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Making Walkable Communities

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Making Walkable Communities

There is no doubt that global warming is happening. With all the rage about climate change and global warming people should be doing more about it than just reading about it in the news. We should be making efforts towards making changes on a local level. This in turn could grow to a national level with more and more people participating in the movement and actually make global changes, instead of just talking about it. When the scale of participants grows the scale of the changes made will grow as well and this will be the beginning of the changes that could slow down climate change.

Scientists have proven that humans are the main cause of the global warming issues at hand. Humans are emitting too much carbon dioxide (CO₂) into our atmosphere in many ways. Some of these ways consist of construction, driving vehicles, and digging up fossil fuels. The trees and plants are being destroyed and the plants and trees are a few of the main things that take the CO₂ out of the atmosphere. Humans are producing a double negative for the planet, by creating more toxins (CO₂) and taking away the things to reduce the toxic chemicals in the atmosphere (trees, plants, etc.).

Creating walkable communities could benefit everyone. These are communities in which the necessities for individuals living in the area are within walking or biking distance. Or within distances where vehicles are not necessary. Driving would not be needed as much, which would cut down the use of gasoline and ethanol. This would cut down the CO₂ emissions and that helps slow down global warming and climate change. Walkable communities would create more space for trees, plants, and animals by creating more green space instead of adding more roads and that would reduce the carbon that has already been emitted into the air. It would also bring aesthetic value to the communities and they would no longer be covered by cement and buildings. Walkable communities make getting places more efficient as well, things would have to be built closer together, but once this was done walking everywhere would not be such a burden. We could walk to the grocery store, kids could walk to schools, and there could be community centers within walking distances for the people of the area to attend meetings or events. Not to mention the exercise that everyone would be getting. This would decrease the obesity rate in the U.S. by getting people out and walking or riding bikes or some other form of transportation that is allowed on sidewalks or grass. In a blog it stated:

“According to a study done by the Harvard Health Watch, an **average American** spends 101 minutes per day **driving**. That means that in a lifetime, an **average Joe** spends a whopping 37,935 hours **driving a car** (assuming that s/he starts **driving** at 17 and drives until 78.7 years old).”

This means that for 37,935 hours in an average lifetime people are sitting in a car, this is not including the time spent sitting at work (if the work being done is in an office or somewhere that requires sitting), the time people watch television, the time at the table spent eating, the time

sleeping, or the time that students sit to do homework. All of this sitting is contributing to the obesity of our country and walking to the places we need to go may sound like a small step, but doing it every day would bring the health issues down drastically. According to the Walkable and Livable Communities Institutes website the “WALC institute helps to create healthy, connected communities that support active living and that advance opportunities for all people through walkable and bikeable streets, livable cities and better built environments,” and this statement shows that the wellbeing of the community being transformed into a walkable community is the first priority. The WALC Institute “directly helps as many as 80 communities across North America by providing technical assistance and working alongside them to plot a course toward a more walkable future”.

The idea of a walking community would eventually save our country, even just at a local level at first, a whole lot of money. If you think about the money spent to get fossil fuels to the U.S. to be able to drive our cars where we need to go and fuel our energy sources, the amount of health bills some Americans pay because of high blood pressure, cholesterol, or other things related to weight, the amount of money spent on buying cars in general just to emit carbon into the atmosphere and speed up global warming is all just a convenience. There are more indirect consequences that are not taken into consideration in the everyday routines that humans partake in. Walkable communities could reduce all of these costs, both money related and health related. Walkable communities will also help with the reduction of the CO₂ that this generation have released into the atmosphere. This would then slow down global warming eventually. Any step forward is a good step, even if it is a baby step.

References

Blog Link:

<http://blog.tempio.io/2013/7-time-consuming-things-an-average-joe-spends-in-a-lifetime/>

WALC Institute Link:

<http://www.walklive.org/>