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River City Saunter Bus Tour: Test Run **Region Corridor Tour – Our Future Need Not Be Our Past** **June 25, 2009**

Concept:

A Tour will be organized to examine current conditions and the impacts of growth over time in three major growth corridors in the Region. Each attendee will be identified by residence jurisdiction and assigned to a tour of the corridors in the other two jurisdictions. In other words, no attendee will tour his or her own jurisdiction. The theory behind this is to lessen any defensive or proprietary feelings and to permit a participant to correlate observations and learning from the other jurisdictions to his or her home jurisdiction with which he or she is already intimately familiar.

The tour will move along each of the three major high density corridors starting at an older development and moving outwards to a recent large development, stopping two or three times for lecture and observation. These stops will also present opportunities for small events to be arranged to accentuate a group, or an interest, impacted by growth or advocating better alternatives.

After a group has toured two corridors, all tours will reconvene at the starting point for a group debriefing followed by an event, which could be a "Transportation Fair" with booths and events from many agencies, groups and advocates of smart growth/

Audience:

Elected officials, planning commissioners, civic opinion leaders, media representatives and interested citizens (hopefully including civic association officers) will be invited.

It is expected that a large portion of the attendees will be smart growth-savvy and enthusiastic. The policy makers will have a mix of knowledge and/or interest in these issues.

Objective:

The tour is meant to provide a live experience about why smart growth policies are important by closely viewing sprawl's impacts over time. Combining in person observations, historical explanations and data, and illustrating effects over time should help educate the attendees about the importance of smart growth policies and techniques and provide a context for current and future decisions and policy opportunities.

Key Points/Takeaways for Audience:

1. Old regional strip centers and malls were once new, and not very well planned. The "newness" and excitement of shopping helped introduce massive single family residential development that was not well integrated into transportation plans.
2. Before long, one center was overtaken by another, then another. At some point, a new outcrop began to consume the inner, older center and its surrounding residential areas.
3. Meanwhile, more residential developments spring up and significantly more traffic was generated at a pace that new road construction could not support. Commuting times, air quality, recreation, safety, citizen frustration and other effects worsen without abatement.
4. The process repeats itself over and again. The "new" presents significant overall quality of life challenges.
5. Viewed as a time continuum, the decline of the inner development rings expands along the path of new development with little redevelopment. Blight moves along the same direction.
6. Road development (corridor and subdivision) funds have dwindled and cannot be sustained.
7. There are alternatives that can change this model: redevelopment and infill incentives and planning, transit oriented development, mass transit in high density corridors, pedestrian and bike friendly planning and infrastructure.

Supporting Content for Each Takeaway: TBD