

COMMUNITY FORUM #2 SUMMARY

Joe Minicozzi, Urban3

January 29, 2020 | 6:30-8:30pm | Civic Arts Plaza – Janet & Ray Scherr Forum

On Wednesday, January 29, 2020 the City of Thousand Oaks hosted the second community forum to discuss big picture trends affecting the City as part of the General Plan Update, *Thousand Oaks 2045*. The forum took place at the Civic Arts Plaza in the Scherr Forum from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The event had roughly 50 participants, not including City staff.

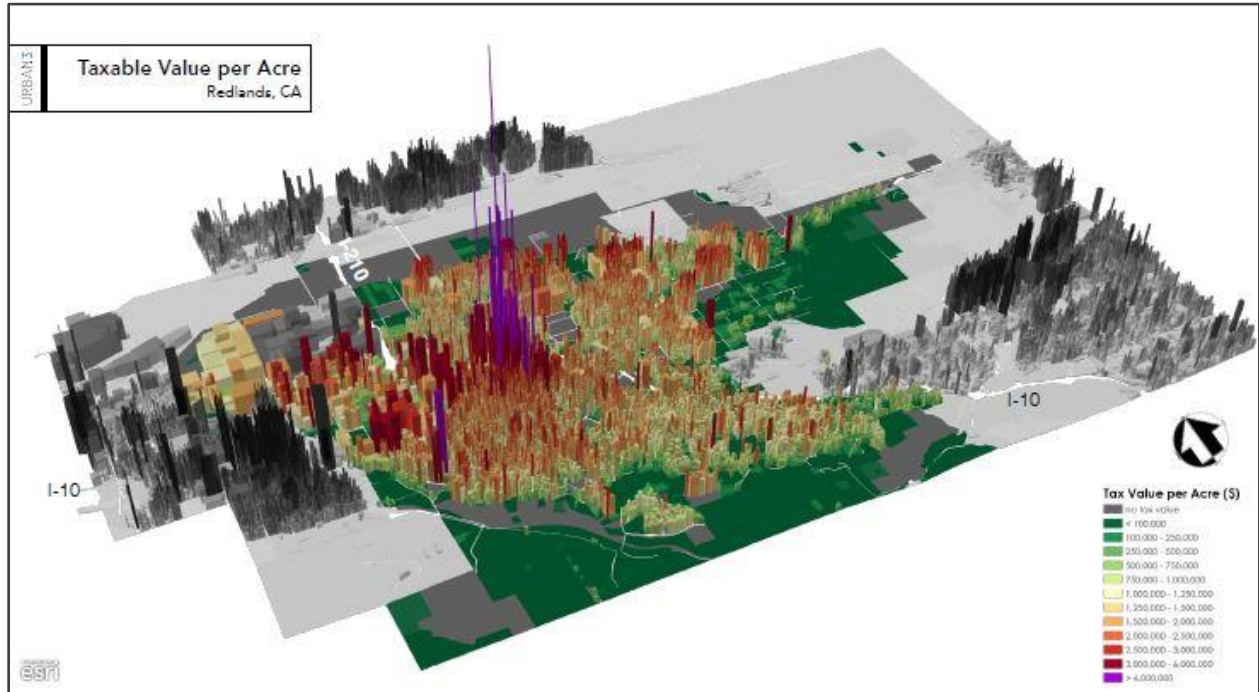
After a brief opening by Mayor Al Adam, the forum's keynote speaker, Joe Minicozzi, Principal of Urban3, explored the relationship between development type, city expenses for infrastructure and services, and city revenues. Mr. Minicozzi presented case studies from cities across the United States demonstrating impacts of development patterns on community economic health.

During the presentation and subsequent Q&A, Mr. Minicozzi challenged our assumptions about the relationship between land use, development intensity and tax revenues. He introduced the notion that a city is a social corporation that should build wealth and provide long-lasting community benefits. Further, a city should expect a return on its investment in infrastructure, particularly roads and utilities, by generating tax revenues to pay for the long-term maintenance of the infrastructure.

Using graphics and visual mapping, he showed how sprawling, low density development has resulted in inefficiencies compared to more compact development patterns. One of his key messages was to rethink revenue metrics; instead of examining revenues by project, we should examine tax revenues per acre. When revenues per acre are used it's clear that higher density development uses land more efficiently and produces far greater returns for a city. For example, he compared a WalMart in Ashville, NC to a 6-story mixed use building downtown. In raw numbers, the 34-acre WalMart produces, \$20M per year compared to only \$11M for the 0.2-acre mixed use building. However, when comparing property and sales tax per acre, it becomes clear that the mixed use building is more efficient as it produces \$634,000 in total property taxes and \$84,000 in city sales tax per acre compared to Walmart's \$6,500 per acre in property tax and \$48,000 per acre in sales tax.

Mr. Minicozzi showed how building types can produce different levels of county tax revenues. Using information from 21 of his studies, he found that a mall or strip commercial development produces \$9.30 per acre in property taxes compared to \$47.80 for a 2-story mixed use building, \$95.00 for a 3 story mixed use building and \$274.00 for a 6-story mixed use building. His message for cities like Thousand Oaks—that have limited land resources—is to consider more compact development as a critical strategy for generating tax revenues, which in turn pay for quality public services and the ongoing maintenance of existing infrastructure.

The presentation also included maps and data showing the visual and spatial implications of tax revenues per acre. One example from the City of Redlands is below. He used similar examples from: Palmdale, CA; Davis, CA; Riverside and Eastvale, CA; Fresno, CA, Hennepin County, MN; Bozeman, MT; and other jurisdictions.



Mr. Minicozzi tied his presentation to *Thousand Oaks 2045* by highlighting the opportunity to examine the relationship between Thousand Oaks' land development patterns and long-term revenues and expenses. His message for the City and its residents is to use data, rather than values or feelings, to make land use and development decisions that provide wealth and generate revenue for the community. This will ensure that the City can maintain its high quality of life, preserve its open space and maintain public facilities and services.

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session with Joe Minicozzi which is summarized below.

- One participant asked if the City has sufficient fire infrastructure (fire trucks, etc.) to support higher density development? Thousand Oaks City Manager, Andrew Powers, responded to this question noting that the City of Thousand Oaks has adequate fire infrastructure to support taller structures.
- Some residents posed a fear of development height above Thousand Oaks' current height restrictions for fear of destroying town character. Mr. Minicozzi challenged the audience to think about how they define character.
- One participant asked when parking is not required for a business, patrons seem to park in other businesses lots and walk to their destination. Which could be considered a subsidy. Mr.

Minicozzi noted that a parking strategy can offer centralized parking lots (or structures) that serves surrounding businesses.

- Mayor Adam noted that Thousand Oaks lacks a street grid system like cities mentioned in the presentation (Pasadena and Santa Barbara), and asked, how Thousand Oaks could become more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Minicozzi noted that Thousand Oaks should consider the long-term cost benefit analysis of their current street system design and consider adding in a new roadway network in their downtown area.
- One participant noted that they would summarize the presentation as encouraging building efficiency, not necessarily tall buildings.
- Matt Raimi, the City's General Plan consultant, offered an observation while facilitating the question and answer session, noting that most of the development in Thousand Oaks occurred between the 1970s and 1990s. The infrastructure developed during those years is now coming due for major investments, and there is not a lot of new vacant land to produce taxes to pay for those impending costs.
- One participant asked what Mr. Minicozzi thought about the relationship between density and the changes in demographic makeup of a community. Noting that they think many communities reject the idea of density for fear of demographic shifts.
- One participant asked for Mr. Minicozzi to elaborate on an example from his presentation regarding a downtown shoe store that brought high value to its community economic health. Mr. Minicozzi responded that the building footprint took up 100% of the lot and had high potency which yielded high taxes per acre, despite being a small structure.
- Another participant asked whether tax values or assessed values were used in the presentation, and how California's Prop 13 impacts reassessments here versus other states where such Propositions don't apply.
- A participant asked how Thousand Oaks, which is mostly built out and over 90% of the land will not change in the next 20 years should consider redevelopment potential. Mr. Minicozzi responded that the city should look at the existing land use and tax data then develop a basic level of floor area ratio (FAR) needed to collect revenues to support ongoing infrastructures maintenance costs.
- Lastly, a participant asked if Thousand Oaks should consider trying to establish a street grid structure to accommodate more efficient use of land?

For more information and to watch a recording of the second community forum click [here](#).

The community forum ended with an encouragement for audience members to spread the word about the General Plan and to attend the February 6, 2020 GPAC meeting.

