Making a Difference for the Environment and the Senior Community via Smart Growth

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Intro

The Built Environment

- **The built environment, where we live, work, shop, and play, has direct and indirect effects on the natural environment and human health.**

Livable Communities = Independence for Older Americans

- **Fundamental to the concept of livable communities for older adults is independence.**

- **Older adults both want and need to remain independent, able to live in their homes and communities as long as possible (Also known as "Age in Place")**

The Problem:

Barriers to Independence

- Many communities are completely auto dependent
- According the 2001 National Household Transportation Survey, the private automobile makes up 86.4% of all journeys
- WHY???...

Barriers to Independence

- **Because residential areas, services, and amenities (also known as different land uses) are too often separate and distinct, while the needs of older adults remain integrated**

Parks

Church

Have to drive to

Home

Shopping

Restaurants

Medical Facilities

Barriers to Independence

- **The current dominant trend in development is developing uniform communities with a single housing type without regard to what types of housing are best suited for seniors.**

Barriers to Independence

- Planning and development which does not incorporate the age of residents living in the community
    - Does not incorporate sidewalks
    - Does not incorporate safe crosswalks
    - Services and amenities are built too far from residential areas

The Solution: Senior-Friendly Development via Smart Growth

- Promote development patterns and design features that meet the needs of seniors
- Provide more senior housing options
- Provide more transportation choices
- Implement accessible building and park design
- Provide larger signs, better lighting

What do Older Americans really Need?

- **Opportunities to** mix and mingle

Opportunities for physical activity

- **Easy access** to sidewalks, bike trails, hiking trails, recreational parks, fitness facilities etc.

Transportation Alternatives

- Easy access to public transportation
- Being able to walk/bike to the store (or where ever) if feasible

Clean Air

- A Brigham Young University study suggests that those most susceptible to having health complications and increased mortality are the elderly, the very young, and persons with chronic cardiopulmonary disease, influenza, or asthma.

- Smart Growth can help alleviate vehicular air pollution by providing alternative modes of transportation and mixed land uses

Housing Alternatives

- **Community based**
- **Affordable**

Easy Access to Amenities

- **Community centers**
- **Parks**
- **Medical facilities**
- **Church**
- **Many more**

Parks

Medical facilities

Restaurants

Home

Church

Shopping

Are we designing and building communities that provide these things?

Maturing of America Study

- **In 2005/2006, The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging in partnership with the International City/County Management Association, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities and Partners for Livable Communities with the support of the MetLife Foundation conducted a national survey of America's cities and counties to assess their "aging readiness".**

Maturing of America Survey Findings

- Less than half **(46 percent) of U.S. communities** had begun any planning efforts to prepare for their aging population.

- The majority of the communities that had initiated plans or programs **tended to be single issue focused** not yet looking comprehensively at the range of programs, policies and services.

U.S. Senior Citizen Stats

- **Since 1900**, the percentage of **Americans age 65+ has more than tripled** from 4.1% of the population to 12.4% of the population in 2000.

- **In 2000** in the U.S. there were 35 million people over the age of 65-representing **1 in every 8 Americans**.

- **By 2030**, older Americans will comprise 20% of the U.S. population, representing **1 in every 5 Americans**.

Charleston County Demographics

► Total Population: *309,969 (Estimated 2006 Pop. 331,917)

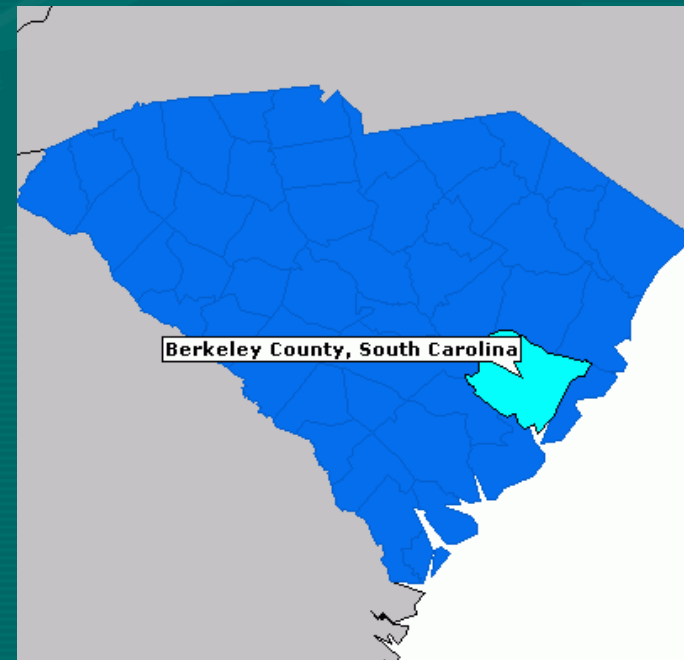► 65 + population: *36,858 (11.9%) which is just below the national 12.1% of seniors in the US.

*2000 Census

Charleston County, South Carolina
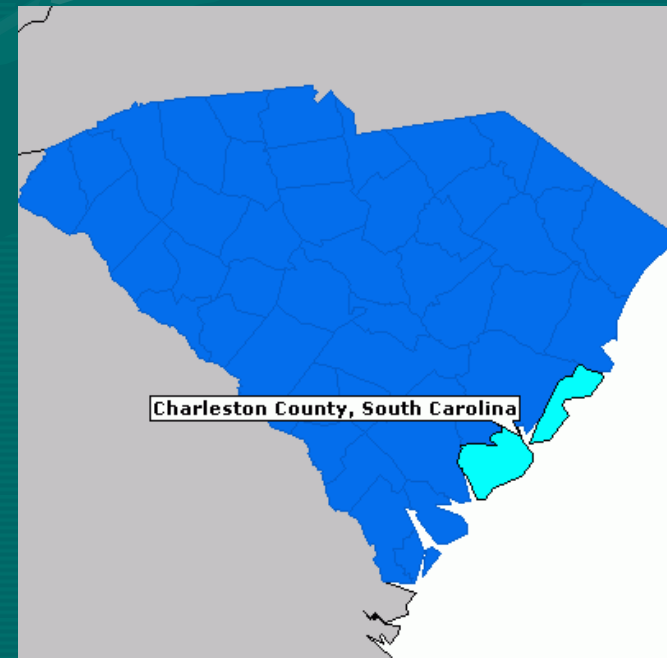
Berkeley County Demographics

- **Total Population: *142,651 (Estimated 2006 pop. 152,282)**

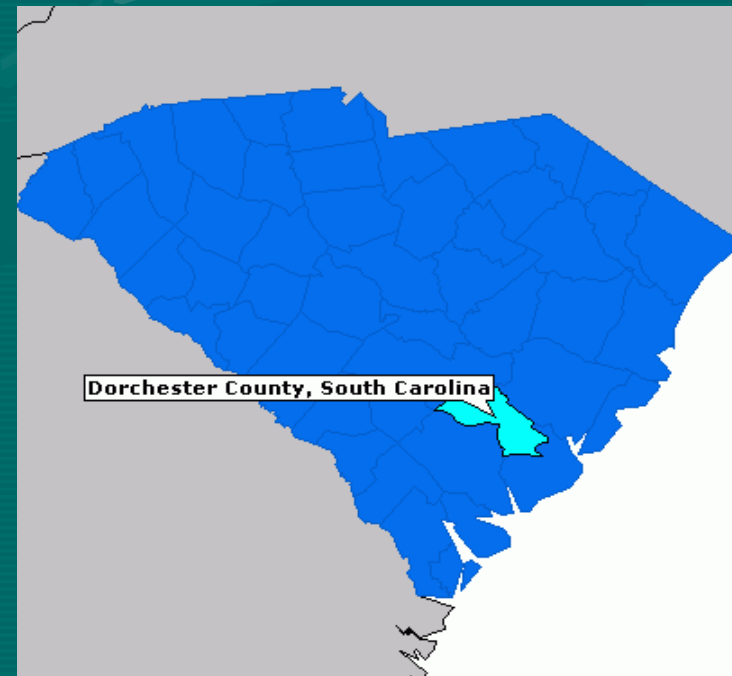- **65+ Population: *11,261 (7.9% estimated to rise to 9.3% by 2006)**

*2000 Census

Berkeley County, South Carolina

Dorchester County Demographics

- **Total Population: *96,413 (Estimated 2006 pop. 118,979)**

- **65+ Population: *8,791 (9.1% estimated to rise to 9.5% by 2006)**

*2000 Census

Dorchester County, South Carolina

Regional Issues

- **Increasing Population**
- **Increasing Senior Population**
- **Land Consumption**
- **Transportation and Congestion**
- **Water and Air Quality**

What is Smart Growth?

- **Smart Growth promotes healthy communities by creating spaces where it is:**

- Easy to walk, bike and use public transit;

- Where it is easy to choose to exercise because parks and recreation activities, food stores, and restaurants are nearby and easy to access;

- Where streetscapes are inviting and narrow streets are built on a grid pattern with safe pedestrian crossings and walkways;

- Where homes are built closer to the front property line with garages in the back;

- Where access to walking/biking routes and public transit are emphasized.

Smart Growth is Characterized by:

- Development patterns that create attractive, distinctive, walkable communities that

- give people of varying age, wealth, and physical ability a range of safe, affordable, convenient choices in where they live and how they get around.

Smart Growth is Characterized by: (Continued)

Growing smart also ensures that existing resources are used efficiently and that lands and buildings that shape communities are preserved.
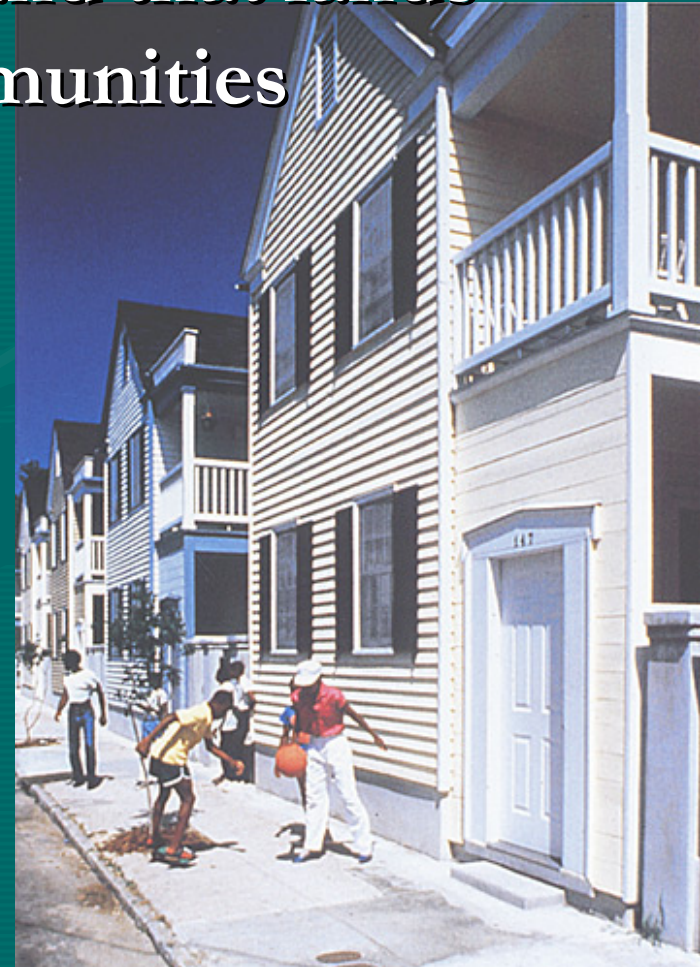
Ten Principles of Smart Growth

1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact building design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

What Smart Growth is and is not

- Smart Growth is well planned growth that improves quality of life for everyone

- Smart Growth is about creating, preserving, and enhancing vibrant cities, suburbs and towns

- Smart growth offers more transportation choices and less traffic.

- Smart growth offers a wider variety of housing choices.

- It is not against growth.

- It is not anti-suburban.

- It is not against cars and roads.

- It is not about telling people where or how to live

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Sprawl takes away resources from our communities

Why do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Smart Growth Enhances our Communities

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Sprawl Creates Traffic Congestion

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Smart growth provides more transportation choices

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Sprawl provides few or no options for pedestrians and cyclists

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

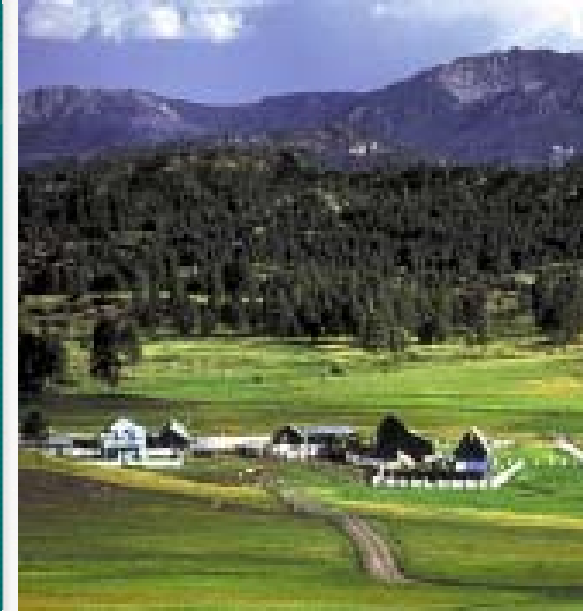- Smart Growth provides safe place to walk, bicycle, tricycle, rollerskate…

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Sprawl consumes open space and destroys farmland

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Smart Growth allows farmers and communities to save farmland

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

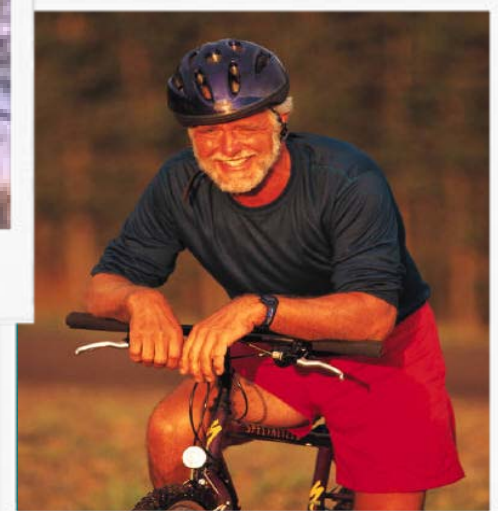- **Smart Growth Creates Parks and Preserves Open Space**

Why Do People Prefer Smart Growth?

- Smart growth   protects the health   eople and the   e
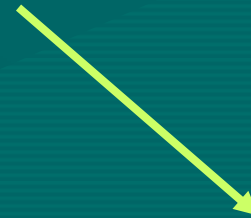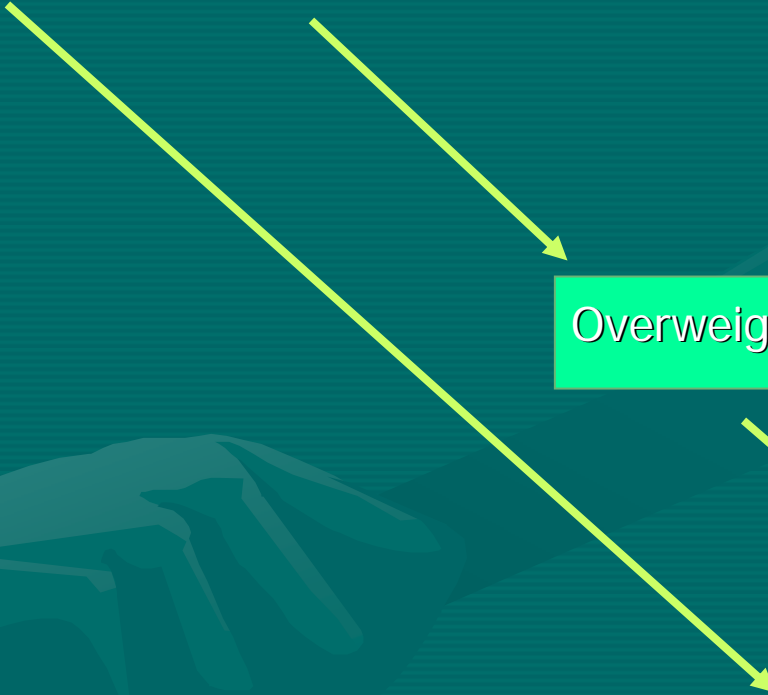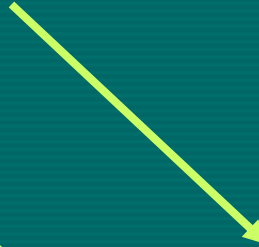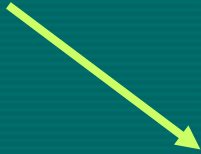
The Built Environment and its Impact on Physical Activity

Non-Walkable Community

Sedentary Lifestyle

Overweight

Health Complications

Smart Growth Promotes a Healthy Environment and Active Aging:

- **Environmental Benefits:**
  - Less Sprawl=
  - Less Traffic
  - Less Air Pollution
  - Less Water Pollution
  - More Open Space

- **Impact on Physical Activity:**
  - More Opportunities to Walk
  - More Bike Lanes
  - Better Access to Parks, Trails, and Recreational Areas

Urban Sprawl Vs. Smart Growth

- **Urban Sprawl** is:
- **Irresponsible development** that takes our tax away from our communities and destroys farmland and open space.

- **Smart Growth** is:
- **Well-planned development** that keeps tax dollars in our communities and provides more choices for everyone.

Urban Sprawl Vs. Smart Growth

Why Does Smart Growth Work Better?

- **Economy:**
  - Succeeds economically and attracts businesses and a skilled workforce

- **Environment:**
  - Causes less air and water pollution, and destroys fewer farms and open space

- **Equity:**
  - Encourages more affordable housing and creates better choices in transportation and housing

- **Engagement:**
  - Encourages participation in civic life and supports healthier and more active residents of all ages

A Few Examples of Smart Growth…

Profile of Older Americans' Transportation Trends

- Like most Americans, older Americans primarily rely on private automobiles for their mobility-primarily as drivers, secondarily as passengers.

- By 2030, 25 percent of licensed drivers in the U.S. will be 65+.

- Reduced mobility can put an older person at higher risk of poor health, isolation and loneliness.

Some Transportation-Related Issues That are Pertinent to the Senior Community are:

- Heavy traffic
- Limited access to public transportation
- Too few and/or too fast traffic lights
- Signs that are not easy to read
- Poor street lighting
- Distance from shopping, parks, and other amenities

Local Transportation Options for Older Adults

- **Planning Communities to Reduce the Reliance on Automobiles**

- **Making Roads Safer for Older Drivers- (examples)**

- **Making Sidewalks and Street Crossings More Accessible for Older Pedestrians**

- **Providing Mobility Options:**
  - **Transit,**
  - **Paratransit**
  - **Volunteer Drivers**

Profile of Older Americans: Housing Status

- Of the 21.4 million households headed by older persons in 1999, 80% were owners and 20% were renters.

- About 76% of older homeowners in 1999 owned their home free and clear.

- Although older adults on average have an asset base of approximately $130,000-$100,000 is tied up in home equity.

- 89% of older adults report that they want to remain in their homes for as long as possible (AKA "Age in Place").

Local Housing Options for Older Adults

- **Modification of Existing Homes to be accessible by the disabled**

- **Development of Active Adult Communities**

- **Development of Community-Based Housing Facilities**

- **Development of Affordable Housing**

- **Zoning Changes to Allow Different Types of Housing Units within Existing Neighborhoods**

How do We Make Smart Growth Happen?

- ✓ **Support** well designed developments such as:
  - ✓ Mixed-use developments
  - ✓ Complete Streets
- ✓ Conduct **community vision exercises**
- ✓ Implement participatory regional, citywide, and **neighborhood planning**
- ✓ **Build coalitions** that include the entire community...businesses, schools, social equity groups, environmental organizations, elected officials
- ✓ **Encourage the others to vote** for Smart Growth and Smart Growth candidates
- ✓ **Tell friends** and family about Smart Growth
- ✓ **Write letters** to the mayor, other public officials, or the editor and tell them what you want!

Here's what a Complete Street Looks Like

The Questions We All Need to Ask

- Is your community a good place to grow up and to grow old?

- Will your community planning practices meet the needs of your citizens when they are 65, 75. 85, 95 or even 105?

- If not, what can you as community members do now to begin to make your community a livable community for all ages--one that values and supports people as they age?

Americans Increased Longevity Is Something to be Celebrated!

- But to ensure that older Americans don't just add years to their lives but that we add quality of life to those years it will require:
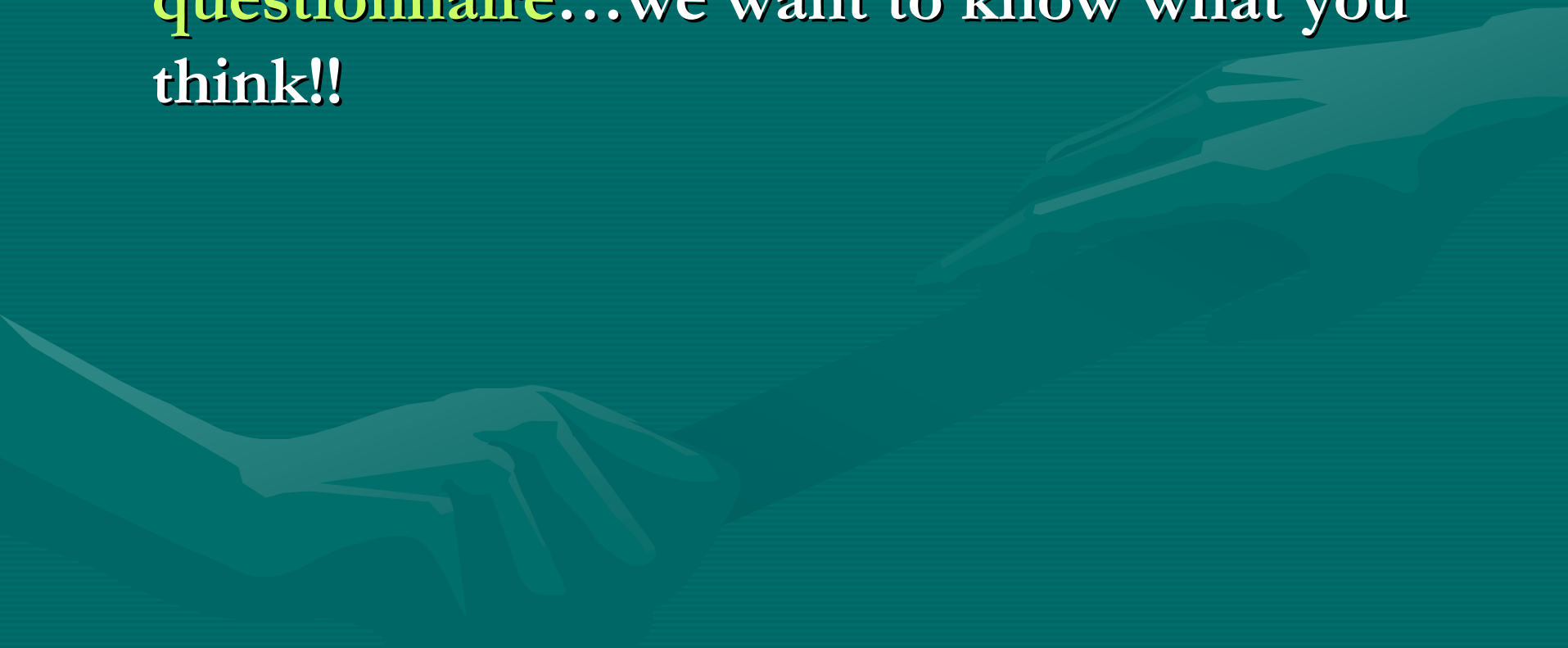 - Individuals
  - Families
  - And the Community Plan

Audience Interaction

Thank You for Your Time!!!

- Please fill out the post-presentation questionnaire…we want to know what you think!!

Sources Cited

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