

ASAP Update

Special Issue

Beyond the Myths of Growth: A Recap of ASAP's Second Annual Conference September 13, 2003

Local Growth: Inconvenient Facts and Antiquated Myths

Presenter: Jack Marshall, Ph.D.

Dr. Marshall is President of ASAP. This is an *abridged* version of his conference presentation. You may request an *unabridged* version by e-mailing harry@harrydale.com.

I believe the most serious long-term problem confronting our Central Virginia localities is population growth. I also believe population growth is the most neglected problem in our communities. Though small clusters of activists can get apoplectic about particular developments – a huge mall proposed here, a vast residential subdivision there – to an astonishing degree, the issue of long-term growth (and its impacts) is ignored.

Because growth occurs relatively slowly, it is easy – on a day-to-day basis – to miss the huge changes it creates over time. But like the death of a thousand cuts, population growth is insidious and cumulative, and it causes or exacerbates a huge range of problems in our financial, social, environmental, and political systems. Conversely, population growth solves nothing – at least for the community as a whole. Many of you may be aware of the challenge from Al Bartlett, the Boulder, Colorado-based leader of efforts to manage local population growth. He asks: “Can you think of any problem, on any scale, whose long-term solution is in any demonstrable way aided, assisted, or advanced by having further population growth?” I don’t think anyone has identified such a problem.

I also believe that a community truly knowledgeable about the pace of its local growth and the implications of that growth (what growth means for its quality of life, its taxes, its environment, and so forth) will take meaningful steps to

maintain its population size at an optimal and sustainable level. Regrettably, most of us in Central Virginia respond to population growth with ignorance, denial, or indifference. We’re lousy at seeing the big picture over the long haul.

This situation has been created in large part because we’ve bought into a number of myths of growth that have served as barriers, as firewalls, insulating most residents from up-to-date, reliable, relevant information about growth. The myths reassure us that there’s really nothing to worry about; indeed, more growth is just what we need. Maintaining these myths is part of an effective (if not always visible) campaign by the “growth machine” intended to maximize the area’s ability to absorb ever-greater numbers of people.

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Myth: Growth Is Good

Presenter: Edwin Stennett

Mr. Stennett is President of the Growth Education Movement, Inc., and author of *In Growth We Trust: Sprawl, Smart Growth, and Rapid Population Growth*. This is an *abridged* version of his conference presentation. You may request an *unabridged* version with footnotes by e-mailing harry@harrydale.com.

This morning I would like to explore one of our culture's dominant stories: the Growth is Good myth. This story is often in conflict with reality. Yet it has great power over us. This power is not intrinsic. In part it emanates from tenets deeply rooted in American culture: a craving for boundless growth, a perception of unlimited land and economic resources. But in much larger measure, the power of the myth flows from the persistent promotion by those who profit from growth.

We can see the power of the myth in action every day. People acknowledge that growth is adversely affecting their lives, but they are unable to question the desirability of growth.

Two of the most common versions of the Growth is Good story are: We need growth because we need jobs, and we need growth in order to keep our local taxes from rising. The former story rarely has validity except in economically depressed areas. And the latter story rarely has validity except in very small communities that can benefit from economies of scale. Yet both stories are repeated over and over again in every community.

According to Timothy Bartik, economist with the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and an authority on development: "In the long run, if you recruit five jobs, four of them go to people who otherwise would be living someplace else." Thus the more jobs we lure to our area, the more people will move in to fill them. The net result is that unemployment rates remain essentially unaffected – while our congestion and related quality of living losses are permanently ratcheted up a notch.

In early 2002 the *Washington Post* editors warned the voters of Montgomery County, MD, that they must "press for the roads that the region must have if the county is to attract solid sources of revenue to offset large tax increases." The phrase "attract solid sources of revenue" of course means attracting new businesses and new residents that the county may tax. The presumption is that the tax revenue from the newly attracted businesses and residents will lessen the tax burden on the existing residents.

The logic is as faulty as it is common. The problem is that the reasoning focuses on income and downplays expenses. The fact that costly services must be rendered to the new businesses and new residents is not even mentioned. This omission is absurd. In most communities these services will completely consume the new tax revenue. Worse, all residents, new and existing, will face the financial burden of the capital costs for the roads built to attract the growth.

The view expressed by the *Post's* editors is not unique. Local officials everywhere praise taxes from new businesses as "money we wouldn't have had otherwise." But new businesses require new residents, and new residents demand services. What communities should ask is not whether the money is new, but whether it will cover the costs of services to the new residents that will come with it. And even if it does cover the cost of the new expenses, we just end up back at "square one" – except that we have greater congestion, less open space, and overcrowded schools.

In short, attracting new businesses and residents in order to pay for county services is a bit like a dog chasing its tail. As the dog never quite catches its tail, the fiscal benefit never quite materializes. But at least the dog gets some exercise.

In prosperous metropolitan areas all across the country, growth is clearly causing the quality of life to decline. The issues are traffic congestion, water scarcity during drought years, school overcrowding, crime rates, sprawl, etc. In these areas the myth and the reality are clearly in conflict. In these areas it is obvious to growing numbers of people that the quality of life losses outweigh any benefits of growth. Yet the Growth is Good story is persistently promoted in nearly every location – large as well as small, prosperous as well as poor.

Why is this? Why do newspaper editors, politicians, business associations, etc. vigorously promote the myth regardless of community circumstances? This is an extremely important question, and the answer lies in the motives of those who so ardently press the story.

In 1976, Harvey Molotch wrote a groundbreaking essay titled: "The City as a Growth Machine."¹ In it he bluntly asserted that:

A city is conceived as the expression of the interests of some land-based elite who profit through the increasing intensification of the land use of the area in which its members hold a common interest. This elite competes with other land-based elites in an effort to have growth-inducing resources invested within its own area as opposed to that of another. Moreover governmental authority, at the local and non-local levels, is utilized to assist in achieving this growth at the expense of competing localities.

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"Environments do very well, thank you, without people, but the people don't do very well without resources." – *ASAP Board member and University of Virginia Professor G. Carleton Ray*

¹ Harvey Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976): 309-330.

Myth: Growth Cannot Be Slowed or Stopped

Presenter: Julie Pastor, AICP

Ms. Pastor is the Director of Planning for Loudoun County, VA, one of the nation's fastest growing counties. This is a summary of her conference presentation. You may request a complete text of her remarks by e-mailing harry@harrydale.com.

Ms. Pastor began her talk by stating that the adoption of Loudoun County's recent revisions to its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance "defies the myth that nothing can be done to successfully manage growth." She added, "Loudoun's approach has been and still is one of *managed* growth, not *no* growth."

The **central concept** of Loudoun's approach is that "development should be systematic and in the right location in order to function well and enable the County to provide adequate and cost-efficient public services." Loudoun is "committed to the creation of affordable, distinct, well-designed, and mixed-use communities that respect, sustain, and enhance the County's natural and heritage resources. ... To this end and *within the parameters of our legislative authority*, the County has aggressively and deliberately pursued revisions to our [Comprehensive] Plan and regulatory ordinances to realize these growth management goals and achieve a better quality of life for our citizens."

The overall strategy adopted in July 2001 had five key components: green infrastructure, fiscal management, housing, transportation, and area-specific policies. The **four geographic policy areas** are **Suburban** (the eastern part of the County around Dulles Airport), **Rural** (the western part of the County), a visual and spatial **Transition** (between Suburban and Rural areas), and **Towns**.

Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure includes the County's natural, environmental, cultural, and heritage resources. It forms the basis for the County's "conservation design" approach to *all* development, both residential and non-residential. The intent of **conservation design** is "to integrate the built environment with the natural environment and to protect environmental and cultural resources."

Environmental **overlay zoning districts** serve as the primary organizing elements for conservation design. They also document and protect the aforementioned resources. Examples include River and Stream Corridor, Mountainside, and Limestone Overlay Districts. The Comprehensive Plan and new zoning districts provide specific guidance on land uses and densities in each of the four geographic policy areas. For example, in the Rural Area, Loudoun has not only significantly reduced permitted residential densities and encouraged traditional farming, but it has also allowed other rural economic uses that enable landowners to earn enough money to keep the land open. In addition, the County

reaffirmed a **hard edge** that defines the limits of central utility services. These urban growth boundaries as well as the land use and density limitations "insure that infrastructure improvements, facilities, and services ... will be in synch where development is desired."

The Loudoun Experience

Ms. Pastor stated that, "The Loudoun experience of dispelling the myth really boils down to two things. The first was our ability to use the authority ... afforded to us by Virginia State Code to plan for and implement a growth management strategy. The second was having the political will and resources assigned to actually accomplish it." She witnessed the numerous rebuffs and chiding from the state legislature to "use the tools you have" before you ask for more. "Loudoun decided to take them at their word and just do it." However, additional tools, such as impact fees and Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances, are still needed.

The newly elected Board of Supervisors provided a clear mandate and direction. Because the mandate was clear even before the election results were tallied, the Planning Department was prepared "from Day 1" to receive the Board's direction. That direction was specific: "The Planning Commission was to review and revise the County's Comprehensive Plan with the specific intent and commitment to implement revisions to its regulatory documents (i.e., the Zoning Ordinance)." The County adopted the Comprehensive Plan revisions within 18 months of the election.

Ms. Pastor stressed that it is essential to have strong links between the Comprehensive Plan, the zoning and subdivision regulations, and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). "It is the integration of these elements that is necessary to sustain such a growth management strategy. ... For perhaps the first time ever, the County has a zoning map that matches what is called for in the Plan."

Ms. Pastor concluded her presentation by anticipating two questions.

Do I think Loudoun County's actions will withstand the legal challenges we currently face?

The County has complete confidence in the comprehensiveness of our approach, the process we followed, and the quality and integrity of the staff resources, consultants, and specialists who have supported our efforts. This Board was not just ready to take this on, it was *really* ready. And the staff just wasn't prepared, but was *really* prepared. And the process wasn't thorough, it was *really* thorough.

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Myth: Growth Is Necessary for Economic Prosperity

Presenter: Kenneth N. Townsend, Ph.D.

Dr. Townsend is the Elliott Professor of Economics at Hampden-Sydney College in Farmville, VA. He and Herman E. Daly co-edited *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics*. This is an abridged version of his conference presentation.

Economic growth is not automatically necessary for economic prosperity. But economic growth and population growth are one and the same thing. I get my understanding of this by going back to a mid-20th century mathematical biologist, Alfred J. Lotka.² In his book, Lotka says that the human creature is a lot like the hermit crab. We are not just the within-the-skin processes that we are endowed with genetically. We consider certain extensions of ourselves—outside the body—to be a right and proper part of our biological being: our clothes, eyeglasses, automobiles, etc. All of us have these kinds of outside-the-body structures. To be human is to have a collection of within-the-skin structures—organs and tissues—and a collection of outside-the-body extensions of ourselves. That is a human being.

Albemarle County is growing at 2% per year in terms of its countable population. You are keenly aware of that. But what about the outside-the-body (as Lotka would put it) extensions of ourselves? What about the outside-the-skin part of the human population, without which we would consider ourselves less than complete? How about counting up the outside-the-body growth of Albemarle County? Really, as much as the population—no, more than the population—that's what is putting the pressure on your precious, to-be-conserved local resources.

I do **not** believe that economic growth and economic prosperity are the same thing. Growth **must stop** because it is patently unsustainable. This is true not just at the community level but, more importantly, at the aggregate level, at the level of gross world product. Development, on the other hand, is to be encouraged. I think we would be in a desperate state of affairs if we did not continue to develop. We would stagnate as a species. We would lose interest. I think we would wither and die if we did not continue to develop.

What are the key differences between growth and development? Traditionally, we have the mantra that growth is good. Indeed, what is the absence of growth? When we are not growing, what do we call it? Stagnation. Or, even worse than that, depression. When we talk about growth, we talk about making *more* things, making *more* commodities, and supplying *more* services. As long as these things are a supportable proposition, a sustainable proposition, then, to be sure, as an economist I would tell you these are, in fact, good things. **But not if they come at the expense of the viability**

² Alfred J. Lotka published his classic text, *Elements of Physical Biology*, in 1925. It was reprinted in 1956 as *Elements of Mathematical Biology*.

of the human creature. Not if they put too much pressure on our immediate environment. Then we all end up suffering from the adverse consequences.

What I want you to understand is that it is not the commodity itself that is the good thing. What's good about it is that the human creature is rendered happy and is confronted with opportunities to improve its circumstances, opportunities to know, to understand, to appreciate, and to be engaged in useful work. The point is that we derive a *service yield* from commodities. I would suggest to you that in as much as our happiness is derived from our ability to get value or utility when we *use* a thing, then it is not the thing itself that makes us happy, it is the *experience* of getting service from the commodity. The economy should be reorganized around producing commodities that last, commodities that are serviceable, and commodities that can be put back into operation rather than being disposed of.

What I am suggesting is that, in a sustainable society, we would *develop* rather than *grow* the economy. Think about the way we measure and account for economic activity. Value is price multiplied by quantity. The reason for the traditional mantra that growth is good is that the larger the quantity, the higher the value. But that is not obligatory. Quantity can remain the same, and value can still go up. How can value go up in a real sense, in a way that is meaningful to people? We can all learn to appreciate better, and derive more service use from, things that are produced.

Development and growth are different propositions. Albemarle **must** develop. Albemarle must be encouraged to develop. Manufactured goods are good things. Services are good things. But disposable, throwaway, or light-duty goods, and cheaply constructed properties—that's old script. I would rather see manufacturers make things better, make them more serviceable, and make them more durable and lasting. I would rather see real estate developers reorganize their construction precepts around renovating existing properties instead of expanding and taking land out of its traditional service use.

What are the three traditional pressures on Albemarle County that you are going to face as the scale or size of Albemarle grows and grows again over the next 60-year period that Jack Marshall mentioned?

- Land is going to be taken out of its traditional uses.
- Resources will dwindle.
- The immediate environment, which serves as an ecological sink, will be stressed. Since the ecosystem is fixed, as population grows, the environment will become more polluted.

You have got to get rid of what you produce. Alan Greenspan's predecessor twice removed, Arthur Burns,³ was very much ahead of his time when he said,

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³ Arthur Burns was Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board from 1970 to 1978.

Conference Summary

Presenter: Al Weed

Al Weed is Vice President of ASAP and a candidate for U. S. Congress. The following passages are excerpts from his summary of the conference.

Who Benefits from Growth?

Jack Marshall, citing Al Bartlett, asked the question, “Does anyone know of any issue where population growth is the ultimate solution?” In one sense, that’s a convincing rhetorical question, but in another sense, it’s not very effective. For many people in the growth machine (as Ed Stennett described), population growth is what provides them and their families significant profit and a very nice life. So, for them, yes, growth is the solution. Therefore, it’s important to ask another question: “Yes, you profit, but who pays?” When they tell you that growth is good for business, you should ask, “*Whose* business—local businesses or national corporations? *Who* is going to benefit from it?”

Closing the Gate

Who sets the limit on population growth? Many of you moved here from someplace else, either not so long ago or a long time ago. Now you are both part of the problem and part of the solution. If someone says, “Well, now that you are here, you must want to close the gate,” I think the answer is, “Yes! Yes, I came here for something, and I want to protect it!” John Hermsmeier [Executive Director of the Environmental Education Center and a member of ASAP’s Board of Directors] some time ago made the point that, “Managing the gate is a very good husbandry analogy. A farmer who can’t keep his gates closed is going to go out of business pretty quickly.” Don’t be embarrassed to say, “Yes, I’m managing the gate.” That’s part of managing the future and managing the future of the resources that we have.

The Real Costs of Growth

When we have growth of population and demand for services, we are always playing catch-up with these services. We never maintain services at the appropriate level. In schools, this is vital. Suppose we think the proper teacher-to-student ratio is—and I’ll just take a number—1 to 20. Suppose we think that’s the ratio that best allows our children and grandchildren to learn. Then population growth causes us to exceed that ratio. It gets to be 1 to 25, then 1 to 28. Only then do we say, “Oops, let’s build a new school,” and we decrease the ratio. What we’ve forgotten about is all those kids who had their one shot at third grade, their one shot at fourth grade, when they were 1 of 28. They don’t get another shot at fourth grade. They’ve had it. And if their educational potential is diminished because of that imbalance, that’s one of the real costs of growth you’ll never see measured.

Growth Pollution

We think about the growth machine a little bit differently, and I think more charitably, than we do about polluters. If we had an industry on the Rivanna River that was profiting by pouring raw sewage into the Rivanna and not having to

process it, we would be outraged, and we would use every legal tool to take care of it. Yet when we have that same kind of industry profiting from polluting our *future* and raising costs for everyone, we can’t quite get a handle on it. But we might argue that that kind of pollution—growth pollution—is every bit as damaging.

Jobs for Whom?

Politicians love this one: we’ve got to get jobs for everybody. But I think Ed Stennett put his finger on it. In a high employment environment, we don’t need lots of new jobs. So when a politician talks to you about the issue and says, “We are doing this because we need jobs,” the simple, straightforward, and clear response is, “Jobs for whom?” If that politician does not have an answer about who is going to get those jobs, then maybe you ought to look for his replacement.

Does Growth Pay?

Does growth increase our tax revenue? That’s the other mantra: “If we grow, we will find somebody else to pay the taxes.” Why, as thinking adults, do we expect to have someone else pay for what we want? That’s what children think. It’s time to grow up. If we want something in the community, let’s face up to it and pay for it.

Refugees from the Failures of Growth

Ed Stennett talked about the Census Bureau’s focus on “micropolitan” areas. People are moving away from metropolitan areas to micropolitan areas because, as Ed points out, growth has not worked and has destroyed their quality of life. Well, folks, we’re a micropolitan, and we’re getting refugees from the failures of growth.

Poverty and Elitism

Are we elitist? Clearly, poverty is a real issue. But it is not being solved by growth. In fact, poverty is increasing with growth.

The Purpose of the Conference

What you in the audience are doing here today is learning the arguments that will allow you to talk to your neighbors, evaluate what your political leaders say, and understand some of the tools available to the citizens of Virginia.

The Politics of Hope

Conventional wisdom is that the politics of hope usually trump the politics of the *status quo*. At this point, the *status quo* is a seriously declining quality of life. If we do nothing, it will continue to be a seriously declining quality of life. The politics of hope would have us say, “Stop, let’s preserve what we have.” It is not only the politics of hope, but it is, truly, a conservative argument.

Marshall — Local Growth: Inconvenient Facts

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Medieval sea captains were paralyzed by the belief that, because the earth is flat, a long journey might take them over the edge. Like those sailors with their myth of a flat earth, we have been blinded with the myths of population growth. As a result of the constant refrain that growth is inevitable and good, we're numbed into not thinking critically about controlling our demographic fate, not rationally balancing the short-term gains against the long-term costs of growth.

Some myths serve to induce guilt in anyone who might dare to speak against unfettered growth: "They just want to shut the gate now that they're here" is an accusation remarkably effective in muzzling potential critics of growth. Who's prepared to parade his ostensibly self-interested agenda by daring to suggest that the gate can't remain open forever, that growth needs limits, that those of us who are here now – whenever we arrived – are the only ones who can conserve and protect what's here?

The myths, though not valid, have also sent a message to our elected decision-makers that there's not really a felt need among voters for serious growth management. This message, I should point out, is quite the opposite of the results of several surveys done here in the last few years; in every case, respondents express great concern about population growth and its impacts.

When we do manage to get beyond the myths, the facts of growth paint a disturbing picture of our community's future.

Let's start with this. Sometime in mid-September, the County's population will pass the 90,000 mark.⁴ It was only 30 years ago – in 1974 – that Albemarle County had 45,000 residents. We've doubled since 1974.

And add this: According to the last census, Albemarle County's population is growing at a rate of 2.1% per year. At this pace, every day the county sees a net increase of more than five residents, and these five people bring an average of three cars with them – every day.

Under current zoning, Albemarle County can hold more than a quarter of a million residents. At the pace of growth in the 1990s, we'll reach that in less than 60 years.

Garrison Keillor once said, "I admire the resolution of people who can look reality in the face and deny it." How do we get

⁴ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Albemarle County grew at an average annual rate of 2.1% during the 1990s. The estimate of 90,000 is based on a continuation of that rate. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service estimated that Albemarle County grew at an annual rate of only 1.3% from April 1, 2000, through July 1, 2002, to a population of 86,700. If that rate is accurate, and if growth continued at that rate for another five quarters, the County's population would have passed the 88,000 mark—not the 90,000 mark—in September 2003.

people to look reality in the face – in particular, the reality of population growth – and NOT deny it? That's the key question for ASAP.

If we do lose this struggle, how do you think our grandchildren (or whoever lives here 70 or 100 years from now) will feel about us as they look at the legacy we've left them: an environmentally damaged county of sprawling developments and malls and industrial parks and endless subdivisions and roads and cars, all with the soul of Fairfax? If we're not able to control growth, I hope our grandchildren won't know how lovely the area is today. For if they do, they can't help but think (to paraphrase Sara Parkin, the British environmental activist): "They saw it coming but hadn't the wit to stop it happening." What a way to be remembered!

Pastor — Myth: Growth Cannot Be Slowed

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What will happen with this November's Board of Supervisor elections and will what has been done be undone?

My sense is that public sentiment is still very strongly in the "do as much as we can to control/manage growth" camp. [What I hear] in grocery store conversations and at public hearings [is that people] are still frustrated by increased traffic congestion, trees coming down, ... ever changing school district boundaries, etc. To most, the quality as well as the quantity of development is paramount. As such, I believe candidates who are likely to represent those interests will be elected.

End note: Under Loudoun's old (1991) Plan, its population would have topped out at 680,000; under the new (2001) Plan, buildout is 440,000. Under the old Plan, Loudoun would have eventually needed 125 *new* schools. Under the new Plan, it will still need 64.

Follow-up: "Why Do So Many People Want To Live Here?"

In addition to all of our other accolades, *Organic Style* magazine has rated Charlottesville—with its "low environmental toxicity"—the Healthiest City in Virginia. Charlottesville, ranked 26th in the nation, beat out Roanoke and Richmond, the only other Virginia cities to make the list.

Stennett — Myth: Growth Is Good

Continued from page 2

In a 1993 book, *Regulation for Revenue*, Altshuler and Gomez-Ibanez followed suit with an equally blunt assertion:⁵

Throughout American history the most consistent theme in local governance has been the pursuit of growth: more people, more jobs, and more real estate development. Local democracy has been dominated by “growth coalitions,” composed of individuals and enterprises with a direct stake in real estate development.

Those of us who have witnessed explosive sprawl and deplored the concomitant loss of quality of living in our own communities may readily resonate with these views. On the other hand, the growth coalitions have done such a masterful job of promoting growth that few people recognize who benefits and who pays.

The engine of the growth machine is powered by the fortunes resulting from land speculation and real estate development. The primary beneficiaries are the speculators, developers, mortgage bankers, realtors, and local construction and construction supply firms. The local business community at large also supports the Growth Machine since the conventional wisdom is that growth will increase business volume, and hence the wealth of the business owners. (In reality, these dreams of greater wealth often fall victim to larger competitors attracted by the growth.)

Many of us have family or friends who live in an economically marginal community. Often the community is small and has fallen on hard times because a key local industry has collapsed. In communities of this sort, the efforts of the local Growth Machine can only be applauded as efforts that will benefit the entire community.

But in prosperous urban areas with a diverse business base, the efforts of the Growth Machine typically slip from civic benefit to self-serving. Hence, those of us who live in economically robust areas may want to keep the words of Oregonian activist Andy Kerr in mind: “Urban growth is a pyramid scheme in which a relative few make a killing, some others make a living, but most [of us] pay for it.”

People all over the country are fleeing the ills of relentless growth. They are abandoning crowded metropolitan areas in pursuit of smaller places to live – places that are less congested, more peaceful. This trend has become so prevalent that as of June 2003, the Census Bureau is required to track “micropolitan” areas as well as metropolitan areas.

The fact that the Census Bureau has added this new category is ample evidence of a significant nationwide trend. This

⁵ Alan A. Altshuler and Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez, *Regulation for Revenue* (The Brookings Institution, April 1993).

trend is the physical manifestation of a changing perception of growth. People may not be ready to abandon the Growth is Good myth, but by their actions they are unmistakably saying that too much growth makes an area undesirable. This trend provides a useful counter-story for all of us working to shine the light of reason on the Growth is Good myth: that is, if growth is so good, why are so many people fleeing the fruits of growth?

Townsend — Myth: Growth Is Necessary

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“The Gross National Product might as well be called Gross National Pollution.” We must take a cradle to grave approach to the manufacture of anything.

As Albemarle grows, not only will you have land taken out of existing use and put into uses that are, beyond some point, questionable, not only will your resources dwindle, but your environment **will** become more polluted.

We want to develop, not grow. Development requires different patterns of thinking. We need more utility from long-lived commodities. We want manufacturers to think, “This could be made better and I could do that at a profit.” We want real estate developers to be true developers, not growers. We want them to think, “Let’s renovate housing and make a profit that way.” Otherwise, sooner or later, we will all look like Business 29.

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Myths are “ideas that have power, that are in the shadow and grip of ideology, and which are so powerful that they need to be first made visible before they can be addressed and, we hope, conquered with creativity and ingenuity.” —

ASAP Board member and University of Virginia Professor Rich Collins

Upcoming ASAP Meetings

October 16 – Board meeting, 8:00 a.m., Room 235, Albemarle County Office Building – members and public welcome

November 6 – General membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church Library, 190 Rugby Road — **Current, Planned, and Proposed Developments in Albemarle County and Charlottesville: What will their cumulative impact be?**

November 20 – Board meeting, 8:00 a.m., Room 235, Albemarle County Office Building – members and public welcome

December 4 – General membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church Library, 190 Rugby Road — **The Ethics of Growth.**

December 11 – Board meeting, 8:00 a.m., Room 235, Albemarle County Office Building – members and public welcome

Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population (ASAP)

ASAP is a non-profit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its **mission** is to increase knowledge and awareness about the effects of net population growth on our natural environment and quality of life, and to advocate appropriate policies and mechanisms that will enable our region to reach a sustainable population size. To achieve this, ASAP will engage in research, community education, policy development, and advocacy.

ASAP publishes this **newsletter** monthly except for combined June-July and December-January issues. Submit editorial comments to the newsletter's editor, **Harry Levins**, at harry@harrydale.com. Articles may be reprinted or excerpted with attribution. To become a member of ASAP and/or to receive this newsletter and a notice of ASAP events, contact crijack@cville.net.

Thank You, Volunteers

ASAP is a volunteer-run organization. Willing citizens created the organization, and they keep it running. Without volunteers, we would not have monthly meetings, the newsletter, or the annual conference. Diana Abbott, Rich Collins, Francis Fife, Pam Fitzgerald, Harry Levins, Jack Marshall, Geoff Mattocks, Al Weed, and others deserve our appreciation for organizing the Conference. Many other ASAP members helped with Conference activities.



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