The Future of Suburbia

Presentation by Joel Kotkin, Senior Fellow New America Foundation
Center for Sustainable Suburban Development
Riverside, CA
January 27, 2007
The Urban Challenge

“For God’s Eden, he substitutes his own”

Jacques Ellul, French theologian
• Early Cities were places sacred, safe and busy
• As cities grew, the need to plan and develop green space evolved
• Cities did best that were cosmopolitan and open to entrepreneurs
• The industrial revolution leads to the multi-polar, suburbanized city
Delhi in 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} Centuries

“A garden of Eden that is inhabited”
The Crisis of the Industrial City

- Cities grow with enormous rapidity...in 1850 Britain first country with an urban majority
- Industrialization makes pollution and other health hazards critical
- Middle Class and aristocrats look for a way out
- Working Class dissatisfaction rises
Industrial cities boosted crowding dramatically

Urban Land Use 1400-1850  Square meters/Person

- Medieval Town
- Pre-Industrial - Early 19th Century
- Industrial - Mid 19th Century
Victorian Industrial City
Urban Disaster

“The cottages are very small, old and dirty, while the streets are uneven, party unpaved, not properly drained and full of ruts. Heaps of refuse, offal and sickening filth are everywhere interspersed with pools of stagnant liquid. The atmosphere is polluted by the stench and is darkened by the smoke of a dozen factory chimneys.”

Frederick Engels
on Manchester in 1844
Bringing Order to the Industrial City: Paris

“Let us open new streets, let us clean up the populous streets that lack air and daylight. Let the beneficial light of the sun everywhere penetrate our walls.”

Napoleon III, 1850
Haussmann’s Paris
“Town and country must be married and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilization.”

Ebenezer Howard
Progressive Reform

- Reformers in Britain, US, Germany and other industrial countries develop new sanitation systems
- Development of parks in cities in Europe, the US and Australia
- Commuter trains spur development of suburbs to bring people to the countryside
Southern California: A Vision of a New (Sub)Urban Paradise

“Los Angeles will retain the flowers and orchards and lawns, the invigorating free air from the ocean, the bright sunshine and the elbow room. It will not be congested like the older cities, for the transportation lines built in advance of the demands, have made it possible to get far out in the midst of orchards and fields for homemaking.”

Editor of the Los Angeles Express in 1905
Missed Opportunities: The Olmsted Plan

- Drawn in 1930
- Envisioned a region wide system of parks, playgrounds and public beaches
- Defeated by several factors: homeowner associations, business interests, the Depression
“Continued prosperity will depend on providing needed parks, because, with the growth of a great metropolis here, the absence of parks will make living conditions less and less attractive… the growth of the region will tend to strangle itself.”

Olmsted Report, 1930
In Most of Urban California the Single Family Home Predominated as “The Universal Aspiration”

“The suburban house is the idealization of every immigrant’s dream---the vassal’s dream of his own castle. Europeans who come here are delighted by our suburbs. Not to live in an apartment! It is a universal aspiration to own your own home.”

—Los Angeles urbanist Edgardo Contini
Despite Some Back-to-the-City Movement, More People Are Still Leaving for the Suburbs

Source: Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University.
Growth: city vs suburb

US Metropolitan & Central City Population: 2000-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metropolitan Population</th>
<th>Central City Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>182,000,000</td>
<td>81,000,000</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>200,000,000</td>
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City vs. Suburb Population Growth

Los Angeles-Long Beach-Riverside 2000-2003

14.1% 85.9%

Source: Demographia
Declustering: A Global Perspective
Percentage Change in Population 1965 - 2000

- Tokyo: -8.6%, 59.0%, 108.5%
- Paris: -24.1%, 39.7%, 74.0%
- Frankfurt: -7.8%, 30.8%, 66.4%
- Chicago: -19.0%, 17.2%, 54.0%
- New York: -1.1%, 9.0%, 18.1%
- London: -12.9%, 7.8%, 14.8%

Source: Demographia
Another Kind of Diversity: Suburb and Central City Household Change by Household Type, 1990-2000

Metro Areas with Population Over 500,000

- All Households: 18% Central City, 9% Suburbs
- Married- No Children: -2% Central City, 10% Suburbs
- Married With Children: 6% Central City, 12% Suburbs
- Other Family- No Children: 10% Central City, 20% Suburbs
- Other Family With Children: 19% Central City, 41% Suburbs
- Nonfamily: 13% Central City, 27% Suburbs
Migration of Educated Workers
1995-2005

Net Domestic Migration of College Educated,
Number of Migrants per 1,000 total Population,
1995-2000 and 2004-2005

Selected Cities

- Houston
- Cleveland
- Denver
- Seattle
- Dallas
- New York
- Portland
- Milwaukee
- Chicago
- St. Louis
- Philadelphia
- San Antonio
- Baltimore
- Detroit
- Los Angeles
- Atlanta

124,977
137,128
Childless Cities

Percentage of Population Under 18

- San Francisco: 14.5%
- Los Angeles: 26.6%
- Riverside-San Bernardino: 27.1%
- San Diego: 24.0%
- U.S. Average: 25.7%

Source: 2000 Census
Declustering: US Job Growth Remains Centered in Low- and Moderate-density Areas

Average Employment Growth (%) 1990-1998

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard, 2001 Tabulations of the Regional Economic Information System (REIS) database
Job Growth Shows the Momentum and Direction of Suburbanized Areas
Non-farm Job Growth, Selected MSAs, 1990 - 2005

Source: BLS Data, Smoothed 3rd quarter average data, various years.
Most California Downtowns Not a Big Factor

Percentage of Employment Within 3-Mile Ring around CBD

Least Sprawled
- San Francisco: 48.30%
- New York City: 46.58%

Most Sprawled
- Los Angeles: 7.30%
- New Haven: 10.47%
- San Jose: 11.41%
- Anaheim: 13.84%
- Fort Lauderdale: 14.86%
Distribution of High-End Jobs:
Surprising Findings

Growth of Jobs paying over $55,000 between January 1995 and January 2004

Los Angeles: 0.6%
Orange County: 1.8%
Riverside-SB: 3.3%
San Francisco: -0.5%
Sacramento: 2.8%
Growth in Professional Business Services

Average Annual Growth 1990 - 2006

Average Annual Growth 2000 - 2006
Housing Price Rises a New Driver

- Housing costs and quality by far the largest reason why people move
- Particularly important for people 30 to 44
- High rents, housing prices are likely to continue
Housing Affordability in California

Percentage Who Can Afford a Median-Priced Home

Source: California Association of REALTORS, 2002 figure based on June 2002 Housing Affordability Index
Housing Prices in Comparison by Region, 2004

source: California Association of Realtors/National Association of Realtors
Perceptions of Affordable Housing as a Major Problem

- Central Valley: 39%
- Inland Empire: 41%
- SF Bay Area: 58%
- Los Angeles: 59%
- OC/San Diego: 63%
Focus on What People Want: Mostly Single Family Homes, Safe Areas

- 83 percent want this kind of dwelling (National Association of Home Builders)
- 86 percent in California (PPIC)
- 70% of downshifting boomers “retiring in place”
- Latinos highest percentage ethnicity to prefer single family home
- More empty nesters heading out than in
- 40% expect kids to move back at some point
- Focus: suburbs, exurbs, safe “neighborhoods” in closer, attractive areas
Where Americans Would Like To Live

- Small town not near a city: 25%
- Rural area: 20%
- Not sure: 5%
- Large city: 15%
- Suburb near large city: 25%

• Fannie Mae, 1998
What People Want

- Single Family Detached Home: 86%
- Attached Home: 8%
- Apartment: 4%
- Other Dwelling: 2%

Public Policy Institute of California, 20002

Looking Ahead

• Growth of Population/smaller households put more pressure on demand
• Price Pressure will resume after end of current bubble
• The Key Challenge: Reconciling desire for low/moderate density with affordability and environment

Source: Bureau of the Census, CensusScope
In 2030, about half of the buildings in which Americans live, work, and shop will have been built after 2000.

Source: Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Rebuild America, p.v
The Archipelago of Villages: Learning to Live with Sprawl

- Housing near jobs
- Emphasis on families
- Strong role for village shopping streets and markets
- Provision of open space around the village core and housing estates
- Solving the problem of “sprawl” within the Sprawl
Visions of Suburbia

- The brain dead land of “Desperate Housewives”
- A new kind of sprawling dystopia
- What people want, a place that can adapt to change
“Plenty of dreary lives are lived in the suburbs. But most of them might be worse in other surroundings”

Hugh Stretton
*Ideas for Australian Cities, 1970*
Traffic Will “Drive” Demand for Change

Average Hours Per Year Stuck in Traffic

1982
- Los Angeles: 31
- Riverside- San Bernardino: 6

1999
- Los Angeles: 58
- Riverside- San Bernardino: 35

Source: California Dept. of Education, Healthy California Progress Initiative, California Highway Patrol, Surface Transportation Policy Project
Figure 4—Share of Workers With Commutes Less Than 30 Minutes, by MSA, 2005
Source: American Community Survey data, 2005.
Transit is nice but no real solution

Los Angeles Red Line Subway
Current Ridership: Projection, Actual; and Corrections

- Projected
- Claimed
- Revised
The Big Trend: Digital Impact

Percent change by mode, journey to work 1980-2000

Source: US Decennial Census
Would you take a pay cut to work in the immediate area where you live?

50% of workers said they would take a 20% pay cut to take a job in their local area.
“The biggest jolt the Industrial Revolution administered to the Western family was the progressive removal of work from the home.”

Dr. Peter N. Stearns, historian
If the electronic cottage was to spread, a chain of consequences of great importance would flow through society. Many of these consequences would please the most ardent environmentalist or techno-rebel, while at the same time opening up new options for business entrepreneurship.

— Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*
“Housing by itself does not accomplish very much,… it’s not a panacea.”

Robert Simon, 1966, Founder of Reston, Virginia
Examples of New Suburbanism

• Naperville, Illinois
• Downtown Fullerton
• The Woodlands, TX
• Valencia, CA
New Poles for Economic Activity

- Office, Commercial alongside or near houses
- Placing Work near concentrations of skilled workers
- Selling Convenience --- a return to the vision of the Garden City
A Key Component: Bringing Culture to the ‘Burbs
The Sacred Space
Ultimately solving our problems depends on developing a sense of community.

People do not live together merely to be together. They live together to do something together.”

-Ortega y Gasset.
Questions and Comment