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Hollywood Community Plan

1 message

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NEWGEOGRAPHY

Why Compact Cities Aren't So Smart

by [Phil McDermott](#) 06/12/2011

Consider the following propositions about the compact city:

- A focus on centralization guarantees congestion;
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- A focus on centralization reduces green space and concentrates urban pollution;
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- Consolidation prejudices old infrastructure, increasing overload and the risk of failure;
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- A commitment to centralization and higher densities increases vulnerability to extreme climatic events, and natural disasters;
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- Medium to high density living is socially flawed, as it is associated with transience, increased urban crime,

diminished quality of life, and loss of a sense of community, especially for households in middle to lower income brackets (and, ultimately, razing of failed apartment blocks);

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- The market does not favor medium to high density housing unless well located, well appointed, and therefore out of the price range of most households;
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- Mixed use developments reduce the amount and push up the price of land for business while lowering the quality of life of residents;
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- Limiting new business land and expecting to take up new employment by increasing densities on existing sites forces up business costs, reducing the attractiveness of investment and competitiveness of business.

None of this makes compact city policies look very smart.