



FEHR & PEERS HOSTS GROWING COOLER WORKSHOPS IN SEATTLE MARKET

As an introduction of the firm to the Seattle area market, Fehr & Peers/Mirai hosted two Growing Cooler Workshops on July 10th at the Seattle Art Museum in downtown Seattle and at Kirkland's City Hall. Over 100 guests were in attendance, most of whom were able to walk to the event from their offices. Fehr & Peers/Mirai office is located in the City of Kirkland.

Jerry Walters, Fehr & Peers Principal and Smart Growth Discipline Leader and Reid Ewing, National Center for Smart Growth presented their new book, *Growing Cooler* for Mirai clients and community leaders in the Puget Sound Region.

Addressing climate change has become a vital issue as businesses and governments grapple with how to deal with it in the State of Washington. We must find a way to sharply reduce the growth in CO₂ emissions in the US. Transportation accounts for a full third of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the US, and that share is growing. Efforts to reduce transportation CO₂ can be viewed as a 3-legged stool, with one leg related to vehicle fuel economy, a second to the carbon content of the fuel itself, and a third to the amount of driving (VMT).

Reid Ewing pointed out that thus far, federal and state policies have focused on more fuel efficient vehicles and lower-carbon fuels such as biodiesel fuel. Yet a stool cannot stand on only 2 legs. Since 1980 the VMT has grown 3 times faster the population in the US.

As noted in their recently published book, the US is the largest emitter worldwide of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming. It is hard to envision a "solution" to the global warming crisis that does not involve slowing the growth of transportation CO₂ emissions in the US. A commonly accepted target for the year 2050 would require the US to cut its carbon dioxide CO₂ emissions by 60 to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

So why do we drive so much? Reid pointed out that the growth in driving is due in large part to urban development. We drive so much because we have given ourselves little alternative. For 60 years we have built homes ever farther from workplaces, shopping, and grocery stores.

The workshop addressed the following key questions:

- What reduction in VMT is possible in the US with compact development?
- What reduction in CO₂ emissions could be expected with less VMT?
- What policy changes do we need to make to shift the development patterns?

Jerry Walters, stated that Fehr and Peers has been at the forefront of research. Our Smart Growth Discipline Group has been working in this emerging field for the past decade.

Fehr and Peers research in this area concludes that VMT generation is directly related to several factors:

- Density dwellings; jobs per acre
- Diversity mix of housing, jobs, retail
- Design connectivity, walkability
- Destinations regional accessibility
- Distance to Transit rail proximity
- Development scale
- Demographics
- Demand Management

The potential of smart growth to curb the rise of GHG emissions will be limited by the amount of new development and redevelopment that takes place over the next few decades. Estimates are that 2/3 of the development on the ground in 2050 will be built between now and then. Fehr & Peers has developed the tool box to analyze the impacts of that growth on VMT.

As more forms of compact development have been built, research has documented the fact that compact, mixed-use, transit-served communities drive less than their counterparts in sprawling communities. When viewed in total, the evidence on land use and driving shows that compact development will reduce the need to drive between 20 and 40 percent.

A robust question and answer session followed showing the keen interest in finding sustainable solutions to reduce CO₂ emissions.