Excerpts on "Cool Communities" from the book, ***Live First, Work Second - Getting Inside the Head of the Next Generation*****,** 2007, by Rebecca Ryan. Ryan is an author, speaker and founder of Next Generation Consulting. A company committed to teaching today's leaders how to engage tomorrow's.

To attract and retain the next generation of knowledge workers to your community, you must see your city through their eyes.

What are they looking for in your community?

Diversity
The *Live First* generation is coming of age in classrooms rich with cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. The subtext they're absorbing is that great talent is not restricted to a certain gender, country of origin, religion or any other demographic label.

Talent just *is*. And the next generation's knowledge workers want to live and work near other smarties.

How diverse is your community? Do your city councils, nonprofit boards and "Leaders of the Year" look more like Ward Cleaver or the United Nations? Is your community run by the same 11 people who make all the decisions and serve in all the leadership posts?

Third Spaces
Another indicator of a cool community is Third Spaces. A Third Space is not home (the 'first space') or work (the 'second space'). A Third Space is an in-between space. It may be a coffee house, a martini bar or a bistro. Third Spaces are generally busy and locally owned. Many have funky restrooms.

Stroll District

When you have a high concentration of Third Spaces, all within a couple of blocks, you just might be looking at a Stroll District.

Stroll Districts are people-friendly areas where:

- You can park once and spend the rest of your afternoon walking from store to store and experience to experience.
- Retail shops—Both locally owned and boutique chains attract discretionary dollars.
- There's a human scale to the sidewalks and storefronts, making them accessible to window-shoppers and passers-by.
- People eat and drink 'al fresco' in the open air.
- People languish at cafés and on park benches.

Stroll Districts are important—like Third Spaces—because they bring a level of equalization to cities. On the sidewalks of the Stroll District, you're reminded that you share the community with others.

Stroll Districts make an important contribution to the local economy. The concentration of shops in a single district shakes more change out of purses, and locally owned shops create a greater economic impact by keeping dollars in their local economy.

Density
Density is important because it allows more opportunities for people to connect with each other.

Density shakes us loose from our narrow-casted lives and lurches us into the human cauldron of culture and society at the heart of the nongenetically modified event we call *life*.

You might be thinking, *but the next generation doesn't care about connecting with others. They isolate themselves with their technology.*

Guilty as charged. Which is why density is so important.

Population density may be the key to more connected lives . . . to a renewed sense of the public good.