DOWNTOWN RECONSIDERED

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The Early Twentieth Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Americans focused on the promise of the city for a richer life marked by a sense of community, employment, and accomplishment (Teaford, 1993). Instead, America's cities became places distinguished by their poverty, disease, and crime. The concentration of population in a relatively small space only magnified these problems. Reverend Josiah Strong preached that "the new civilization is certain to be urban; and the problem of the twentieth century will be the city." (Teaford, 1993, 1) It was evident that the center of civilization was to be the city, but it was inevitable that the city would not satisfy the insatiable human need for innovation and growth. In the early twentieth century, the downtown was the business center of the metropolitan area and the source of commercial activity that provided much of the income of the citizens. "City Hall, soaring skyscrapers, Marshall Field's and Macy's, glittering theaters, mammoth hotels, cavernous rail terminals, and a dense tangle of streetcar lines—all were part of the downtown scene." (Teaford, 1993, 17) The downtown was the hub of the city's activity while simultaneously belonging to no one single group or class of citizen. There was a place to live and a place to work for every resident in the city. While neighborhoods were divided by class and/or ethnicity, everyone walked on the same sidewalks downtown.

Rapid urbanization and industrialization produced cities formed by unplanned, ill-fitting parts. Buildings, factories, and housing were placed where there was open space and where a developer had purchased land. Without zoning or land use controls, neighborhoods were a peculiar mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial structures that held little aesthetic value. In 1909 a collection of architects, public officials, civic leaders, and landscape architects convened at the First National Conference on City Planning (Teaford, 1993). They believed that civic pride could be created through city improvements and displaying art in the city. The entire city—not just the few areas in which the wealthy resided—should be an object of beauty and source of pride. The Conference was motivated by the emerging City Beautiful Movement led by planner-architect Daniel Burnham. The focus of the movement and all who were involved was to make cities beautiful by creating additional parks, landscaped street and boulevards, plazas, and incorporating classical architecture throughout the city (Teaford, 1993). Others shared Burnham's vision of planning the city as an orderly whole. According to these reformers the city needed to grow in a single direction rather than groundlessly responding to private market forces.

American cities growing without plans produced social, economic, moral, and political diversity juxtaposed in a small area with no order. The divide between wealthy city residents and the poor grew as the economy improved and conflicts arose.

> At the dawn of the century the city included great wealth and great poverty, opulence and deprivation, sin and sanctimony, politicians dedicated to personal profit and politicians committed to civic virtue,

ugly zones of commercial exploitation and enclaves of lovely shaded

streets. (Teaford, 1993, 43)

City planners began to create physical plans that offered a common goal for the city

community as a whole rather than for each class of its citizens. However, the officials

responsible for directing the city's policies were often over-confident that all residents

shared their visions for the future. "Beautifying" the city often meant displacing low-

income residents and destroying what was labeled as "blight". Structures that housed

low-income city residents were removed to make city centers more attractive. While

demolishing buildings made room for appealing tree-lined boulevards and pricey

brownstone homes, cities undertaking these improvements no longer had enough

available affordable housing.

Displaced residents began to look outside of the city and further away from

downtown to find homes within their budget. The residential areas immediately

surrounding cities gained population from the migration of the middle- and lower-class

residents out of their suddenly expensive neighborhoods.

Between 1900 and 1915 the population of the island of Manhattan in the

heart of New York City increased less than 16 percent, whereas the

population of the borough of Queens soared 160 percent. From 1900 to

1910 the population of the core area of Boston known as Boston Proper

rose only 9 percent, whereas the number of persons living in the outlying

neighborhood of Dorchester soared 52 percent, and the populace of the

independent suburban municipality of Brookline increased by almost 40

percent. (Teaford, 1993, 21)

Landscaping and architecture are only surface improvements that do not help the social environment of a deteriorating city. As city officials improved cities they invariably increased property values. The populations of areas immediately surrounding central cities increased due to their proximity to places of employment and services and the substantially lower cost of living compared to downtown. Cities were beautified, but less residents could afford to live in them. Commutes to work became longer and traveling from home to retail stores took much longer. Ironically, the beautifying of cities started the unrest of the middle- and lower-class towards city life.

The Rise of the Automobile

The automobile promised a more open city with greater mobility and individual autonomy. City dwellers could be freed from the streetcar lines and allowed to travel from the urban core to the suburbs or even to escape to the beach or the mountains (Teaford, 1993). American society had not created a way to control its rapidly growing technology and, by 1915, there were 2,332,426 automobiles in the United States (Wilson, 1974). There were no questions about the right to produce cars, the right to purchase a car, or the right to drive a car. Regulations did not exist about the number of cars made, the size of the cars, or how many people could purchase a car. Anyone who could afford a car could purchase one. Car manufacturing was streamlined, resulting in the faster production of cars at a more affordable price for the consumer. "In 1915 there was one automobile in Chicago for every sixty-one residents; by 1920 the number had risen to one for every thirty; five years later it was one for every eleven Chicagoans." (Teaford, 1993, 62) Most of the commuters and shoppers residing in the city still relied on public transportation, but the number of people entering and exiting the urban core by automobile was quickly rising.

The spread of the automobile was seen in nearly every city in the United States. "In 1931, for example, 435,000 persons entered downtown Los Angeles each day by automobile whereas only 262,000 entered by public transportation." (Teaford, 1993, 63)

While many were grateful for the automobile and praised its innovation, it was clear that cities had not been designed to accommodate them. City planning became focused on adjusting to the new, rapidly-increasing mode of travel. Planning efforts were diverted away from traditional city issues to compensate for the quickly multiplying automobile. Traffic engineers worked on timing traffic lights to even the flow of traffic while public works departments raced to widen and repave streets. However, these city improvements did not solve traffic problems. "The smoother pavements, the wider streets, and the efficient flow of traffic simply encouraged more urban residents to invest in an automobile and forsake public transportation." (Teaford, 1993, 64) More streets merely led to more automobiles and reduced use of public transportation. Adjusting the city in favor of the automobile acted as an incentive for commuters to purchase a car. The automobile became a required tool in achieving the "American Dream". Commuting to work in a car was a sign of class and status while riding public transportation was for the lower-classes unable to afford one.

The rise in the number of people driving to and from downtown can also be blamed on Americans' dissatisfaction with mass transit. As more Americans abandoned the city's streetcars, the revenues used to operate and maintain public transportation plummeted. A smaller operating budget resulted in fewer streetcars running less often between stops. The streetcars became crowded, uncomfortable, and unreliable (Fogelson, 2001). Commuting to and from work became an ordeal of frustration, and people searched for better options. Construction of houses away from existing transit lines resulted in 13 million people living in communities beyond the reach of the existing rail lines, and by 1940 and the car had become a necessity (Wilson, 1974). Inflation during

and after World War I resulted in further deterioration of the service. Throughout this period the railway companies were forced to raise fares and to abandon miles of lesser-used lines while simultaneously postponing much-needed repairs (Fogelson, 2001). Daily traffic jams and a lack of parking plagued the commuter, but the automobile was still seen as preferable to the streetcar and other forms of public transportation. While some city officials suggested a ban on automobiles in the downtown, most Americans agreed that the private automobile was a business necessity and made the downtown more accessible (Fogelson, 2001). Production and ownership rates of automobiles were growing. Downtown business owners recognized that a majority of their customers arrived at their store by automobile and they would inevitably lose customers and money if cars were banned from downtown.

Driving downtown had become too time-consuming and costly for most Americans, and rather than stop driving and use public transportation, people stopped going downtown (Fogelson, 2001). "Although the automobile may have bred traffic jams, created parking woes, and deprived transit companies of needed revenues, it represented the hope of the future for many urban Americans." (Teaford, 1993, 67) The availability of the automobile relieved Americans of being forced to live along the fixed rail lines. The population in and around the city would no longer be forced to cluster around transit stops and thus people saw automobiles as relief from congested living. Living in the suburbs, while still being able to work and shop in the city, became a possibility for any household with an automobile. For many Americans, the suburbs became a land of promise (Teaford, 1993). Living without access to public transportation had formerly been only a luxury held by the very wealthy. The availability of jobs,

affordable homes, and personal transportation options made living in the city no longer a necessity. Downtown was no longer the epicenter of activity and became a less prestigious and desirable location to have an address.

The compressed business district was highly efficient when commuters used the public transportation system to arrive and leave work, but, with the rise of the automobile, many Americans saw the traffic problem as a function of the centralization of business in a highly compact central business district. For decades all construction and planning efforts has been focused on the central city. The introduction of the automobile as a means of commuting made it apparent that the lack of available space to expand streets and build parking garages was a problem. Crowded conditions arose as the population increased and more people went downtown. Similar daily work schedules led to too many people pouring in and out of a small space at the same time. To solve the problem it was often suggested that cities should enlarge their central business districts and encourage the decentralization of industry and the growth of business districts in outlying areas (Fogelson, 2001). The assumption was that if employees and consumers began traveling in varying routes, the congestion would diminish. The business district began to spread out and set in the motion the loss of the word "central" from "central business district".

The loss of residents—and ultimately retail customers—was not the only effect suburbanization had on the central city. While construction of new houses in the suburbs created new opportunities for fortunate citizens, a housing gap was left behind in the city. The problem of suburban growth was not what it did to the residents of the new communities, but what it did to the people and neighborhoods that were left behind

(Abbott, 1987). The rationale for expanding the suburbs is that housing was seen as a "hand-me-down commodity"—new housing in the suburbs was intended for the city's wealthiest residents and when the rich moved out, their former homes would be available for the group a step below them on the economic ladder (Abbott, 1987). Even the city's poorest citizens were able to move-up from the worst of housing conditions. This system of "filtering" in the housing market was positive for residents, but the worst housing was left abandoned and ultimately razed by cities. This resulted in a decline of property taxes for the city and a lack of housing available to immigrants and other new residents.

The Depression and World War II

Stock market prices plummeted in October 1929 and set in motion a decade of economic despair. While the event is an important historical moment, it was the inevitable result of a long and steady economic decline across many industries. "The nation [had] suffered from chronic unemployment in coal mining and textile manufacturing through the 1920s. Farm income [had] also showed a steady decline." (Abbott, 1987, 46) The crash of the stock market was proof that many industries in the United States had been weakening for years. "Construction came to a virtual standstill, unemployment soared, local relief payments mounted, tax delinquencies rose, and discontent among the working class seemed to threaten the capitalist system." (Teaford, 1993, 75) Construction was one of the industries hit the hardest during this period. In earlier decades cities had witnessed rapid growth and developers had invested to build homes in large suburban tracts of land. The depression did not discriminate and brought a housing crisis to the poor and the middle-class alike. Home mortgages could not be refinanced, and unemployed homeowners could not afford to make payments (Abbott, 1987). Many people had no homes at all.

Construction of new housing fell by 95 percent between 1929 and 1933 and industrialists were not replacing old machinery that was not being used. There was nothing new being built and owners could not afford to repair what already existed. "Urban America was cannibalizing itself, consuming its physical facilities without the

ability to rebuild for the future." (Abbott, 1987, 48) Cities were letting their roads, schools, and fire engines run down because they could not afford for repairs or replacement. During the prosperous 1920s, many cities had accumulated debt to pay for new city sewers, schools, roads, and bridges. As revenues fell in the 1930s, much of public spending was for debt payments. At the same time, more and more property owners were unable to pay their taxes, leaving the city with few options (Abbott, 1987).

From 1941 to 1945, during World War II, the United States government mobilized the country for defense. Billions of dollars were spent for the production of tanks, airplanes, uniforms, rifles, and warships. The government sought to ensure that every city and town was working to defeat Germany and Japan. Americans were expected to support the government and accept whatever sacrifices were deemed necessary (Teaford, 1993). Cities especially felt the economic effects of the war. Public transportation saw an increase in ridership as gasoline and tire rationing kept automobiles off of the streets. Urban factories roared back to life as the government ordered billions of dollars in war material made. Cities with historically small populations and little industry became centers of manufacturing as industrial facilities were dispersed throughout the nation to decrease the nation's vulnerability (Teaford, 1993). As several cities raced to produce housing for the influx of new manufacturing workers, older cities were boarding-up abandoned homes as residents left to pursue employment elsewhere. World War II came to an end on August 14, 1945 with the surrendering of the Japanese. The government announced that rationing of gasoline would end and automobile production would resume (Teaford, 1993). The next two decades produced major transformation in America's cities.

In the post-war era, America's birth rate rose dramatically and young families abandoned the crowded central cities and invested in suburban homes. Due to New Deal efforts to revive the construction industry, defense workers and returning veterans could get home loans on very good terms (Frieden, 1989). Veterans could buy a new house without a downpayment. "A new industry of merchant builders organized to meet the demand, and housing starts jumped from a level of 300,000 a year in the 1930s to one million in 1946 and two million by 1950." (Frieden, 1989, 11) Land surrounding the major cities budded new housing, shopping centers, and motels while simultaneously drawing millions of dollars away from the cities (Teaford, 1993). By the early 1960s, new factories that provided thousands of jobs lined suburban highways. Manufacturing, warehouse, and wholesale companies were attracted to the large, undeveloped tracts of land for their new plants. Industrialists ready to invest in new plants wanted sites with highway connections, large land parcels, and industrial zoning (Frieden, 1989). The modern assembly-line system was much better suited for long, sprawling, one-story plants than the multistory buildings historically used in city downtowns (Teaford, 1993). Industry was changing, and the densely-developed cities did not have enough space for the new manufacturing methods. "In the top forty metropolitan areas central cities lost an average of 26,000 manufacturing jobs between 1954 and 1963, and the central city share of manufacturing work slipped from two-thirds in the early 1950s to less than half by 1963." (Frieden, 1989, 12) The suburbs' gain was truly the cities' loss.

The Depression and World War II had destroyed the construction industry, but the end of the War left a hunger for new homes. The suburbs had land that was open, cheap, and free from complicated building regulations that had hindered building in the central

city. The public wanted single-family homes in uncrowded neighborhoods where their

children had yards to play in.   The suburban population in the United States more than

doubled between 1940 and 1960 (s*ee chart: Suburban Population 1920—1980).* The

combination of a lack of new housing built during the Depression and the sudden

opportunities available for purchasing a home resulted in a quick surge in population in

the suburbs. A single-family home with a yard could be purchased for a comparable

price as an apartment in a crowded city neighborhood. Motivated by new possibilities

and developers' advertising, consumers chose the suburbs.

Suburban Population 1920--1980			
Year	Suburban Population (millions)	Suburbs as Percentage of U.S.	Suburban Proportion of All Metropolitan Population
1920	9.7	9.1	26.9
1930	16.9	13.7	30.9
1940	20.2	15.2	32.0
1950	35.1	23.2	41.5
1960	54.9	30.5	45.9
1970	75.6	37.2	54.2
1980	101.5	44.8	59.9

Abbott, 1987, pg. 7

The suburbs were removed from the public transportation lines, but Detroit was

quickly producing inexpensive cars. The availability and low cost of fuel made it easy

enough to live without using public transportation (Frieden, 1989). What resulted was

the creation of consumer choice. Homebuilders chose the suburbs for the cheap land and

quickly perfected tract housing production. The homebuyers followed, choosing more

land at a lower cost, safe neighborhoods, and a better return on investment than housing

options offered in the city (Moulton, 1999). The pressures for suburban growth were

overpowering as the postwar boom got under way. The combined effects of economic

recovery, life-style choices, new mortgage finance opportunities, and advances in

industrial technology left city officials with little to do in terms of resistance (Frieden,

1989). Multiple powerful forces were at work shaping the land, the people, the economy,

and transportation.

The Suburban Boom and Downtown Revival Efforts

The flight of Americans to the suburbs created population loss in central cities. Of the twelve cities that ranked as most populous in 1950, eleven lost population during the following decade (s*ee chart: Population of Central Cities 1950—1970*). Los Angeles was one of the few cities to gain population due to the large, undeveloped tracts still existing within its city limits. By 1970 much of the existing infrastructure in the nation's largest cities was aging and in need of repair or replacement. The decline in population resulted in the loss of valuable tax money generated from residents. Without the funds available to address these problems, cities with declining infrastructure became even less appealing places to live compared with the pristine look of the newer suburbs. The relatively quick shift in population from the city to the suburbs also changed transportation patterns and greatly affected downtown businesses.

Population of Central Cities 1950--1970			
City	1950 Population	1960 Population	1970 Population
New York City	7,891,957	7,781,984	7,894,862
Chicago	3,620,962	3,550,404	3,366,957
Philadelphia	2,071,605	2,002,512	1,948,609
Los Angeles	1,970,358	2,479,015	2,816,061
Detroit	1,849,568	1,670,144	1,511,482
Baltimore	949,708	939,024	905,759
Cleveland	914,808	876,050	750,903
St. Louis	856,796	750,026	622,236
Washington	802,178	763,956	756,510
Boston	801,444	697,197	641,071
San Francisco	775,357	740,316	715,674
Pittsburgh	676,806	604,332	520,117

Teaford, 1993, pg. 110

As automobiles became more affordable and accessible, ample parking space was more important to retailers than their location near a transit stop. Unfortunately for downtown businesses, cities lacked the available space to include parking areas in shopping districts. The parking facilities that existed in many cities either charged too much money or were not as conveniently located as the parking available at suburban shopping centers (Teaford, 1993). The downtown shopping district was becoming a relic of the past. For a consumer living in the suburbs, a trip downtown was an unnecessary inconvenience.

> Before World War II, when few families had more than one car and the
> husband was usually behind the steering wheel, middle-class housewives
> still rode the streetcar to downtown department stores. By the 1950s,
> however, a second car in the family freed the wife from this journey and
> enabled her to frequent the newest suburban shopping centers. (Teaford,
> 1993, 111)

The first sign of change was the sharp decrease in the number of people using cities' public transportation due to the increase in automobile ownership and movement of households out of the center city. The loss of riders on the transit lines meant that the retailers lost their main source of customers: the middle-class households (Frieden, 1989). The loss of employment in the city as manufacturing and industrial plants relocated to the suburbs meant that retailers also lost the working-class customers as well. "Between 1963 and 1972 retail sales figures dropped 30 percent in Newark, 20 percent in Cleveland, [and] 19 percent in St. Louis…In 1967 New York City was the corporate headquarters for 139 of the Fortune 500 firms; by 1974 the number had plummeted to

98." (Teaford, 1993, 142) As businesses abandoned the center city, the tax base fell dramatically. This became a problem especially for older cities when they could no longer make payments for bonds previously taken out to finance construction projects such as road-widening and the erecting parking garages for the increase in automobile usage. The parking lots built to accommodate cars did not generate new jobs, and the new and widened roads meant that more and more land downtown was devoted to traffic and parking (Greenblatt, 2006). As prime real estate in the center of downtowns was converted automobile-centered activities, there was less room—and less incentive—for new development to occur in cities.

The suburbs in the 1950s were not a uniform mass of white, middle-class bedroom communities and were not particularly different from the central cities. Many of the suburbs at this time were accumulations of residents from varying neighborhoods in nearby cities. Some suburbs were primarily residential, but many were commercial centers that accommodated office buildings and factories for the large number of companies relocating from city centers (Bruegmann, 2005). The needs of growing businesses could not be met by the limited space in the city. Downtowns had become ill-suited to be major retail centers. Thus, the role of downtown had narrowed. The city had once been the center of transportation, business, industry, amusement, and government (Teaford, 1993). By the 1960s these important civic features were dispersed in areas surrounding the once vital center city. As more businesses and more households moved to the suburbs, the number of people commuting to and from the city dropped. "In 1980, 27 million people commuted from suburb to suburb, versus 14 million from suburb to central city. By 1990, more than 35 million were commuting from suburb to suburb,

while just over 15 million were traveling from suburb to central city" (Hudnut, 1998, 86). The workforce in the city was a major source of steady income for downtown businesses, and the lack of automobile traffic in and through cities resulted in a lack of consumer traffic to downtown stores and businesses.

The first obstacle city officials had to overcome was that most people who had a choice were opting to live in the suburbs (Frieden, 1989). Traffic congestion and the decline of available employment and shopping opportunities had driven people to the suburbs and were keeping them there. The lack of and the inability to change was making cities obsolete. "By 1970, downtown housing had largely disappeared. The exodus of the population to the suburbs had an inexorable ripple effect: department stores followed the people, taking smaller specialty shops with them to the new suburban shopping malls." (Moulton, 1999, 6) Cities had once dominated the housing, commercial, and job markets, but the development of the suburbs into more than just residential districts generated competition for downtowns.

Today's Downtown

   The movement of businesses out of America's downtowns accelerated the "flight

to the suburbs" caused by favorable tax and mortgage practices teamed with enormous

federal investment in the nation's interstate highway system (Birch, 2005). In the

decades since the flight began, public officials have created and employed a variety of

tactics to save declining downtowns. "In the late 1950s and early '60s, several cities

consciously deployed urban renewal funds to foster middle-income residential

development as an alternative to the suburbs." (Birch, 2005, 2) The presence of these

new residential developments often planted the seeds for continued housing development,

but the suburbanization of people and jobs remains the dominant trend (Birch, 2005).

While many downtowns still contained large amounts of office space and promoted other

assets such as sports stadiums, convention centers, and hotels, they still lacked large,

steady, residential populations. The continued suburbanization of housing and businesses

caused a surplus of empty buildings and vacant lots in cities across the country.

Vacancies tend to result in a "domino-effect" of abandonment because an empty building

is not an appealing neighbor. Strategic plans need to be in place including immediate

plans for empty, unused buildings.

    Downtown is one of the largest mixed-use developments in a

    metropolitan area. However, there is almost never a strategic plan for

    downtown, nor any formal management of it. By contrast, the typical

regional mall, a much smaller and far simpler development, has a comprehensive strategy for the positioning of the mall and 24/7 oversight. (Leinberger, 2005, 6)

A problem facing many would-be downtown developers is that revitalization can be nearly impossible from a legal perspective because of modern-day zoning and building codes including parking requirements, separation of land uses, and limits on density (Leinberger, 2005). The price of real estate is considerably higher in cities compared to the suburbs, regardless of how competitive their markets are. Developers are often discouraged in their efforts to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned buildings in the city due to strict regulations and the cost of construction close downtown.

A survey conducted by The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Police and the Fannie Mae Foundation looked at cities around the nation and found that all of them are projecting growth to quadruple in their downtowns by 2010 (*see chart: 2010 Projected Downtown Population)*. "Anecdotal evidence suggests that people are living downtown because they want to be near their work places and cultural amenities, and because they enjoy a bustling urban environment." ("A Rise in Downtown Living", 1998) Downtowns across America have observed an amazing resurrection in growth and development spurred by a surge in the consumers need for a walkable, vibrant place in which to live and work (Leinberger, 2005). A "critical mass" of urban amenities must be created and established for a sense of walkable urbanism to exist. Development in the suburbs may follow the design decree "less in more", but in a walkable urban community "more is more" in terms of services, housing options, transportation, and entertainment.

2010 Projected Downtown Population

CITY	CURRENT DOWNTOWN POPULATION*	2010 PROJECTED DOWNTOWN POPULATION**	CHANGE (PERCENT)
Austin	9,555	14,805	54.9
Baltimore	13,800	14,600	5.8
Boston	21,625	23,580	9.0
Chicago	115,341	152,295	32.0
Cleveland	6,400	21,000	228.1
Denver	3,480	9,250	165.8
Detroit	32,920	34,753	5.6
Houston	2,374	9,574	303.3
Los Angeles	26,600	27,000	1.5
Memphis	6,210	14,000	125.4
Pittsburgh	4,500	8,000	77.8
Seattle	15,236	33,600	120.5

*Source: Cities reported population based on census figures and household units.
**Source: Cities determined projection based on developments underway, building permits, and anticipated real estate projects.

"A Rise in Downtown Living", 1998

A flourishing suburb boasts open space, car-friendly developments, and a "less is more" style, but in a viable downtown more activity attracts more people (Leinberger, 2005). More people living in the downtown leads to an influx of business to fulfill the everyday needs of residents and support daily visitors. While many people are attracted to suburbs because of the lack of congestion and noise, downtowns attract crowds looking for a mix of retail stores, office space, restaurants, nightlife, and a variety of unique housing options. "With increasing demand for walkable urbanism…cities with vibrant downtowns have a better shot of recruiting or retaining the 'creative class' of workers [that] economists, like Richard Florida, have shown is key to future growth." (Leinberger, 2005, 5) Many downtowns have sought-after features such as waterfront

property, architecturally interesting buildings, efficient public transportation, professional sports teams, higher education, and proximity to jobs.

A downtown urban environment is appealing to certain demographics because of its proximity to work and business centers along with a multitude of entertainment options. Young adults and couples without children are often attracted to city living because of these features. Couples with children are still convinced that they need a single-family home with a yard to raise a family. Young adults are typically not homeowners and therefore are looking for housing with the flexibility of renting and without the need to maintain. The first waves of new residents in a revitalized city are often referred to as "urban pioneers" in reference to the earliest settlers of the American frontier.

> The initial urban pioneers looking to live within walking distance of the urban entertainment growing in downtown will tend to be young, often students and those in their 20s. This age group was probably raised in the suburbs, and probably doesn't have as negative an impression of downtown as their elders. They also look upon it as exciting and interesting, especially compared to where they were raised. (Leinberger, 2005, 14)

Examining where and why young adults settle is important in analyzing a city's economic health and predicting the housing market. Cities that attract young adults have job opportunities, economic stability, recreation and leisure activities, and a diversity of lifestyles.

People 18 to 29 are the most mobile age group, and their past migration

patterns have defined the future of regions, from the long rural exodus of

the 1900s to the Silicon Valley boom of the 1990s. Youth-magnet cities

gain an enviable cultural allure and a labor-market edge. (Shellenbarger,

2009)

Cities must also have housing available that is affordable to young adults. While many

potential residents in this age group are renters, in order for a city to retain people it must

also be able to offer housing options for first-time homebuyers. Once a residential

downtown is created by the "urban pioneers", opportunities for a for-sale housing market

are created. The market makeup of buyers interested in for-sale homes in a downtown is

different because they typical buyer has significant assets and is looking for a more

permanent location. Ideally the homebuyer will remain in the downtown as he/she ages

and the city can accommodate his/her evolving needs.

While this chapter has focused on trends on young adults living in cities, it is also

important to indicate that cities are ideal for the lifestyles of retirees and senior citizens.

"The ability to access goods and services without the need for a car, coupled with close

proximity to medical care…make downtown an ideal location for [retirees]." (Leinberger,

2005, 18) America's cities are home to the nation's best hospitals, hotels, museums,

theatres, libraries and restaurants. Senior citizens may lose the ability to safely operate

cars and become isolated in their homes. Cities' public transportation systems,

availability of taxis, and the general close proximity of ameneties may remedy senior

citizens' feeling of confinement and loss of freedom.

The total number of "urban places" in the United States has grown steadily over the years and the percentage of the U.S. population living in "urban locations" was over seventy percent by 1980 (see chart: *Urbanization in the United States in the 20th Century").* Cities should dedicate themselves to cultivating a unique and marketable urbanism by identifying those who love cities and catering to their often nonmainstream needs. Now, perhaps more than ever, cities need to know which Americans want to live in them and how their vision of urban life may be accommodated by public policy. Cities must fully understand the suburbanites they target. Typical suburban urbanites willing to consider urban living nonetheless remain distinct from many city dwellers—that is why they live in the suburbs. Targeting suburban urbanites, as with most urban revitalization strategies, is likely to be only marginally effective. Most suburban urbanites will stay put regardless of how well cities market themselves (Danielsen, 1997).

Urbanization in the United States in the 20th Century			
Year	Number of Urban Places	Total Urban Populations (millions)	Percentage of U.S. Population in Urban Locations
1900	1,737	30.2	39.7
1910	2,262	42.0	45.7
1920	2,722	54.2	51.2
1930	3,165	69.0	56.2
1940	3,464	74.4	56.5
1950	4,764	96.5	64.0
1960	6,041	125.3	69.9
1970	7,129	149.3	73.6
1980	8,765	167.1	73.7

Abbott, 1987, pg. 2

In the article "Who Lives Downtown", Eugenie L. Birch states that all downtowns generally fall into one of five major categories defined by growth rates and number of households: Fully-Developed Downtowns, Emerging Downtowns; Downtowns on the Edge of Take-off; Slow-Growing Downtowns; and Declining Downtowns (*see chart: Downtown Typologies).*   There are only five "Fully Developed Downtowns", but they are home to almost half of the nation's downtown households. These cities have

Downtown Typologies				
Fully-Developed Downtowns	**Emerging Downtowns**	**Downtowns of the Edge of Takeoff**	**Slow-Growing Downtowns**	**Declining Downtowns**
Boston	Atlanta	Chattanooga	Albuquerque	Cincinnati
Chicago	Baltimore	Dallas	Austin	Columbus, GA
Lower Manhattan	Charlotte	Miami	Boise	Des Moines
Midtown Manhattan	Cleveland	Milwaukee	Colorado Springs	Detroit
Philadelphia	Denver	Washington, D.C.	Columbus, OH	Jackson
	Los Angeles		Indianapolis	Lexington
	Memphis		Lafayette	Mesa
	Norfolk		Phoenix	Minneapolis
	Portland		Pittsburgh	Orlando
	San Diego		Salt Lake City	San Antonio
	San Francisco			St. Louis
	Seattle			

Birch, 2005, pg. 15

sustained growth while other cities lost population because of their concentration in major job centers and they are able to attract an educated population (Birch, 2005). The cities constituting the "Emerging Downtowns" group all experienced rapid population increases in the 1990s, when their growth actually outpaced the growth of their suburbs. These cities show promise of becoming "Fully Developed Downtowns" if their populations continue to increase, although their rates of homeownership and educational attainment are much lower and the cities are much less affluent (Birch, 2005). The cities

in this category on average experienced a five percent decline in their number of households in the 1970s and almost no growth in the 1980s (Birch, 2005). These downtowns are much smaller and less dense than the "Fully-Developed Downtowns" and therefore their population counts can be much more volatile and unpredictable. The sustainability of reliable increases in the number of total housing units is the common feature of the "Fully-Developed Downtowns" and is what hinders the "Emerging Downtowns" from being fully-developed.

Conclusions

Many cities rely on a mixture of attractions and leisurely spending to generate revenue and maintain interest in their downtowns. Some skeptics of downtown revitalization worry that the success has been built on relatively new trends that could easily change (Greenblatt, 2006). Profiting from a popular trend may not be a sustainable revenue source if the trend is fleeting or hinges on a particular demographic. Cultural changes and demographic changes reinforce each other. Movies and television shows like "Sex and the City", "Friends," and "Gossip Girl" depict urban living as the lifestyle choice of hip, single, young adults (Greenblatt, 2006). The majority of today's young people grew up in suburbs and aspire to live in cities because they provide a richer sense of place and offer the action and commotion the suburbs do not. However, cities that promote their downtowns as "urban theme parks" may not be built on a strong foundation and their success may only last as long as the public is entertained. Cities that seek a "magic bullet"—such as building a sports arena or offering free parking—will not solve a downtown's problems (Greenblatt, 2006). A successful city must have a stable mixture of entertainment, retail, and business, as well as a critical mass of residents.

An essential step in the resurgence of activity in America's downtowns is allowing people to rediscover the joys of living downtown—"considered by activists to represent the highest expression of civilization and culture, the most efficient use of land,

the places most likely to promote community, and the most environmentally friendly organization of human habitation." (Flint, 2006, 85) Life cycle, household composition, and education are demographic variables that determine preferences for urban living. For instance, younger, educated singles and childless couples often prefer cities and higher-density shelter (Danielsen, 1997). Improving public education is often cited as the key to attracting suburbanites to cities, but households made up of married couples with children accounted for only a quarter of the nation's total in 1995, down from four in ten households in 1970. So-called nontraditional childless households are now the norm. Taxes generated by attracting childless households to the city can be used to improve school quality for families with children without adding any additional burden on school systems (Danielsen, 1997).

Regardless of the benefits of urban life over suburban life, living in the city is not for everyone. For instance, families with young children are often significantly more likely to prefer spacious, low-density residential neighborhoods (Lewis, 2010). The suburbs are generally perceived to have great schools, lower crime rates, and an overall better quality of life than cities. Regardless of whether this is true or not, the typical American family chooses to live in the suburbs to raise their children. By contrast, childless young adults and older empty-nesters have lifestyles that are more agreeable to the city lifestyle (Lewis, 2010). The future of residential development in America's cities depends on the public's attitude towards it. Compact living environments are not appealing to everyone. However, even if living in the city only appeals to a limited subset of people—young adults and empty-nesters—those are still sizeable, growing markets (Greenblatt, 2006).

To determine what kind of development will result in an increase of population downtown, many cities use target marketing as a means to identify which middle-income suburbanites may relocate to central cities. The most targetable populations—"suburban urbanites"—reside near central cities and lead urban lifestyles (Danielsen, 1997). The people who choose the city are of many different kinds, but they have one thing in common: they like the city. Although many, if not most, suburbanites view the city with caution, a sizeable minority of suburbanites show an affinity for cities. America's cities are able to maintain a high population because of the availability of a variety of housing and the amenities, services, and entertainment options they offer.

Two large-scale randomized telephone surveys were conducted in California and four southwestern states in 2007 in an attempt to assess the public's understanding of and preferences for compact development (Lewis, 2010). Both surveys asked questions to elicit attitude towards living in neighborhoods with various characteristics including: 1) A small home with a small backyard and a short commute to work; 2) A mixed-use neighborhood where one could walk to stores, school, and services; and 3) A high-density neighborhood with convenient public transit (Lewis, 2010). "In both surveys, more respondents said they preferred a small home with a small backyard and a short commute over a large home and backyard with a long commute." (Lewis, 2010, 223) Though most respondents were not ready to embrace high-density living, at least half are willing to accept smaller lot sizes to achieve shorter commutes and more walkable settings (Lewis, 2010). Overall, the surveys found that a significant share of the public supports compact development, but there is still evidence that many Americans are not comfortable with the thought of living in an urban environment.

If you ask a roomful of people about the state of urban America, chances are you'll get two responses: first, they will express concern over crime, education, and quality of life issues; second, they will deplore urban sprawl and say they don't want any more development where they live. (Hudnut, 1998, 1)

It may be the case that negative stereotypes and old impressions of city life have carried on into the twenty-first century. The environment in which an individual is raised can shape one's opinions about the ideal residential living environment.

Basic sociodemographic characteristics also showed significant relationships to individuals' attitudes towards neighborhood patterns. In addition to gender and race, the respondent's nativity—immigrant or native-born—showed to be an important relationship. This is perhaps due to a foreign-born individual's attitude toward neighborhoods and compact development in his/her native country.

Broadly speaking, members of historically disadvantaged groups tend to favor compact development for living environments…Hispanic ethnicity, foreign-born status, or both, also positively predispose respondents toward…compact development. (Lewis, 2010, 231)

The surveys also presented evidence that while most people support compact development, they are attached to their single-family home and large lot and would not like their own neighborhood to be used for infill development (Lewis, 2010). Proponents of compact development face an obstacle in convincing Americans that their own decisions about housing affect the overall living conditions and environmental policies in the United States.

While the surveys suggest that all Americans may not be interested in urban life, many urban neighborhoods across the country are currently experiencing transformations. Parking lots, former industrial sites, and unoccupied commercial spaces are being converted to condos, apartments, and townhouses (EPA, 2010). The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") undertook research using permit data supplied by the U.S. Census that shows a dramatic increase in the share of new construction built in central cities (EPA, 2010). For instance, many cities that had not experienced a large amount of downtown construction in the 1990s are seeing resurgence in interest in the area (*see chart: Central City Share of Metropolitan Residential Building Permits*). Baltimore, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Atlanta are four cities with downtowns that shared less than 10% of the total metropolitan residential building permits between 1990 and 1995.

Central City Share of Metropolitan Residential Building Permits			
	Average Share		
City	1990-1995	2003-2008	2008
New York City	15%	49%	63%
San Diego	42%	37%	47%
Chicago	7%	27%	45%
Portland	9%	26%	38%
Sacramento	9%	23%	27%
Denver	5%	21%	32%
Kansas City, MO	12%	21%	27%
Seattle	11%	21%	31%
Milwaukee	6%	18%	25%
Miami	2%	17%	16%
Los Angeles	11%	17%	25%
Dallas	13%	12%	22%
Ft. Worth	5%	16%	16%
Atlanta	4%	14%	12%
Philadelphia	3%	13%	16%
San Francisco	5%	11%	18%
Baltimore	2%	9%	19%

Source: EPA's Residential Construction Trends in America's Metropolitan Regions--2010 Edition

The same data was compiled for the core suburbs immediately surrounding central cities. Many of these older suburbs have been built-out for years and new residential development is almost always built upon previously developed sites (EPA, 2010). Construction in suburban communities surrounding cities like Washington, D.C. and Minneapolis accounted for only one to two percent of residential building permits in the early 1990s, but by 2008 their share had more than doubled (*see chart: Core Suburban Communities' Share of Residential Building Permits*). These findings are consistent with the surveys' conclusion that more Americans are willing to sacrifice large lots and new homes in order to live closer to the city.

Core Suburban Communties' Share of Residenital Building Permits

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Average Share		
	1990-1995	2003-2008	2008
New York MSA			
Bergen County, NJ	4%	6%	3%
Washington, D.C. MSA			
Arlington County, VA	2%	6%	9%
Alexandria, VA	1%	2%	3%
Boston MSA			
Middlesex County, MA	6%	10%	8%
Miami MSA			
Broward County, FL	5%	11%	11%
San Diego MSA			
San Diego County, CA	2%	5%	10%
Minneapolis MSA			
Hennepin County, MN	1%	3%	5%

Source: EPA's Residential Construction Trends in America's Metropolitan Regions--2010 Edition

National trends in building permits show that permits for single-family detached homes has fallen the most dramatically, while permits for rental apartments and multifamily buildings has increased (*see chart: Housing Starts Share by Unit Type 2001—2008*). The market for townhouses and condos stayed fairly consistent between

Housing Starts Share by Unit Type 2001-2008					
Year	Detached Single Family	Townhouses	Condos	Rental Apartments	Large Multifamily Buildings
2001	71%	9%	4%	16%	11%
2002	70%	9%	4%	16%	11%
2003	71%	10%	5%	14%	11%
2004	71%	11%	6%	12%	10%
2005	72%	11%	7%	10%	10%
2006	70%	11%	8%	10%	11%
2007	66%	11%	8%	14%	15%
2008	59%	10%	7%	24%	23%

Source: EPA's Residential Construction Trends in America's Metropolitan Regions--2010 Edition

2001 and 2008. The shift in percentage share from single-family homes to rental and multi-family buildings can suggest a decline in the amount of money Americans are spending on their places of residence. It may also suggest that—as the two large-scale surveys showed—Americans are willing to sacrifice home and lot size for a shorter commute and/or proximity to services. The motivation behind the change matters less than the fact that the change is happening.

Lessons Learned

The campaign to rebuild downtown has been one of the longest for local

governments. Beginning in the early 1950s and for over fifty years since, big-city

mayors struggled to rescue dying city centers. By the 1970s they were working to repair

the damage left by the "bulldozer" days of urban renewal and were producing useful,

attractive, and popular project (Frieden, 1989). The cities classified as "Fully-Developed

Downtowns" (*see chart: Downtown Typologies*), have been able to maintain consistent

increases in the number of available housing units while also sustaining the elements that

are required to make their downtowns attractive, such as jobs, services, amenities, and

entertainment options.

The Cost of Living Index is useful in analyzing the health of a city. There are

obvious trends among cities grouped into the same "downtown typology" (*see chart:*

Cost of Living Index 2008). The Fully-Developed Downtowns have a much higher cost

of living than the Slow-Growing and Declining Downtowns. As cities improve their

appearance and increase access to employment and amenities, they also increase property

taxes and the cost of living. It follows the adage "You get what you pay for": the cities

that are the most expensive to live in are also some of the most desirable places to live.

The high cost of living in many American cities does not mean that only the wealthy can

afford to live there. The many building restrictions and zoning ordinances prevalent

throughout the city suburbs created social and economic divisions through class and

ethnic discrimination. Today, downtowns are more racially and ethnically diverse than

they were twenty years ago and are home to some of the most and least affluent

households in their region (Birch, 2005). Many suburbs tend to be consortiums of

socioeconomic groups to the point that one can guess which income bracket a household

belongs to based solely on what town their home is in.

Cost of Living Index 2008

The nationwide average equals 100 and each index is read as a percent of the national average

Fully-Developed Downtowns		Emerging Downtowns		Downtowns on the Edge of Takeoff		Slow-Growing Downtowns		Decling Downtowns	
Boston	134.7	Atlanta	96.1	Dallas	91.2	Albuquerque	98.3	Cincinnati	90.4
Chicago	110.3	Baltimore	118.0	Miami	115.4	Austin	94.5	Des Moines	90.3
Manhattan	212.8	Charlotte	89.7	Wash., D.C.	136.4	Colorado Springs	93.8	Jackson	93.5
Philadelphia	123.5	Cleveland	98.9			Columbus, OH	97.4	Orlando	103.4
		Denver	103.4			Indianapolis	94.7	San Antonio	94.1
		Los Angeles	144.6			Lafayette	97.7	St. Louis	91.5
		Memphis	89.3			Phoenix	100.6		
		Portland	120.8			Pittsburgh	98.9		
		San Diego	139.5			Salt Lake City	100.7		
		San Francisco	168.5						

Source: U.S. Census (www.census.gov)

Before the proliferation of the automobile into the lives of American citizens,

cities did not have to attract citizens because there were few options regarding residency

if one wanted to be employed or have access to necessities. The rise of the automobile

changed the stakes in the housing market game and cities were not ready to compete with

the suburbs as a place for people to call home. The availability of appealing housing

options is critical for sustaining the life of a downtown. There must be a variety of

housing size, style, and cost for a healthy housing market to exist. The market depends

on the ability of residents to "trade-up" to more expensive homes and sell their smaller, less expensive homes to first-time homebuyers. This is a system called "filtering" that describes what happened to city housing as the middle class moved out of the cities. The type of housing the middle class was looking for could not be found in the city and thus millions of people moved to the suburbs to find what they were looking for.

Instead of resisting the car and building-up their public transportation systems, cities attempted to alter themselves to welcome the car onto their streets.

> No truly conservative society would have permitted [cars] to run rampant if they uprooted and flung out populations into low-density suburbs, caused taxing and bonding into the billions of dollars for new boulevards, harder street surfaces, and traffic control, spewed foul-smelling fumes into the air, and altered social behavior. (Wilson, 1974, 46)

In the end, public policy is shaped by the public. Citizens wanted to drive cars and they wanted to live in the suburbs. Cities did not properly maintain their existing rail systems, and public indifference combined with the poor reputation of many transit companies caused attempts to revitalize the rails to fail. Cities could have maintained their pre-automobile policies and protected themselves from the barrage of cars putting pressure on the existing infrastructure. However, cities received benefits from the presence of cars including an incredible amount of employment in automobile-related industries such as garages, salesrooms, parking lots, gas stations, and warehouses (Wilson, 1974). "The auto suburbs of the interwar period developed simply because millions of people wanted to live in them. The satellite areas of all central cities that had reached a 100,000

population by 1910 grew at a rate far greater than the central cities." (Wilson, 1974, 34) Growth in itself tells nothing about the motive for people moving to the suburbs—it only tells us that they did.

As demand for walkable, exciting, vibrant, mixed-use and transit-oriented neighborhoods increase, the commitment to revitalizing downtowns will intensify. The next generation of homebuyers will be better educated about the environment and sustainable living. While the cities were once decried as crime-filled and over-populated, the suburbs are now criticized for their sprawled development patterns, lack of public transportation, and high contributions of greenhouse emissions. "A purely suburban, car-dominated metropolitan area is at a competitive disadvantage for economic growth." (Leinberger, 2005, 5) Today's businesses seem to be more environmentally-conscious and, with federal programs and tax incentive programs to promote "green building", more development will occur away from open land and focus on re-use of empty buildings. The renewed interest in "loft-style" condominiums was created through the reclaiming of old, abandoned factories and mills by developers.

Cities that make an effort to revitalize their downtowns attract more residents and more jobs. It also leads to more out-of-town visitors and trips from suburban residents to experience what downtown has to offer. "Many cities are experiencing population increases after decades of decline. Assessed valuations are going up. The line is being held on taxes. Progress is being made in the search for smart growth and sustainable development." (Hudnut, 1998, 1) The success and sustainability of a downtown cannot be based on a single "magic bullet". Cities that are experiencing a recent surge in population and attractions witnessed a combination of economic, political,

environmental, cultural and demographic changes taking place simultaneously that resulted in a renewed interest in urban, compact residential living. A city should not think of its residents as the supporters of its downtown—a downtown should support the city's residents.

For Future Research and Consideration

An aspect of the history of cities that I did not cover in my research is immigration. The United States welcomed 17 million immigrants between 1890 and 1914 and another 2.9 million between 1919 and 1924. The majority of immigrants coming to the United States settled in urban areas. Russians, Italians, and the Irish tended to concentrate in the cities of the Northeast (Boston and New York) and major port cities (New Orleans and San Francisco). The Midwest became home to Germans as well as Poles and other central Europeans (Abbott, 1987).   Ethnic groups tended to concentrate together in certain parts of each city and established neighborhoods. Today, cities remain influenced by the early immigrants and many still have sections or neighborhoods referred to as "Little Italy" or "Greek Town" in reference to its ethnic history.

Immigration in the United States has led to several cities receiving the label "Gateway City". "Gateway cities" are defined as those that add economic muscle from their links to the expanding global network and serve as key entry points for both pools of foreign workers and global imports. These cities have diverse economies that attract new immigrant populations (Bell, 2008). In the United States New York; Washington, D.C.; Miami; Houston; Los Angeles; San Francisco; San Jose; Seattle; and Chicago serve as gateway cities (Bell, 2008). Downtowns are magnets for immigrants who come for job opportunities because downtowns have the resources new immigrants need in order to

find employment and assimilate to the culture. Gateway cities typically have double the number of foreign-born populations compared to the national average and generally have a more resilient economy (Bell, 2008). Immigration was important to the founding and growth of America and its cities since the beginning. The foreign-born population in the United States continues to grow and as second- and third-generation immigrants are born it will be interesting to witness population shifts in American cities. The release of the United States Census data for the year 2010 would offer further insight into the issues addressed in this paper.

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