Downtown Houston.



Downtown Houston – 1997

After years of work and millions of dollars put into smart-growth designs, Downtown Houston has become one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. People are walking around until midnight, visiting local bars and clubs and fine-dining restaurants.



Downtown Houston – 2008

Adding the light-rail system through Houston has dramatically cut down on the amount of individual driving by people. People from all walks of life ride the light rail to work, local universities and the Houston's Medical Center.



Downtown Houston – 2008

As you can tell by the new developments, revitalization of a run-down area has been transformed into a flurry of activity and businesses. There's a diverse mix of homes, offices, and restaurants. The streets are now equipped with sandstone sidewalks for pedestrian walking.



Downtown Houston - 2008

Downtown Houston has even inserted a duck pond and fountain, surrounded by landscaping and park benches. Around this area, the developers also laid down a walkway where people could walk, run or bike ride to get some exercise. Through smart-growth planning and utilization, it also helped combat Houston's homeless population by opening more shelters and community centers to get them off the streets.

There's no doubt smart-growth is the way if the future. Not just for looks, but for boosting a local economy and people's quality of living.

Work Cited/References

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