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by Dr. Elizabeth Strom, Assoc

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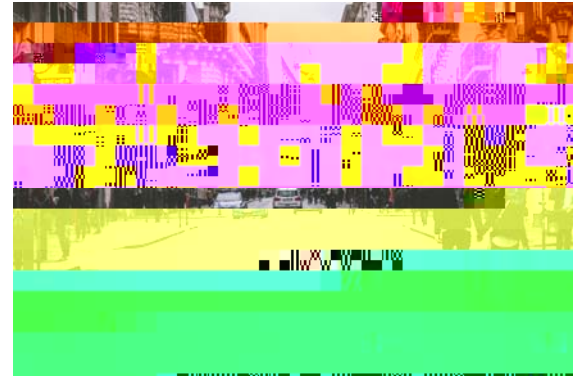


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win a backyard
pretty appealing.

at efforts to encourage urban density are misguided Urban
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Source: Peter Fazekas

on the coming age of dispersion as people flee large cities for less dense places.



Source: David Shankove

But there are good reasons to continue to promote strong cities, even now.

But there are other examples of dense cities that have managed to survive the pandemic more successfully, for example Hong Kong and Seoul. In the U.S. we see examples like San Francisco, our second densest city, where (as of this writing May 2020) just 31 patients have died of COVID 19. Evidence suggests that early adoption of widespread testing alongside clear stay at home directives can help reduce impacts, even in cities.

COVID 19 clusters have been found in suburban areas like New Rochelle, NY and Kirkland, Washington. When we look nationally at counties with high per capita infection rates, we find rural counties those most impacted by COVID19. Here in Florida, while our worst hotspots are in the Miami Ft. Lauderdale area, we find higher infection rates in rural Suwannee, Liberty, and Madison County than in Tampa or Orlando. Those living outside cities, lacking access to testing facilities and medical treatment, could face worse outcomes than city dwellers if the infection spreads in their area.

Moreover, this pandemic should not blind us to even more profound threats to our health and economic wellbeing. There are reasons planners want people to drive less: in 2018, the U.S. reported 36,560 automobile fatalities. The new highways we need to link far flung exurbs destroy animal habitat and create polluting runoff. And aren't zoonotic viruses, such as

this novel Coronavirus, thought to be more prevalent today because of encroachments on animal habitats? Automobile commutes account for some one quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, hastening the climate change trends that are particularly problematic for Floridians.

Finally, urban agglomerations are epicenters of economic, scientific, and cultural innovation. [Urban Agglomerations](#). No doubt the research that will lead to a COVID 19 vaccine will be done in urban areas. City environments will be the launching pads for our much needed economic regeneration.

Florida cities like Miami, Tampa, and Orlando have gained population in recent years, and with the [Urban Agglomerations](#), we need to continue to promote city living. Even dense urban areas can have hn