

# Developer

The Business of Creating Successful Sustainable Communities

September 2009



## Green Shoots & Silver Linings

In search of 'What's Next for Planning,'  
DEVELOPER forecasts the opportunities ahead. [pg.8](#)

plus

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### Stress Test

Reborn communities in New Orleans and Greensburg, Kan., counter weather extremes with more sustainable solutions.

# Jump-Start the Future

Amid the dark of pre-recovery comes clarity.

**A** passage in a September article by James Gustave Smith, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, in the *Harvard Business Review* reads: "Soon, developed countries will begin the move to a postgrowth world where working life, the natural environment, communities, and the public sector will no longer be sacrificed

for the sake of mere GDP growth, and where illusory promise of ever more expansion will no longer provide an excuse for ignoring compelling social needs. A post-growth society will involve less consumerism and higher prices; quality of life will improve in ways too long neglected."

Is this scenario—with its ramifications for the development community—so different than another forecast (see Jennifer Popovec's special report on page 8)?

The development industry is undergoing a seismic shift in the way it approaches the development process. In the past, developers were more independent, almost like mavericks, says Cliff Selbert, co-founder of Selbert Perkins Design, a global design firm based in Playa del Rey, Calif. Development will require a more unified approach from land planners, municipalities, designers, lenders, and developers. As a result, developers must become more team-oriented and work to integrate into the community. "Eventually they'll be considered an ally instead of an enemy," Selbert says.

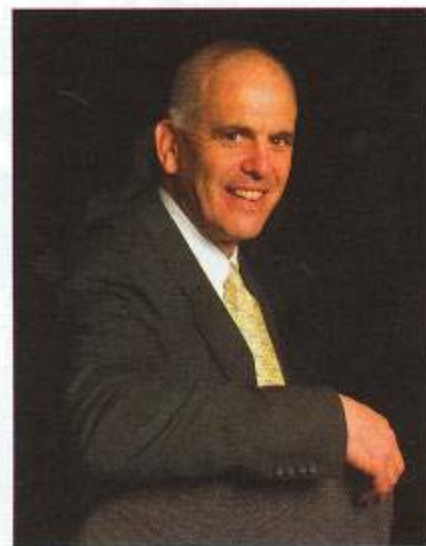
Clearly, it's going to take good old-fashioned growth for business, society, and culture to move enlightened values wholly into the economy's structure. At the same time, Selbert's assertion is that the future is now.

The Great Recession—from which we've flirted with hope for recovery of some stripe—has taught us at least one thing: Just being good at transactions, real estate or

otherwise, is not a sustainable strategy.

The learning happens when we strike upon and master what it is we really need to be good at in the context of the "compelling social needs" Yale's Smith refers to above. It's not hard to see that Wall Street's model was broken. It's much harder to reckon with the possibility that Main Street's could be as well.

To begin to find out where you fit as a developer into society's much-needed solutions, join us at the Developer Conference, "Press Reset," Oct. 12-14 at the Bellagio in Las Vegas. Check it out at [www.developerconf.com](http://www.developerconf.com). □



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