Recentralizing the Metropolis

Steve Belmont

Making Density Work - San Diego - October 10, 2008
Jane Jacobs Revisited

“In Oakland, California, the worst and most extensive slum problem is an area of some two hundred blocks of detached one- and two-family houses … Cleveland’s worst slum problem is a square mile of much the same thing.”

Jane Jacobs (1961)
“Pseudosuburbs … are ideally suited to rape, muggings, beatings, holdups and the like [unless] secluded from city life.”

Jane Jacobs (1961)
Jane Jacobs Revisited

“Anticity planning remains amazingly sturdy in American cities.”

Jane Jacobs (1992)
Charlotte Gardens, South Bronx
Anticity Planning

“Charlotte Gardens … could well be the most important story of urban America at the dawn of the twenty-first century.”

Anticity Planning

“Surely cities do not have to reclaim all their lost glory—all the population, density, [and] economic mass of the first half of this century.”

Lyn Park, “The Suburb in the City,” 1 mile from downtown Minneapolis
Brooklyn/Park, Kansas City
1030 Morgan Av N.  (Photo credit: Minneapolis StarTribune 16 August 1996)
DSNI’s turf, Roxbury, Boston
Cottage Street, Roxbury
The Density Deficiency of the American City

Population densities in America’s 50 most populous cities in the year 2000 (residents per square mile)
Jefferson County’s Cornerstone 2020 land-use plan advocates greater density in the urban core.

“[Louisville’s aldermen] said the plan gives too much emphasis to the environment and not enough to the automobile.”

“The aldermen have proposed amendments ... aimed at preserving single-family zoning in city neighborhoods.”

New land-use plan still needs scrutiny, aldermen contend

Neighborhoods could be harmed, committee says

By NINA WALFOORT
The Courier-Journal

Saying the proposed countywide land-use plan could harm Louisville’s traditional neighborhoods, a committee of aldermen called yesterday for an extensive review of the plan. The aldermen said they fear the plan — known as Cornerstone 2020 — advocates greater density in the “urban core” and takes away the Board of Aldermen’s power to prevent unwanted land-use changes. They also said the plan gives too much emphasis to the environment and not enough to the automobile.

“We do find somewhat startling the line that has been mapped out seemed to be way too fast,”

Working with their attorney, David Banks, the aldermen have proposed 64 amendments to the objectives. Many of them are aimed at preserving single-family zoning in city neighborhoods.

Alderman Tom Owen said many neighborhoods in his 3rd Ward, including parts of the Highlands, have fought to “downzone” their community, thus limiting the number of apartments or condominiums that can be built.

And 12th Ward Alderman Paul Bather said an increase in rental housing in western Louisville has been symptomatic of its decline. The redevelopment of the Cotter-Lang Homes public housing complex, he noted, is a move toward lower density.

“It’s not that there’s never an appropriate place for multifamily,” Bather said. “But we do not have enough single-family housing.”

Louisville Courrier-Journal
18 September 1996
“Communities are focused on lowering housing densities.”

An analysis of Minneapolis NRP: *Defining Community: A Neighborhood Perspective* (1996)
“Minneapolis will maintain the unique character of the city’s housing stock [and] maintain areas that are predominantly developed with single and two family structures.”

Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, 2000
Old Dominion University area
Norfolk
Simpson St, Atlanta
Gratiot Av, Detroit
Halsted Av, Chicago
West Broadway, Minneapolis
Number of residents required to sustain a neighborhood commercial node in Minneapolis:

1950s: 5,000

1996: 10,000

Economic Research Corporation, June 1996
(Commissioned by MCDA)
“Almost all [NCNs] lack some of the basic goods and services needed or desired by most residents on a regular basis. This makes it necessary for residents to go to other commercial areas on a regular basis.”

Economic Research Corporation, 1996, noting that only 1 of Minneapolis’ 57 NCNs has all three traditional anchors.
“Many areas of the city have an oversupply of commercial space.”
West Broadway, Minneapolis
NEIGHBORHOOD EVOLUTION

Paul Revere House
North End, Boston
“New York in the 1920s was a mature place. But they were producing a hundred thousand units a year … tearing up swaths of Manhattan and building higher buildings.”

Harvard economist Edward L. Glaeser, quoted in *N.Y Times Mag.*, 5 March 2006
Park Avenue, Upper East Side
Park Avenue, Upper East Side
"I had to sell. I didn’t mean to start the snowball rolling, but the money ..."

Tulfan Terrace 50-year resident Michael Dennis quoted in New York Times, 2 March 2004
“I held out … and I was quite emotional at times. But in the end they offered me good money, and turning down good money, well it’s hard”

Tulfan Terrace 40-year resident DiAnn Pierce, quoted in New York Times, 2 march 2004
1st Avenue, Upper East Side
Upper East Side: East 80th Street
Means of Transportation to Work (Census 2000)

**Upper East Side**
- Drive Alone: 8.4%
- Walk/Bike: 19.1%
- Public Transportation: 62.1%
- Carpool: 3.3%
- Work @ Home: 6.3%
- Other: 0.8%
- HH/acre: 108

**Near North**
- Drive Alone: 58.9%
- Carpool: 14.4%
- Work @ Home: 3.0%
- Walk/Bike: 3.2%
- Public Transportation: 19.0%
- Other: 1.6%
- HH/acre: 5
Vehicle availability (households)

Upper East Side
- None: 70.4%
- 1 or 1+: 29.6%

Near North
- None: 29.5%
- 1 or 1+: 70.5%

Density, Income, Car Ownership (Census 2000)

Upper East Side
- Household density (HH/acre): 5
- Median HH income: $74,777
- Poverty rate: 6.2%

Near North
- Median HH income: $27,520
- Poverty rate: 33.5%
Density Inversion and the Degeneration of Transit
The Natural Transit Superiority of the Metropolitan Center

1. Better proximity to routes
2. Direct access to more destinations
3. Shorter headways
Metro-center transit advantage #1:
Closely Spaced Routes

Transit route pattern, Buffalo, New York
Metro-center transit advantage #2:
Direct Service to More Destinations
Metro-center transit advantage #3:
Frequent Service

Daily weekday counts, downtown-bound buses, Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis
The Natural Transit Superiority of the Metropolitan Center

In the Twin Cities metropolis:

“65 percent of all transit travel never leaves the cities [and] only 6 percent occurs entirely in the suburbs”

Even though:

the cities contain just 22 percent of their metro area’s population and 15 percent of developed land area, and suburban routes are much more heavily subsidized than urban routes.
“Say the options are to double residential density … within one mile of a downtown … or at a distance of 10 miles from it. In the first case, public transit trips per capita in the affected area will increase seventeen times as much as in the second case.”
In the London metropolis:

"Just a couple of hours off-peak travel around the suburbs reveals near-empty trains running past ... vast new housing developments and shopping complexes ..."
Inner-City Sprawl: GMMHC houses in Minneapolis, 1 mile northwest of downtown Minneapolis

Suburban Urbanity: Apartments in Edina, 8 miles south of downtown Minneapolis
This plan to build offices and condominiums in the parking lot of the Lagoon Theater in Minneapolis was rejected Thursday by the Minneapolis Planning and Zoning Commission.

Back to the drawing board for Lagoon development

Minneapolis StarTribune, 27 June 2005
Density Aversion

“Uptown is not downtown. Uptown is not a high-rise district.”

Mayor R.T. Rybak quoted in StarTribune 27 June 2005
Metro-center transit advantage #2:
Direct Service to More Destinations
Regional Commerce Centre, St. Clair/Yonge subway station, Toronto
Regional Commerce Centre, Eglinton/Yonge subway station, Toronto
New development in Uptown, Minneapolis
New Development in Edina
Population density in 20 most populous US cities, 2000
Population density / transit share in 20 most populous US cities, 2000
Population density in 20 most populous US cities / metro area transit %, 2000
Population density in 20 most populous US cities / metro area transit %, 2000
Boston
Detroit

CMSA pop. (millions) 5.8 5.5
PMSA pop. (millions) 3.4 4.4

Com'l. office space in
CBD (millions sq. ft.) 50+ 14

State capitol? Yes No

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; The Hayman Company, January 2000
Metropolitan Detroit Office Market Summary; New York Times, 31 Dec. '03

Population density in 20 most populous US cities / metro area transit %, 2000
Polycentricity

Myth and Reality
Polycentricity Myth

“Edge City … is, on average, an improvement in per capita fuel efficiency over the old suburbia-downtown arrangement … That is why Edge City is the crucible of America’s urban future.”

Joel Garreau, Edge City (1991)
“Job decentralization, either in polycentric regions or in dispersed patterns, results in less use of transit for all trip purposes.”

Transit Cooperative Research Program
*Transit and Urban Form* (1996)
Polycentricity Reality

“CBD workers are five times more likely to use transit than workers in other activity centers.”

Polycentricity Mythology

“Typical commutes are becoming shorter… People typically took 21.7 minutes in 1980. The new census number will probably be closer to 20 minutes…”

Joel Garreau (1991)

Polycentricity Reality

The new census number (1990): 22.4 min.
Polycentricity Reality

“Workers who worked in their county of residence increased 25 percent from 1980 to 1990, while workers who worked outside their county of residence increased almost 50 percent.”

U.S. Dept. of Transportation, 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro office space</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBD share</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge City share</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polycentricity Reality

Commuting trend in Twin Cities 7-county area, 1990-2000

Within county commutes 10 % increase
Commutes to adjacent county 30 % increase
Commutes beyond adj. county 60 % increase

Minneapolis Star Tribune, 6 March 2003
“The number of miles driven in California has increased at a rate 50 percent faster than the rate of population growth for the past two decades.”

New York Times, 29 August 2008
Polycentricity Myth
the energy-efficient commute of Garreau’s imagination

Polycentricity Reality
the energy-gluttonous commute of commercial decentralization
Polycentricity Reality

“A metropolitan area is a core area containing a large population nucleus together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration …”

U.S. Office of Management and Budget
Polycentricity Reality

“The British New Town concept of the 1940s … aspired to produce self-sufficient urban centers. In actuality, these towns remained suburban and dependent on larger urban centers …”

National Academic & Licensing Study Aids, LLC (1998)
Polycentricity Reality

“Achieving a numerical balance of jobs and housing is unlikely to yield many dividends.”
Robert Cervero (1996)

Self-Containment among 23 Bay Area Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Independence Index (1990)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napa</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallejo</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alameda</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremont</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayward</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasanton</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyvale</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Mateo</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut Creek</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Leandro</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood City</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daly City</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = municipalities designated “emerging Edge City” by Garreau
b = balanced between jobs and housing—within .15 in 1990.
+ = Garreau adds suffix “area” or lists additional components.

Note: Garreau characterizes San Jose as part of an “Edge City,” but this is an inaccurate characterization by Garreau’s own definition. (See Cities in Full, page 144.)
San Francisco: MUNI Balboa Park line
Automobile-Oriented Transit

Atlanta: MARTA Dunwoody Station
Automobile-Oriented Transit

“Marta has been spectacularly unsuccessful in checking automobilized sprawl, which has increased exponentially since the early 1970s.”

Charles Rutheiser, “Imagineering Atlanta,” 1996
Automobile-Oriented Transit

“Suburban Neighborhoods are car-oriented even when served by trains.”

Christof Spieler, “Houston Hitches a Ride on Light Rail, Architecture (February 2004)
View from Ashby Station, Atlanta
View from Capitol Heights Metro station, Washington, D.C.
View from 46th Street station, Minneapolis
Automobile Oriented Transit

“Regional rail systems have been a force toward decentralization of both population and employment.”

Transit Cooperative Research Program
*Transit and Urban Form* (1996)
NeoPolycentricity

“We stand for the ... reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs [to promote] environmental health.”

Charter of the New Urbanism (1996)
NeoPolycentricity

“People want to live in urban environments … We have to redesign the underlying [suburban] armature …”

Peter Calthorpe (discussing Issaquah Highlands in 2003)
Suburbanites created an “ugly depressing” environment because “they were drunk most of the time, in a stupor.”

Peter Calthorpe quoted by James Howard Kunstler in *Home from Nowhere* (1996)
NeoPolycentricity

“The suburban system … isolate[s] people from one another [and gives them] reason to fear each other.”

NeoPolycentricity

“A modern suburb is an instrument for making people stupid.”

Philip Langdon, A Better Place to Live (1994)
NeoPolycentricity

“Everyone loves to hate the suburbs except for the people who live there. Academic revisionists are reporting that suburbia, far from crushing lives, has had a liberating effect … the sense of community can be as strong as it is in a small town.”

New York Times, 5 December 1999
NEW URBAN ROW TOWNHOMES

The traditional architecture of the New Urban Row Townhomes makes a classic statement. These homes offer 2-4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, generous storage, and a 2-car garage tucked under the spacious rear elevated deck.

From the mid $200’s

URBAN ROW TOWNHOMES

Style and functionality at its best can be found in an Urban Row Townhome. 2 - 3 bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths with a spacious deck off the back over a two-car tuck-under garage.

From the mid $100’s

FOR NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION SEE MAP ON PAGES 10 & 11

EDEN PRAIRIE
Hartford Commons
WOODBURY
Dancing Waters

CHASKA
Clover Ridge Village
The ugly truth about neotraditional suburbs: Kentlands Square
Main Street, Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove
Arbor Lakes’ source of customers
Transit commuters per 100 housing units

Minneapolis: 18
St. Paul: 11
WestRidge TOD: 1

Source for Minneapolis: 2000 Census
Source for West Ridge: a.m. counts, August 6 and 14, 2002
“Islands of transit-oriented development in a sea of freeway-oriented suburbs will do little to change fundamental commuting habits … Successful transit villages will need to be part of a transit metropolis.”

### Transit Metropolis

**Transit’s share of work commutes: selected metro areas in the U.S., 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro area</th>
<th>Transit share</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City CMSA</td>
<td>24.9 percent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago CMSA</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford MSA (median)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rank based on data for America’s 49 MSAs/CMSAs with more than 1 million residents in 2000. Data from Census Bureau and APTA.
## Transit Metropolis

### Carbon footprint from autos: selected metro areas in U.S., 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro area</th>
<th>Per capita carbon footprint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>.664 tons (lowest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster, PA</td>
<td>.767 tons (runner-up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.004 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From an analysis of the 100 most populous metro areas in the U.S., *Shrinking the Carbon Footprint of Metropolitan America*, Brookings (2008)
NeoPolycentricity

“Revitalization efforts should not focus unduly on bringing families back to the inner city …”

Andres Duany et. al. Suburban Nation (2000)
“Surely cities do not have to reclaim all their lost glory—all the population, density, [and] economic mass of the first half of this century.”

Traditional planning in the traditional city: new low-cost homes (81 in all) blend in with existing houses in central Cleveland.