



## Press Release

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## Book Information

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# It's a Sprawl World After All

## The Human Cost of Unplanned Growth -- and Visions of a Better Future

By Douglas E. Morris

Suburbia has twisted the American dream into a nightmare. The US now has the most rapes, assaults, murders and serial killings per capita, by a wide margin, than any other first-world nation. *It's a Sprawl World After All* is the first book to link America's increase in violence and the corresponding breakdown in society with the post WWII development of suburban sprawl.

Without small towns to bring people together, the unplanned growth of sprawl has left Americans isolated, alienated and afraid of the strangers that surround them. Suburbia has substituted cars for conversation, malls for main streets, and the artificial community of television for authentic social interaction. This has resulted in dramatically negative impacts on US society, including:

- The transformation of America's community-oriented small-town sensibilities into an isolated society of strangers burdened by isolation, loneliness and depression
- The emergence of a culture of incivility characterized by extreme individualism and a callous disregard for others, and
- Levels of violence so virulent as to be proclaimed "epidemic" by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Advocating that urgent attention be paid to managing development by emulating the smart growth examples of European cities, the book's final section offers readers practical solutions to rebuild community in their lives, while also suggesting ways to re-create the physical landscape to improve everyone's quality of life.

Provocative and thoughtful, *It's A Sprawl World After All* also includes a helpful resource listing of organizations committed to making communities more sustainable and livable.

## About the Author

International entrepreneur, magazine columnist, and published author of five books, Mr. Morris spent over 14 years living in the safe, community-oriented cities and towns of Canada and Europe. Upon returning to the US he was stunned at the extensive urban decay, lack of livable small towns, and comparatively non-existent public transit and passenger rail systems. This prompted him to begin a two decades long search for livable places in the United States. He visited streetcar, railroad, and garden suburbs; college towns, urban neighborhoods, greenbelt villages, strip malls, and every place in between. Though he did find some locations with a semblance of community life, the author's quest confirmed that genuine communities, and the safety they confer, were extremely rare in the US.

Mr. Morris then combined his extensive international experience and multi-cultural perspective with over eight years of in-depth study and research to uncover the negative sociological, cultural and personal impacts of sprawl. The result of which is this book, designed to ameliorate the twin problems of suburban sprawl and urban blight, while also helping each individual American find the safety and sense of belonging that comes from being a part of a genuine community.

## Advance Praise

"This book is controversial, but a must read. Many studies are available that quantify problems of our sprawl development pattern. *It's a Sprawl World After All* centers on the least quantifiable, but arguably, the most important impact - the loss of a sense of community. The author gives a hard-hitting warning that must be heeded if we are to have a civil future."

— **Parris N. Glendening**, President, Smart Growth Leadership Institute; Governor, Maryland (1995-2003)

"There is so little public debate about the insane living arrangement that most Americans consider normal. This book helps remedy that situation, a clear wake up call to a nation that has been sleepwalking into the future."

— **James Howard Kunstler**, renowned urban critic and author of *The Geography of Nowhere* and *Home From Nowhere* (kunstler@aol.com)

"Sounding an impassioned call to action and offering thoughtful, commonsense suggestions for repairing the damage we have inflicted on our landscape and our way of life, Morris has given us a useful addition to the growing body of anti-sprawl literature."

— **Richard Moe**, President of *The National Trust for Historic Preservation* and author of *Changing Places* (richard\_moe@nthp.org)

"Morris has made a convincing argument connecting the breakdown of American society with suburban sprawl. His book is a challenge to sociologists, criminologists, and urban planners everywhere to begin serious study of the human costs associated with living in suburbia."

— **Ray Oldenburg**, author of *The Great Good Place* and Emeritus Professor of Sociology at The University of West Florida (rayoldenburg@msn.com)

"In this cautionary tale of a landscape stretched to its limits, *It's a Sprawl World After All* simply yet eloquently illustrates how suburban sprawl has fractured social relationships and hastened the disappearance of civic-mindedness.

Straightforward and convincing, Morris presents a book that is far from being just another critical account of the negative effects of sprawl. The author invokes an optimistic and pragmatic spirit aimed at getting people to embrace the virtues of walking, public engagement, and tight-knit communities."

— **Andy Hamilton**, President, *America Walks* (Andy.Hamilton@sdcounty.ca.gov)

"Land-use and crime are clearly intertwined. The places we build can either enhance the human spirit or destroy it by inviting ghoulish behavior. An example of this is the transitory landscape of strip malls and cheap motels along old Highway 99 in Washington State that provided Gary Leon Ridgway, the Green River Killer, with an ideal hunting ground. In *It's a Sprawl World After All*, Morris gives us a voice with which to understand this growing problem as well as solutions to help defeat it."

— **Aaron Corvin**, *The News Tribune* - Tacoma, Washington (Aaron.Corvin@mail.tribnet.com)

"In his compelling book, Morris poses serious questions that beg for immediate answers from each citizen who has concerns about the quality of life in our increasingly unstable, disconnected, and hostile society."

— **Leslie Charles**, author of seven books, including *Why Is Everyone So Cranky?* (Leschas@aol.com)

"Are you increasingly shocked by people's impolite behavior? Do you ever feel unsafe walking alone, even in your own neighborhood? If so, this book is for you. Morris shows how sprawl has reduced our overall quality of life and turned neighbors into strangers. Most importantly, he offers practical suggestions on how readers can create meaningful, fulfilling connections in their communities -- regardless of where they live. Read it and reap the benefits."

— **Sam Horn**, author of *Tongue Fu!* and *Take the Bully by the Horns* (info@samhorn.com)

"Mr. Morris's new book, *It's a Sprawl World After All* reveals a litany of frightening details about America's failing economic, community and personal health; all tied to the unbearable auto dependency associated with our suburban and urban wasted places. As Director of *Walkable Communities* it has become abundantly clear to me that where we live impacts our soul, spirit and optimism. As a people and as communities we require a collective thump on the noggin. We need to rethink how we are building our nation. This book helps us do that."

— **Dan Burden**, Director, *Walkable Communities* (DBurden@aol.com)

"Mr. Morris offers readers a passionate and exhaustive critique of all that is wrong with the nation, along with a common sense course for individual and community action."

— **Helen Tangires**, author, *Public Markets and Civic Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (h-tangires@nga.gov)

"With his engaging account of the American society's devolution, Douglas E. Morris has delivered a book that belongs in the town-planning canon alongside *Suburban Nation*, *The Geography of Nowhere*, and kindred volumes."

— **Michael Dolan**, author of *The American Porch: An Informal History of an Informal Place* (emdolan@erols.com)

"Mr. Morris' book points out that sprawl makes life less convenient, less attractive, and less fulfilling in so many ways. More importantly, he warns us that sprawl also makes us less safe. America's sterile suburbs—unlike true communities, where neighbors constantly meet and interact—do a bad job of civilizing the young and inducting them into the ranks of the empathetic. If he's right—and he presents a logical case—suburban sprawl may be an unintended nightmare spawned from the American dream."

— **Paul Akers**, editorial-page editor of *The Free-Lance Star*, Fredericksburg, Va. (pakers@freelancestar.com)

"Morris clearly demonstrates how our quality of life, personal safety and sense of fulfillment are diminished by suburban sprawl. Then through his practical solutions Morris reminds us that it's not too late to change the way we build and re-create community in our lives."

— **Michele Micalizzi McCarthy**, Editor In Chief, *Primo Magazine* (umbriawriters@hotmail.com)

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## Other Books by Mr. Morris ([www.TheItalyGuide.com](http://www.TheItalyGuide.com))

### Open Road Publishing

**Italy Guide**, ISBN 1-59360-017-8, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, \$19.95

**Rome Guide**, ISBN 1-892975-45-9, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, \$14.95

**Tuscany & Umbria Guide**, ISBN 1-892975-74-2, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, \$14.95

**Rome Made Easy**, ISBN 1-894638-24-7, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, \$9.95

**Florence Made Easy**, Available Spring 2006

**Venice Made Easy**, Available Spring 2006

### Fabjob.com

**Become a Travel Writer**, ISBN 1-894638-24-7, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, \$19.95 ([www.fabjob.com/travelwriter.asp](http://www.fabjob.com/travelwriter.asp))

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## Notes to Press Editors

### Schedule an Interview

To schedule an interview with the author, Douglas E. Morris, please contact him at 202.331.9578 or roma79@aol.com.

### Sign Up As a Speaker

The author is available to speak about the ideas in his book. To schedule him at your annual conference, convention or meeting, please contact the author, Douglas E. Morris, at 202.331.9578 or roma79@aol.com.

### Press Launch

Members of the press are invited to a book release party for ***It's a Sprawl World After All*** on Thursday, September 29 starting at 6:30 at **Busboys & Poets** at 14<sup>th</sup> and V Streets NW, Washington, DC (202/387-POET - [www.busboysandpoets.com](http://www.busboysandpoets.com)). Please RSVP: Douglas E. Morris, 202.331.9578, roma79@aol.com

### Purchasing Information

***It's a Sprawl World After All***, ISBN 0-86571-546-7, US\$17.95 / Can\$21.95 plus shipping and handling. The book can be ordered from New Society Publishers ([www.newsociety.com](http://www.newsociety.com) or 1-800-567-6772), most bookstores, and any online bookseller.