



## The Connectivity Challenge

Chicago, IL  
December 8-10, 2010

*Imagine a community where you never have to step foot in a car again. A place free of rush hour woes, where every convenience is within a short walk, bike ride or transit trip. Now imagine that we could realize that future here and now.*

Seventy years ago GM's Futurama generated a compelling vision for a new American ideal: a spacious, car-centered good life. That ideal dominated public policy for 50 years, literally paving the way for Americans to spread out by increasing homebuyers' access to credit and supporting development patterns that relied on cheap land and cheap gas.

We are beginning to see that while sprawling suburbanization made sense for a time, Americans have a growing appetite for urban living. The places that thrive today are those with the highest velocity of ideas and the highest density of talented people. We know that 25-34 year-olds have shown an increasing propensity to live with a 3-mile radius of central business districts and by 2000 were 33% more likely than other Americans to live in close-in neighborhoods that are compact, multi-functional (thanks to a mix of uses) and offer alternatives to the car as a way to get around.

Planners now project that 86% of the growth in new households will be single people or couples without children at home – and neither group wants to live in remote suburbs or in houses surrounded by big lawns. Four cars in every garage may have once been the dream of Americans, but it's now clear that not only is that time-consuming and isolating; not only does it undermine the natural advantages of cities, but it is also expensive.

A key advantage of cities is their intrinsic sustainability: they require less car travel, use less energy and generate fewer emissions per capita than more sprawling areas. Alternative forms of transportation (transit, walking and cycling) enable city-dwellers to recapture income otherwise spent on cars and gasoline – money that quickly leaves the local economy – and redistribute it in their local economies.

CEOs for Cities has calculated that by reducing vehicle miles traveled by one mile per person per day in just the nation's top 51 metro areas, the U.S. could realize a \$29 billion "Green Dividend." Therefore, a critical strategy for promoting true sustainability—environmental and economic—is to reduce vehicle miles traveled. And the best way to reduce vehicle miles traveled is through genuine urbanism.

### Creating cities that are of, by and for us

Imagine a community taking up the challenge to ensure its citizens are able to meet their daily needs without owning a car. What would that look like? What would be an effective quick start strategy? Where are the early wins to create momentum? And how would a community know when it is succeeding?

Those are the questions we will tackle as part of the Connectivity Challenge. It is one of five big challenges that are part of a new initiative organized by CEOs for Cities and its network of partners



in 45 of America's largest communities. We call it the US Initiative – an initiative to build and sustain the next generation of great American cities that are of, by and for us.

CEOs for Cities is launching the US Initiative now for one reason: We continue to build too many of our communities – physically, economically, and socially – on an outdated set of beliefs. This is expensive, wasteful and puts us way over due for a new version of the American dream.

The purpose of the US Initiative is to bring into very clear focus how communities can deliver on five big (very big) ambitions that, together, can define a new American dream. We hold these values to be self-sustaining:

- Livability** We will all have access to beauty, art and nature every day.
- Community** We can all participate in a robust public life.
- Connectivity** We can meet our daily needs without owning a car.
- Opportunity** We will develop all of our talent and put all of our talent to work.
- Optimism** We believe that the future can be better for each of us and all of us.

The US Initiative is:

- 200+ civic partners across
- 45 cities committed to a
- 5 year campaign to innovate the future of cities through
- 6 rallying “Brain Trust” events, celebrating the work of
- 52 innovators changing the urban condition at
- 5 Local Challenges to bring new thinking into action inviting
- 1000's of people to create new images of the future collected in
- 1 book documenting the movement and digitized available to
- 1,000,000's of people interested in the future through the web

## Chicago: A Model of Urban Accessibility

On December 8-10, 2010, CEOs for Cities and the Chicago Architecture Foundation will host the Connectivity Challenge in Chicago. With one of the country's oldest and most robust public transportation systems, Chicago is a model of urban accessibility.

Working with a team of international connectivity experts led by Jan Gehl, CEOs for Cities and the Chicago Architecture Foundation, together with the City of Chicago, Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and other regional transportation stakeholders, will imagine a future for Chicago in which its residents can meet their daily needs without owning a car.

In addition to producing big ideas and quick-start strategies for Chicago, results of the Connectivity Challenge will be reported nationally.