



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PUBLIC DISTRUSTS DEVELOPMENT IN U.S., BRITAIN, CANADA  
ACCORDING TO NEW POLL FROM SAINT CONSULTING**

**-- Data Also Reveals Doubts About Local Planning Processes, Politics --**

**HINGHAM, MA – June 4, 2007** – Public opposition to development is rampant in the United States, Britain and Canada, where recent surveys find remarkably similar opposition to large-scale development, distrust in local politicians and fears that the planning process is unfair. The Saint Index, conducted as three surveys by The Saint Consulting Group, an international land use politics consultancy, found that huge majorities in each country want no more development in their local area.

This phenomenon, known as NIMBYism (Not in My Back Yard), makes the planning process a political challenge for the development industry to overcome local opposition and face an increasingly hostile public in projects across the property spectrum in each country (see headline bullet points below for details). The results show that 73% of Americans oppose new development in their community, which is the lowest compared to three-quarters (75%) of Canadians and 83% of Britons. However, the U.S. has the greatest distrust of the planning process—75% say the relationship between elected officials and developers makes the process unfair, versus 60% in Canada and nearly three-fifths (58%) in Britain.

U.S. respondents also differed in the reasons for their opposition to development, with 36% saying it was a desire to protect property values, an opinion shared by only 4% of the Britons and Canadians. U.K. respondents most often (16%) cited “to protect green space and the environment, while most Canadian opposition stemmed from a desire to “protect the character of the community.”

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### **What do these surveys mean?**

“Developers in all three countries need to change the way they do business,” says Pat Fox, the Boston-based President of Saint Consulting. “They can no longer count on getting an application approved just because they think it is a good project with real community benefits. Residents are acting aggressively in their self interest to protect their real estate values and the character of their communities. They are increasingly sophisticated in their attacks, understanding that elected officials are unlikely to vote against the wishes of an angry electorate.”

### **Other Interesting Findings**

- **Global agreement – large majorities oppose new development in their community**

83% UK  
75% Canada  
73% U.S.

- **Majority of Americans, Britons, and Canadians give a “fair to poor” rating to their local authorities’ handling of planning issues**

66% U.S.  
62% UK  
55% Canada

- **Perception of ‘cozy relationship’ between developers and elected officials crosses borders**

Three quarters (75%) of Americans, 60% of Canadians, and 58% of Britons believe that these relationships make the planning approval process unfair.

- **Politicians take note – Your position on development is a key factor in your chances of re-election**

More than nine-out-of-ten (93%) of Americans say a candidate’s position on growth is important (Senior citizens especially interested – 90% agree, 68% strongly agree).

87% of Canadians believe the position on growth is important.

70% of Britons concur (with the senior citizens vote again being critical; 71% agree, 51% strongly agree).

- **Active opposition to development is much more prevalent than support**

1 in 5 Canadians and 1 in 8 Britons have taken their opposition to the streets, and in America, twice as many have opposed a project as have supported one.

- **People love to shop in out-of-town big box stores, they just don't want them near their town**

6 out of 10 in both America and Canada say they enjoy shopping in big box stores, but 7 out of 10 Americans would oppose one in their community; 6 out of 10 Canadians also do not want one in their community.

- **Property values, community character, traffic and the environment are the most common reasons in all three countries for opposing development**

70% of Americans support using tax dollars to keep land undeveloped, and 38% feel strongly about it. Interestingly, 36% of Americans cite protecting property values as their top reason for opposition, while only 4% of Britons and Canadians feel the same way.

"No matter where in the world people live, everyone is interested in protecting their homes," added Mr. Fox. "We believe the disparity seen in reasons for opposition is more than likely attributed to cultural differences among the three countries."

- **Some types of real estate developments are universally reviled and face stiff opposition no matter where you go:**

Casinos: Opposed by 67% of Americans, 83% Canadians and 86% Britons  
Quarries: Opposed by 76% of Americans, 64% Canadians and 76% Britons  
Landfills: Opposed by 87% of Americans, 72% Canadians and 81% Britons  
Power plants: Opposed by 75% of Americans, 57% Canadians and 79% Britons

- **Some interesting contradictions**

Senior citizens vote is crucial in U.S. and Britain, but in Canada they seem less worried about a candidate's position on growth.

Supermarkets face little opposition in U.S. and Canada (25% in each country), but are confronted with 59% opposition in Great Britain.

Private housing is the least opposed use in the U.S. and Canada at 6% and 11% respectively, but is opposed by 30% of Britons.

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## **About The Saint Consulting Group**

The Saint Consulting Group began operations in 1983 and today is the global leader in land use political consultancy. Saint has 13 offices around the U.S. and international offices in London and Toronto. As experts in land use politics, Saint Consulting provides political campaign expertise to win complex or controversial planning decisions. Among the property sectors that use its services are: aggregates, food retail, shopping centres, hospitals, landfill, mixed-use developers, housing, and utilities.

The Saint Index<sup>®</sup> is the first and only annual primary research tool that quantifies and tracks the politics of land use, spotlighting who actively opposes and supports real estate projects and why.

For further details, contact:

**US:** **Stacy Thompson** at [stacy@blisspr.com](mailto:stacy@blisspr.com) and +1 212 840 1661

**UK:** **Paul Mindus** at [mindus@tscg.co.uk](mailto:mindus@tscg.co.uk) and +44 (0) 7990 56 8667 or **Nick Keable** at [keable@tscg.co.uk](mailto:keable@tscg.co.uk) and +44 (0) 7710 062494

**Canada:** **Paul Devlin** at [devlin@tscg.biz](mailto:devlin@tscg.biz) and +1 (416) 934-5028 Ext 2134