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Investigation into Motivation and Rationale behind Varying Levels of Household Location Efficiency

Investigation into Motivation and Rationale behind Varying Levels of Household Location Efficiency Research has shown that housing location efficiency may have the greatest impact on total household energy use yet location inefficient homes (traditional suburban development) remain a predominant choice among homebuyers and developers in North America. Suburban developers claim that the majority of buyers demand location inefficient homes while a growing number of municipalities are attempting to attract residents closer to the city center by promoting location efficient housing options. Research on this subject has primarily focused on industry driven inventories of amenities or model based transportation research into commute times and residential choice and has largely overlooked household's intricate reasoning for location choice. This project investigated Edmonton, Alberta homeowners' complex motivations and rationale for residing in varying efficient and inefficient locations. A Q-statement sort was utilized to reveal emergent factors among households regarding statements relating to walkability, financial realities, commute times, transit use, neighbourhood perceptions and housing needs/norms. A Q-image sort of stereotypical homes/neighbourhoods was also employed to contrast participants' motivations (Q-statements) with norms regarding 'ideal' households. Short qualitative interviews were conducted during/post sorting to provide context into participants' preferences. Results from this project are anticipated to provide jurisdictions attempting to attract citizens to mature suburban or urban neighbourhoods with novel characteristics and attributes of households that have not been previously established using quantitative hedonic scale housing surveys or models. Data analysis is ongoing and will be complete by mid-summer 2012.