## Urban Sprawl Good

#### Urban Sprawl Allows for the "Walmart Effect" Matthew E. Kahn , Tufts University, 03-08-06, The Benefits of Sprawl, <http://greeneconomics.blogspot.com/2006/03/benefits-of-sprawl.html>

Walmart and other “superstores” could not exist in an urban world of compact cities with binding zoning laws. “Wal-Mart has sometimes had difficulty in receiving planning approval for its stores. Currently, Wal-Mart has either no presence or an extremely limited presence in New England, the New York metro area, California, and the Pacific Northwest. However, its expansion into new areas has proceeded over the past few years (Hausman and Leibtag 2005).” These stores require large physical spaces and large parking lots to accommodate their inventory and to attract shoppers. Such stores offer one stop shopping and prices that can be 25% lower than regular supermarkets (see Hausman and Leibtag 2005). The diffusion of these stores may mean that the U.S consumer price index over-states inflation because this index does not properly reflect the prices that people face for core goods. These stores are disproportionately located in suburban and rural areas where land is cheap. Center city residents often drive to suburban locations to shop at such stores. While the popular media often reports stories critiquing Walmart’s employee compensation and its effects on driving out of business smaller “mom and pop” stores, it cannot be denied that consumers gain from having access to such stores. The key counter-factual here is what prices would residents face in a compact monocentric city without Walmart and other superstores?

#### Urban Sprawl Happening Now

US EPA 03 <http://www.policyalmanac.org/environment/archive/urban_sprawl.shtml>

Population growth is the most significant factor effecting urban sprawl in the Mid-Atlantic region. As population size increases, so does the amount of land required for residential and commercial needs. In the Chesapeake Basin alone, between the years of 1950-1980, the percent of land used for residential and commercial purposes increased nearly 180% while population increased about 50%. Likewise, in Northern Virginia, development is expanding beyond the current service areas of public water supplies provided by the Potomac River. Specifically, Northern Virginia's Loudoun County's population has increased by nearly 150 percent from 57,000 in 1980 to nearly 140,000 today, with the landscape changing from rural to suburban. Ground water is being utilized to support the uncontrolled growth. Yet, no assessment has been conducted on groundwater availability and how aquifers are being impacted by suburban sprawl.