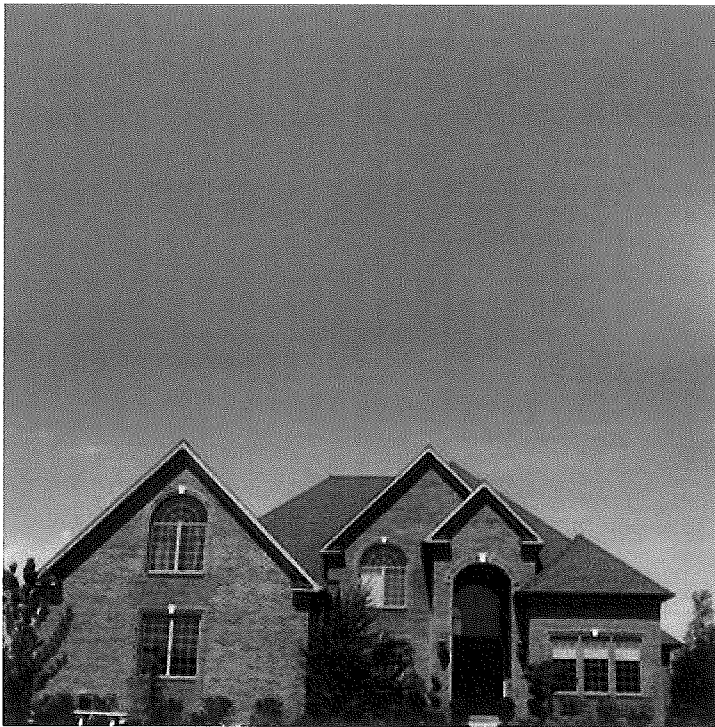


Negative Effects of Urban Sprawl

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Urban sprawl has undesirable consequences.

Proponents of urban sprawl argue that living in suburban areas outside of major cities is a matter of personal choice and freedom. Additionally, they may present the various benefits of urban sprawl, such as the short-term economic and employment boost caused by new construction. However, urban sprawl is a growing concern in all of America. When choosing your next residence, consider the negative effects of

urban sprawl, and their impact on you, your community and the environment.

Increased Air Pollution

Longer and more frequent commutes are a major concern associated with urban sprawl. The average American spends the equivalent of eight 55-hour work weeks behind the steering wheel of a car annually, according to the Sierra Club. More driving leads to more air pollution, which can contribute to poor health and smog problems.

Water Overconsumption

Spreading out development creates water distribution problems and can lead to water overconsumption. A typical low-density or suburban community uses more water than a high-density city community. Landscaping is the primary culprit for this excessive use of water. According to the EPA, 30 percent of the water used daily in the United States is devoted to outdoor use.

Loss of Wildlife Habitat

The San Francisco Bay Area, with over 400,000 acres of natural landscape, is one of the nation's six hotspots for biological diversity, according to the Center for Biological Diversity. The region has a wide variety of plant and animal species; unfortunately, 90 of them, including the California tiger salamander, are listed as endangered or threatened. Rapid development can negatively affect wildlife by tearing down, clearing, or building over its habitat, potentially threatening survival. This is not only a problem in the San Francisco Bay Area; it's a problem in all of America.

Increased Racial and Economic Disparity

When residents relocate outside of a city's core, they take their tax dollars with them. Often, it's the city's poorest residents that are left behind. This creates economic disparity and stratification based upon location. It also creates funding problems for the core, which directly affects the money available for education, crime prevention, and maintenance and upkeep. Urban sprawl can also lead to economic "white flight." According to "Urban Sprawl: A Reference Guide," urban sprawl leads to racial segregation as minorities are often left behind in the poorest parts of a region. This problem may not be as widespread as it has been in the past, but it's present nonetheless.