

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

USA: United States of Atlanta?

Short Film “Sprawlanta” Offers Stark Warning About Atlanta’s Unstoppable Suburban Sprawl

BUFFALO (May 3, 2010) - The pilot episode of a new web series about America's cities sounds the alarm bell on Atlanta’s suburban sprawl, warning that America’s fastest growing city is on pace to spread from coast to coast by the year 2050.

“When it was founded in 1850, Atlanta was 3.14 square miles. Today metro Atlanta is approximately 8,379 square miles. Extrapolating this exponential growth rate, Atlanta could cover the entire continental United States by mid-century,” explains filmmaker John Paget.

Sprawlanta serves as the series premiere of *American Makeover*, a new online show spotlighting the harmful effects of sprawl and the transformational possibilities of new urbanism and traditional neighborhood design in cities across America.

The unique series is partially sponsored by the *Notre Dame School of Architecture* and *The Fund for the Environment and Urban Life* (www.enviro-urban.org) and is free to watch at www.americanmakeover.tv.

“There’s been a lot of makeover television shows about kitchen remodels and plastic surgery; but what really needs an extreme makeover is the American landscape, which has been completely uglified by sprawl,” says Paget, co-creator of **American Makeover**, explaining the impetus for the series.

“It’s not just the aesthetic issue; severe sprawl is making American life dysfunctional for all of us,” adds Dr. Chris Elisara of First+Main Media, producer of the series. Recent books and news stories have led to a growing awareness of how suburban sprawl is bad for human health and the environment, but people remain largely unaware of any alternative to the suburbs. “We’re hoping to remind audiences of the harms of sprawl, but really focus on the solution, which comes down to how we design towns and communities.”

Atlanta: Perfect Case Study

Atlanta was a natural choice for the series’ first episode: it is known as the poster child of suburban sprawl, *and* it’s home to Glenwood Park, which serves as one of the transformational stories that is at the heart of the **American Makeover** series.

Recently built by Charles Brewer, founder and former CEO of the Internet service company Mindspring, Glenwood Park is a 28-acre development less than 2 miles from downtown Atlanta. In the episode, viewers experience a day in the life of Glenwood Park, a community that consists of diverse people, various housing types, retail, restaurants and office space. The smart, attractive design and the mix of residential and commercial buildings ultimately work to create a pleasant, walkable neighborhood that stands in stark contrast to Atlanta's automobile-dependent suburbs. Brewer, interviewed in the episode, says, “It all comes down to walkability.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Dr. Howard Frumkin (also one of the episode’s featured interviewees), is enthusiastic about neighborhoods like Glenwood Park: “As public

health workers, we want to see more physical activity; more social interaction, which is very good for health; and less driving which improves air quality and reduces the risk of being in car crashes; so Glenwood Park is an example of neighborhood design that incorporates many strategies that are really public health strategies."

You Can Help Greenlight the Series!

American Makeover is an independent production seeking grassroots support. The series was launched as a *Kickstarter.com* project, a unique funding platform that gives people the power to greenlight new projects by directly funding independent filmmakers with small donations.

The producers of **American Makeover** are seeking additional viewer support to extend the series, with plans to produce future episodes in other major cities across America.

To watch the series pilot *Sprawlanta* or to find out how you can back **American Makeover**, visit www.AmericanMakeover.tv.

###

About First+Main and John Paget | Paget Films

Winner of the 2009 YouTube competition sponsored by the Congress For The New Urbanism (CNU) with its short film *Built to Last*, First+Main extends their campaign of promoting walkable, neighborhood-based urban development as a healthy alternative to the national epidemic of suburban sprawl. Director John Paget's previous films include the award-winning documentaries *Alcatraz Reunion* (2008), *Almost Elvis* (2006) and a Route 66 series *An American Odyssey* and *Return to the Road*. More information at <http://www.firstandmain.tv/> and <http://www.pagetfilms.com/>

About Kickstarter.com

Kickstarter.com is a funding platform for artists, designers, filmmakers, musicians, journalists, and inventors. It's a new way to directly link creative people, great ideas and ambitious endeavors with the scores of potential supporters and followers who could 'kickstart' such projects into reality. Kickstarter is powered by a unique all-or-nothing funding method where projects must be fully-funded or no money changes hands. For more information and a complete FAQ go to Kickstarter.com.

CONTACT:

Chris Elisara, Producer
First+Main Media
chris@firstandmain.tv
716-822-2817

John Paget, Director
Paget Films
john@pagetfilms.com
716-867-6488