



18 Reasons to Preserve / Renovate Buildings for Smart Growth

At a Historic Preservation conference in Louisville, the keynote speaker discussed why historic preservation is a good “smart growth” strategy. He presented a list of 18 reasons why buildings should be saved and neighborhoods revitalized. Provided below is this list:

1. Public infrastructure already exists (no need to extend roads, utilities, etc.)
2. Vacant buildings don't generate a tax base
3. Public transportation already exists
4. Promotes integrated uses (not separate zoning areas)
5. Inner-city properties are pedestrian oriented (not vehicular)
6. Does not abandon existing assets (public and private)
7. Trend is back to historic neighborhoods
8. Great for new start-up businesses: existing buildings have lower rent than new.
9. Diversity of rental rates
10. Renovation is more labor intensive; therefore, money is kept in the community.
New construction is more material intensive, and therefore money is transferred to suppliers outside the community
11. Landfill space is becoming scarce. Therefore, avoid demolition.
12. Inner city neighborhoods are “Real Urbanism” and not the suburban “New Urbanism”
13. Density of use
14. Ample labor force nearer the city. Therefore, locate jobs nearer the labor force.
15. Existing schools reinforce neighborhoods
16. Renovation saves open land
17. Existing housing is more diverse than the bland, generic new suburbs
18. Renovation reduces demand for land sprawl