maintain a small-town neighborliness but also the patterns of development that provide an ecologically-sound suburban alternative to continued sprawl development (Article 33, "Principles of New Urbanism"). New Urbanism communities feature homes with front porches (Article 34, "Rocking-Chair Revival: Nostalgic Front Porch Makes a Comeback in a New Century"), pleasant walkable paths, few driv- way cuts that impair walkability, traffic-calming measu clustered development to preserve open space, and emphasis on building suburban town squares and ot public places.

The design principles of the New Urbanism have als been applied in the inner city, in an effort to transform pul lic housing and their surrounding neighborhoods. Chicago and other cities used the federal assistance in the **HOPE VI program** to tear town the most distressed high-rise public housing towers, replacing them with new low-rise units of mixed-income housing (see Article 35 "HOPE VI and the New Urbanism: Eliminating Low-Income Housing to Make Mixed-Income Communities"). The subsidized low-income housing units were "blended in" and made indistinguishable from market-rate units. Public spaces in the project were also given attractive design in a further effort to promote community building.

Critics counter that as wonderful as New Urbanism communities are, they simply do not provide an answer for such problems as suburban sprawl. Few Americans live in New Urban communities. Developers will continue to build, and Americans will continue to buy, homes in more conventional suburbs, with their continued reliance on the automobile.

Urbanists hopes that **regionalism,** or the effective intergovernmental cooperation of communities within the metropolis, will help provide an answer to many of the problems of the burgeoning metropolis. In the 1950s and 1960s, many academic urban experts pushed for the creation of new metropolitan-wide governments. A few actually were created (or, to be more accurate, a few regional governments were created, but none were given full governing authority over the region). In most metropolitan areas, suburbs simply sought the preservation of their autonomy; their residents did not wish to cede power to new metropolitan authorities over which they would have little direct control.

In more recent years, regional reformers have come to recognize th- ulty of creating new metropolitan gover- of pursuing metropolitan restruc- **new regionalism** look for pos- tic regional action and coalition suburban boundaries. Myron mporary suburbia is no monolith Coalition-Building and the Inner inner-ring suburbs and low- class communities both suf- wth and the overconcentra- 's **favored quarter** of more rfield argues for creative at central cities, older suburbs, and source communities can work together to fight for their fair share of new investment, infrastructure support, and government aid. Orfield even raises the possibility of **regional tax-base sharing,** a program enacted in the Twin Cities area that ensures that all communities in the region receive a share of the benefits from new growth and development. Orfield observes the special role that churches and religious-base communities can play in pushing for more equitable and ecologically sensitive patterns of regional growth.

Fred Siegel, in contrast, argues that many new regional initiatives are not all that desirable (Article 37, "Is Regional Government the Answer?") Siegel argues that Americans are generally happy with suburban growth and lifestyles and do not wish to have their choice of homes and communities constricted by measures designed to curtail sprawl and slow suburban growth. These citizens are also suspicious of placing the decision-making authority in the hands of large-scale, regional bureaucracies. How to get small-scale governments to overcome self-interest and to work together effectively to combat sprawl and other urban problems, however, remains an open question.

Article 30

The Six Suburban Eras of the United States

ROBERT LANG, JENNIFER LEFURGY, AND ARTHUR C. NELSON

Introduction

The Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech (MI) proposes a timeline to show the flow of suburban eras and types. The timeline defines six periods of U.S. suburban development in order to establish more common base years for historical data analysis. As the field of suburban studies matures into a formal academic sub-discipline, these suggested eras can help guide research projects.

The current standard split in suburban history, proposed by New Urbanists such as Andres Duany, offers a rather crude division into pre- and post-World War II periods (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). But this simple pre/post-war dichotomy is a caricature of suburban history. It can be argued that one suburban era actually spans the immediate pre- and post-war decades, which are labeled "Mid-Century Suburbs" (or the years 1930 to 1970) in this note. In addition, the post-war period is now so long, at 60 plus years, that it too can be divided into eras. Consider, for example an article by Robert Lang, Edward Blakely, and Meghan Gough (2005) that looks at the "new suburban metropolis" period from 1970 to 2010.

This timeline is not meant to be definitive. There are no clean breaks in history. Thus the timeline is depicted as a meandering river to indicate the continuous flow of events. The dates show stops along the way where the river course shifts, implying a directional change in history.

This note divides American suburban history into six eras. It finds that the United States is now in the fifth era and will soon enter a sixth one. The timeline also indicates some exemplar suburbs of each period and touches on key political changes and technological innovations. However, this argument does not subscribe to the notion of technological or economic determinism. Previous efforts to categorize historic eras focused especially on advances in transit technology (Stern and Massengale 1981), but multiple forces propel suburban change, and this proposed timeline also considers how cultural influences shaped the course of evolution.

The timeline reflects current thinking on the suburbs and incorporates the work of many historians including James Borchert (1996), Robert Fishman (1987, 1990), Dolores Hayden (2003), Kenneth Jackson (1985), Chester Liebs (1985), Richard Longstreth (1998, 1999), and Sam Bass Warner, Jr. (1962, 1972). The understanding of the three later eras is driven mostly by the current work of researchers at MI and the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program. The labels attached to these eras were developed by MI and reflect its conceptualization of how the suburbs have evolved since the mid-19th century.

Before 1850: Proto Suburbs

Prior to 1850, U.S. suburbs were mostly extensions of cities (Jackson 1985, Warner 1972). They featured street plans and housing that closely resembled the urban core. In this era, the urban fringe featured dense row houses that abruptly give way to open fields and farms. However, some historians have documented the fact that the residents of early U.S. suburbs such as Brooklyn already had a different demographic character than residents of the central city (Jackson 1985). At first, these borderlands were poorer than the core. But with the introduction of ferry service around New York harbor, neighborhoods such as Brooklyn Heights emerged that catered to middle-income commuters. Henry Binford (1988) finds a similar development pattern at the fringe of Boston in the first half of the 19th century.

The earliest distinctly non–urban looking suburbs began in the United Kingdom in the early 19th century (Fishman 1987). They appeared first in London (Clapham Common—1800) and later Manchester (Victoria Park—1830s). These same kinds of "picturesque" suburbs did not emerge in the United States until the second half of the 19th century.

1850 to 1890: Town and Country Suburbs

The notion of suburbs as distinct physical places from cities became evident in the United States by the 1850s (Fishman 1987). The earliest documented English-style American suburb was Llewellyn Park, NJ, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted

in 1857. Olmsted's work captured in design and spirit an entire mid-19th century U.S. movement that elevated domesticity and the nuclear family. This movement, along with the picturesque landscape architecture, had its roots in England.

But note that we do not refer to this suburban era as "picturesque" as some others have (Hayden 2003). That is because these suburbs are only part of the suburban story of the period. The flip side of the affluent picturesque places was a more moderate-income and city-like suburb based on horse-drawn streetcars (Hayden 2003). These streetcars were a big improvement over horse-drawn omnibuses because they were faster and carried more load (Warner 1962). They helped change the course of urban development in places such as New York, where suburbs now spread north on Manhattan Island instead of only crossing the East River to Brooklyn (Jackson 1985).

The horse-drawn streetcar suburbs were much denser and more traditionally urban that their picturesque counterparts—thus they were the "town" in the "town and country suburbs." But they also were now distinct from the urban core. In places such as the Jamaica Plains neighborhood of Boston, the architecture began to shift in the 1850s from the tight row houses such as those found on Beacon Hill to a looser configuration with side alleys (Warner 1962). In many cases, the houses were fully detached but remained on small narrow lots. To a modern eye, this does not seem as important a distinction, but it signaled a much larger change. Also note that many of the "town" suburbs had been annexed by the central city and appeared for all intents and purposes to be "urban neighborhoods" (Rusk 1993). Yet in the context of the mid-to-late 19th century American metropolis, these places were suburbs. The best example of a neighborhood built in this style was Gross Park in Chicago, dating from the 1880s (Hayden 2003).

1890 to 1930: Streetcar Suburbs

By the late 1880s, the first electric streetcars—or trolleys—were in use. The trolleys were a turbo version of the horse-drawn streetcars (Warner 1962). They were much bigger and faster and helped spread development for miles past the old urban core. Many of the trends that began in the horse-drawn era were greatly accentuated and extended by trolleys—the suburban houses spread out more (especially in places such as Los Angeles) and differences between the look and feel of the edge and the core grew (Fishman 1987). The streetcars so dominated the construction and speculation of this period that many historians use them to label this suburban era (Warner 1962). Suburban diversity, which began in earlier eras, continues and intensifies with the emergence of large-scale residential "city suburbs" (Borchert 1996).

Suburban retail and commercial districts also began to change radically in the streetcar suburbs (Liebs 1985). The old, dense form of Main Street now took on an elongated appearance. Storefronts stretched to reflect the fact that people might now window shop from a fast-moving trolley. These extended main streets, also referred to as "taxpayer strips," were the forerunner of the auto-based strip (Liebs 1985; Lang, LeFurgy, and Hornburg 2005). Many of these places exist today, threading through the edges of central cities and older suburbs, and are to the modern eye "traditional looking." But in their era, these strips represented a sharp break with commercial districts in the urban core.

Automobiles were invented around the same time as trolleys, but had much less immediate impact on urban development in the early years of the 20th century. They were expensive, hard to store, and poorly accommodated in urban places. Yet the streetcars began to loosen up the American metropolis so effectively that cars began to find navigating suburbs easier with each passing year. The first commercial districts to begin building parking lots were the trolley-based taxpayer strips. By the 1920s, the west side of Los Angeles began to develop fully auto-based shopping (Longstreth 1998, 1999).

1930 to 1970: Mid-Century Suburbs

Key developments during this era include the creation of Federal Housing Administration loans in the 1930s, which greatly improved middle-income access to suburban housing, and the beginning of the interstate highways in 1956 (Jackson 1985). Suburban architecture grew even more distinct from both traditional urban and even earlier suburbs (Hayden 2003). The dominant housing type was the one-story ranch-style home with a minimally classic exterior and a modern open floor plan. The scale of development expanded, especially after World War II in projects such as Levittown and Lakewood (Hayden 2003). The modest suburban shopping centers of the early 20th century exploded into massive malls that, beginning in 1956, were mostly enclosed and climate-controlled (Liebs 1985).

The New Urbanists, such as Andres Duany (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000) and James Kunstler (1993), argue that a clean break in history exists between the pre- and post-World War II eras. In their view, all development before the war was pedestrian-oriented and traditional in form. After the war came an auto-dominated environment of subdivisions and shopping malls. However, the historical literature does not support this simplistic view (Harris 1988) and instead indicates that many early 20th century suburbs began a slow, decades-long adoption of automobiles (Liebs 1985). By the 1930s, cars were poised to significantly remake the American metropolis, but first a depression and then war greatly slowed the pace of urban change (Jackson 1985). Yet in the few places that still grew during the depression and war, such as the Los Angeles and Washington, DC, regions, the car made its mark (Longstreth 1998, 1999). These places, along with select parts of suburban New York, contain many examples of 1930s auto suburbs complete with proto tract-style subdivisions and early auto-oriented shopping centers.

Thus, a new suburban style emerged at the mid-20th century. This style existed both immediately before and after the war. There is just so much more development occurring after the war, that Mid-Century Suburbs were said to have a "post-war" style.

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1970 to 2010: New Metropolis Suburbs

The interstate beltways, constructed mostly in the 1960s, paved the way for a boom in suburban commercial development by the 1970s. A new suburban-dominated metropolis emerged during this period (Fishman 1990; Sharpe and Wallock 1994). The amount of suburban office space surpassed that of central cities, giving rise to Edge Cities and even more commonly Edgeless Cites (Lang 2003)—a more sprawling style of commercial development. Suburbs now typically had the region's balance of people, shopping, and business, yet they maintained a distinct non-urban look (Lang, Blakely and Gough 2005). They became cities in function, but not in form (Fishman 1990; Lang 2003).

The suburbs also grew diverse (Lang and LeFurgy 2006). The 1965 reform in immigration law led to a surge in the foreign-born population of the United States by the 1980s. The cities no longer had a monopoly on attracting immigrants. By the first decade of the 21st century, the suburbs equaled cities as immigrant magnets (Frey 2003). The suburbs also attracted growing numbers of nontraditional households, including single and even gay residents (Brekhus 2003; Frey and Berube 2003). In fact, the suburbs grow so diverse in this era that a whole new language was needed to describe the multiple types of communities and their complicated forms of development.

The suburban split between upscale and more modest development, detectable even in the 19th century, intensified in this era (Orfield 1997, 2002). Many older suburbs from the streetcar, and even mid-century, periods were in decline (most town and country era suburbs have been annexed by central cities). The amount of suburban poverty dramatically increased in places that fall outside the "favored quarter" (Leinberger 1997), or the most affluent wedge of the metropolis. Places in the favored quarter boomed. Newer suburbs at the edge of the region featured "McMansions" as the average house size in new construction nearly doubled from 1970 to the end of the century (Lang and Danielsen 2002). Closer-in suburbs within this quarter became cosmopolitan and competed directly with fashionable urban neighborhoods for the region's arts and intellectual communities (Lang, Hughes, and Danielsen 1997).

2010 and beyond: Megapolitan Suburbs

A new suburban era may emerge after 2010. It likely will be characterized by an enlarging exurban belt that stretches so far from the original urban core that its residents may have a choice of directions in which to commute. For example, people living around Fredericksburg, VA, 50 miles south of Washington, DC, now have the option of commuting south to Richmond or north to the District of Columbia or booming Northern Virginia. The commuter sheds in the "Megapolitan Suburbs" will link up vast networks of cities (Carbonell and Yaro 2005). The scale of the building also will be enormous as the nation adds at least 30 million new residents each decade until mid-century (Nelson 2004).

Lang and Dhavale (2005) developed a new trans-metropolitan geography that labels vast urban zones "Megapolitan Areas." The first one emerged in the Northeast between Maine and Virginia (Gottmann 1961), but now nine others reach into all regions of the United States. By 2005, Megapolitans captured more than two in three Americans, and the share will grow significantly by 2050 (Lang and Dhavale 2005).

A wave of suburban gentrification will occur post-2010, especially in the favored quarter. Many of the new developments will intensify the urban look and feel of many suburbs. A new urbanity will sweep the suburbs—they will still not look like traditional cities, but may incorporate more urban elements than Edge Cities of the past. Many first-generation Edge Cities will lose their edge as traditional cores revive and more distant suburbs explode with new development (Lang 2003). The scale of urbanity may shift away from mega projects in the suburbs—like Edge Cities—and into smaller scale town centers. The new town centers will have less concentrated office space than Edge Cities, but will be more mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented than the current form of suburban commercial development.

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