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## Future Speaking Engagements

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Tues., June 9 - Chris Leinberger will be the keynote speaker.

[ULT Philadelphia Urban Marketplace](#)

Thur., June 25- Chris Leinberger will be a keynote speaker and Jason Duckworth will be a panelist.

## Arcadia Book Corner

### [The Option of Urbanism](#)

by Arcadia partner, Christopher B. Leinberger.

Americans are voting with their feet to abandon strip malls and suburban sprawl, embracing instead a new type of community where they can live, work, shop, and play within easy walking distance.

### [Views of Seaside](#)

by Seaside Institute.

A book about the iconic community of the New Urbanism-- Seaside-- developed by Arcadia partner, Robert Davis.

### [Last Harvest](#)

by Witold Rybczynski.

A book about American development told through the lens of Arcadia's New Daleville community in Chester County.

Greetings!

Princeton, NJ -- 94  
Narberth, PA -- 92  
Annapolis, MD -- 89  
Fairfax, VA -- 58  
Voorhees, NJ -- 22  
Blue Bell, PA -- 20

What's the rating? Walkability on a scale from 0 to 100. This month we introduce our readers to a remarkable website, [Walkscore.com](#), which ranks places in terms of the ease and utility of getting around on foot.

We also conclude our three-part series on obstacles to infill development. We suggest public policies that would help existing urbanized places-- either urban or suburban--increase their share of new development.

Best,

Jason Duckworth  
Vice President

## Walkscore.com: how walkable is your neighborhood?



Arcadia partner, Chris Leinberger, is an advisor to [Walkscore.com](#), an innovative website founded in 2007 that ranks locations based upon their walkability. Walkable places are dense, mixed-use and pedestrian oriented-- places where walking is both a daily pleasure and a realistic alternative to the automobile.

The founders of Walkscore not only want to quantify walkability but also herald its many virtues. Walkable neighborhoods promote public health (N.B., one [study](#) found that residents of walkable neighborhoods weigh 7 pounds less on average than those of sprawling neighborhoods), have smaller carbon footprints, and enjoy greater social capital (i.e., [research](#) suggests that since residents drive less, they are more likely to be involved in community groups and know their neighbors).

Although Walkscore primarily targets homebuyers, we think it is an equally valuable tool for developers seeking locations less exposed to the impacts of high fuel prices and more desirable to the growing ranks of environmentally conscious buyers.

The [Arcadia office](#) in Wayne, PA has a Walkscore of 94.

What's yours?

## Overcoming the obstacles to infill: policy prescriptions to make walkable infill neighborhoods the norm.

Our last [newsletter](#) described the many advantages that exurban development has over infill development in suburban or urban settings. From cost advantages to more rapid permitting, our current system for land development actually makes it hard to do the right thing and build densely in existing urbanized areas.

What to do?

- **Increase allowable densities in places with public infrastructure.** Public policy should prohibit land use regulations that mandate artificially low residential and commercial densities in infill locations with public transportation and water and sewer infrastructure. When we enforce short height limits next to our train stations, when we require excessive parking for office buildings in urbanized areas, or when we mandate land application sewer systems when public sewer is readily available, we squander past infrastructure investments, erode housing affordability, and push development further out and farther apart. (See the 2008 book [Rethinking Federal Housing Policy](#) by economists Edward L. Glaeser and Joseph Gyourko (AEI Press) which argues persuasively that local land regulation is a chief contributor to local-market housing unaffordability.)

- **Make walkable urbanism "by right."** Sadly, walkable neighborhoods are often outlawed by local zoning regulations; walkable neighborhoods are rarely a "by right" use. Every traditional neighborhood development (TND) Arcadia has proposed has required an amendment to the zoning ordinance to mix uses, to shrink lot sizes, and to tighten road geometry. Worse yet, many older walkable infill communities (*which shall remain nameless here*) would be impossible to build under extant zoning. We recently contributed to proposed legislation being drafted by [State Rep. Bob Freeman](#) in Pennsylvania that will go a long way towards increase the adoption of traditional neighborhood development as a by-right use.
- **Treat urban and suburban places differently.** Obviously, a traditional main street is different than a commercial arterial. A block of rowhouses is different from a large-lot estate development. Transportation and environmental regulation often fails to discern the difference, applying one-size fits all policies to vastly different conditions. Because the regulators themselves encounter more low-density development than dense development, suburban norms are often applied to infill areas, generating excessive costs and eroding traditional urban design qualities.
- **Increase the cost/lower the subsidies of sprawl.** One way to increase the viability of infill development is to increase the cost of sprawl or to reduce its subsidies. The true cost of low-density sprawl is not contained within the real estate transaction between builder and buyer; sprawl generates externalities in the form of traffic, tax, and environmental impacts which are passed on to society in general. Regulation, impact fees and tax policy could redirect these costs back to the homebuyer--where it belongs.

These policies would go a long way towards redirecting development to infill locations. Unfortunately, the reality of fragmented local government in much of the United States makes implementation of these policies nearly impossible. Because the negative impacts of development are generally contained within municipalities while the benefits are more diffuse, opposition to development has become a constant refrain in local politics. To make these smart growth policies happen, we need Federal or state level action that would create powerful incentives for local government to enact smart growth policies. As recommended by Glaeser and Gyourko (2008): "The federal government should lean against the local tendency to restrict new construction."

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