

Why Not Be Prepared?

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We would agree with Joel Kotkin ("[400,000,000](#)," editorial page, Oct. 17) that the prospect of another 100 million Americans within four decades is no cause for panic. But we emphatically disagree with his implication that this growth requires little or no advance planning. He seems to believe everyone will find their own plot in the desert, stock up on bottled water, connect to the wireless Internet and live in happy isolation.

The more likely scenario is that most new Americans will come to the metropolitan areas that offer jobs and opportunities. We think it makes sense to engage citizens now in thinking about what gets built where, when and how. Mr. Kotkin derides the idea of smart growth, but we fail to see what's wrong with steering growth to areas that are prepared for it and away from farms and forests that ought to be preserved for the sake of our future economy and ecology. As we grow toward 400 million, our cities, suburbs and towns in metros will get denser, whether we plan for it or not. Doesn't it make sense to be prepared?

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