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WHAT IS SPRAWL, AND WHY?

Two ways to grow; the five components of sprawl;
a brief history of sprawl; why Virginia Beach is not
Alexandria; neighborhood plans versus sprawl plans

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The cities will be part of the country; I shall live 30 miles from my office in one direction, under a pine tree; my secretary will live 30 miles away from it too, in the other direction, under another pine tree. We shall both have our own car.

We shall use up tires, wear out road surfaces and gears, consume oil and gasoline. All of which will necessitate a great deal of work . . . enough for all.

— Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* (1967)

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TWO WAYS TO GROW

This book is a study of two different models of urban growth: the traditional neighborhood and suburban sprawl. They are polar opposites in appearance, function, and character: they look different, they act differently, and they affect us in different ways.

The traditional neighborhood was the fundamental form of European settlement on this continent through the Second World War, from St. Augustine to Seattle. It continues to be the dominant

The traditional neighborhood: naturally occurring, pedestrian-friendly, and diverse. Daily needs are located within walking distance

Suburban sprawl: an invention, an abstract system of carefully separated pods of single use. Daily needs are located within driving distance

pattern of habitation outside the United States, as it has been throughout recorded history. The traditional neighborhood—represented by mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities of varied population, either standing free as villages or grouped into towns and cities—has proved to be a sustainable form of growth. It allowed us to settle the continent without bankrupting the country or destroying the countryside in the process.

Suburban sprawl, now the standard North American pattern of growth, ignores historical precedent and human experience. It is an invention, conceived by architects, engineers, and planners, and promoted by developers in the great *sweeping aside of the old* that occurred after the Second World War. Unlike the traditional neighborhood model, which evolved organically as a response to human needs, suburban sprawl is an idealized artificial system. It is not without a certain beauty: it is rational, consistent, and comprehensive. Its performance is largely predictable. It is an outgrowth of modern problem solving: a system for living. Unfortunately, this system is already showing itself to be unsustainable. Unlike the traditional neighborhood, sprawl is not healthy growth; it is essentially self-destructive. Even at relatively low population densities, sprawl tends not to pay for itself financially and consumes land at an alarming rate, while producing insurmountable traffic problems and exacerbating social inequity and isolation. These particular outcomes were not predicted. Neither was the toll that sprawl exacts from America's cities and towns, which continue to decant slowly into the countryside. As the ring of suburbia grows around most of our cities, so grows the void at the center. Even while the struggle to revitalize deteriorated downtown neighborhoods and business districts continues, the inner ring of suburbs is already at risk, losing

residents and businesses to fresher locations on a new suburban edge.[•]

THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF SPRAWL

If sprawl truly is destructive, why is it allowed to continue? The beginning of an answer lies in sprawl's seductive simplicity, the fact that it consists of very few homogeneous components—five in all—which can be arranged in almost any way. It is appropriate to review these parts individually, since they always occur independently. While one component may be adjacent to another, the dominant characteristic of sprawl is that each component is strictly segregated from the others.

Housing subdivisions, also called *clusters* and *pods.* These places consist only of residences. They are sometimes called *villages, towns,* and *neighborhoods* by their developers, which is misleading, since those terms denote places which are not exclusively residential and which provide an experiential richness not available in a housing tract. Subdivisions can be identified as such by their contrived names, which tend toward the romantic—Pheasant Mill Crossing—and often pay tribute to the natural or historic resource they have displaced.[■]

A residential subdivision: houses and parking

[•] Bill Morrish and Catherine Brown have done much to document this new frontier of decline, the "inner ring," at the Design Center for American Urban Landscape at the University of Minnesota. Los Angeles journalist Mike Davis describes this evolving phenomenon in his book *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles.*
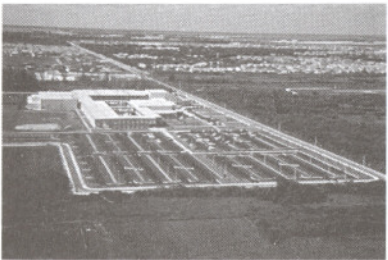
[■] Housing subdivisions are not the only components of sprawl with ridiculous names. Our favorite is a new section of Atlanta called Perimeter Center, a moniker that aptly sums up the confusion inherent in the suburban landscape.

A strip center: stores and parking

A corporate park: offices and parking

A public high school: classrooms and parking

Shopping centers, also called *strip centers, shopping malls,* and *big-box retail.* These are places exclusively for shopping. They come in every size, from the Quick Mart on the corner to the Mall of America, but they are all places to which one is unlikely to walk. The conventional shopping center can be easily distinguished from its traditional main-street counterpart by its lack of housing or offices, its single-story height, and its parking lot between the building and the roadway.

Office parks and business parks. These are places only for work. Derived from the modernist architectural vision of the building standing free in the park, the contemporary office park is usually made of boxes in parking lots. Still imagined as a pastoral workplace isolated in nature, it has kept its idealistic name and also its quality of isolation, but in practice it is more likely to be surrounded by highways than by countryside.
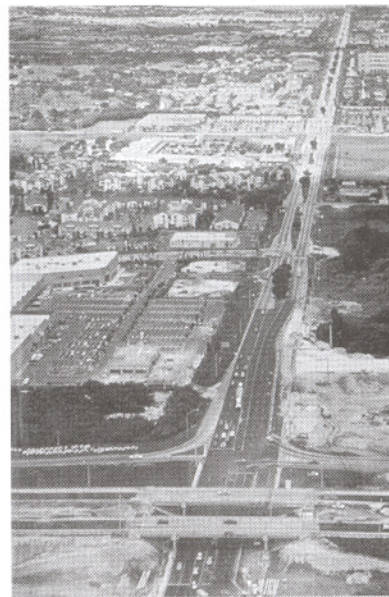
Civic institutions. The fourth component of suburbia is public buildings: the town halls, churches, schools, and other places where people gather for communication and culture. In traditional neighborhoods, these buildings often serve as neighborhood focal points, but in suburbia they take an altered form: large and infrequent, generally unadorned owing to limited funding, surrounded by parking, and located nowhere in particular. The school pictured here shows what a dramatic evolution this building type has undergone in the past thirty years. A comparison between the size of the parking lot and the size of the building is revealing: this is a school to which no child will ever walk. Because pedestrian access is usually nonexistent, and because the dispersion of surrounding homes often makes school buses impractical, schools in the new suburbs are designed based on the assumption of massive automotive transportation.

Roadways. The fifth component of sprawl consists of the miles of pavement that are necessary to connect the other four disassociated components. Since each piece of suburbia serves only one type of activity, and since daily life involves a wide variety of activities, the residents of suburbia spend an unprecedented amount of time and money moving from one place to the next. Since most of this motion takes place in singly occupied automobiles, even a sparsely populated area can generate the traffic of a much larger traditional town.

The traffic load caused by the many disassociated pieces of suburbia is most clearly visible from above. As seen in this image of Palm Beach County, Florida, the amount of pavement (public infrastructure) per building (private structure) is extremely high, especially when compared to the efficiency of a section of an older city like Washington, D.C. The same economic relationship is at work underground, where low-density land-use patterns require greater lengths of pipe and conduit to distribute municipal services. This high ratio of public to private expenditure helps explain why suburban municipalities are finding that new growth fails to pay for itself at acceptable levels of taxation.

The modern city: low density, high dependence on automotive infrastructure

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPRAWL

How did sprawl come about? Far from being an inevitable evolution or a historical accident, suburban sprawl is the direct result of a number of policies that conspired powerfully to encourage urban dispersal. The most significant of these were the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration loan programs which, in the years following the Second World War, provided mortgages

The traditional city: higher density, low dependence on automotive infrastructure

for over eleven million new homes. These mortgages, which typically cost less per month than paying rent, were directed at new single-family suburban construction.[*] Intentionally or not, the FHA and VA programs discouraged the renovation of existing housing stock, while turning their back on the construction of row houses, mixed-use buildings, and other urban housing types. Simultaneously, a 41,000-mile interstate highway program, coupled with federal and local subsidies for road improvement and the neglect of mass transit, helped make automotive commuting affordable and convenient for the average citizen.[■] Within the new economic framework, young families made the financially rational choice: Levittown. Housing gradually migrated from historic city neighborhoods to the periphery, landing increasingly farther away.

The shops stayed in the city, but only for a while. It did not take long for merchants to realize that their customers had relocated and

[*] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier,* 205–8. "Quite simply, it often became cheaper to buy than to rent" (205). Interestingly, Jackson notes that "the primary purpose of the legislation . . . was the alleviation of unemployment, which stood at about a quarter of the total work force in 1934 and which was particularly high in the construction industry" (203).

[■] Ibid., 249. The Interstate Highway act of 1956 provided for 41,000 miles of roadway, 90 percent paid for by the federal government, at an initial cost of $26 billion (249–50). Jackson notes that, "according to Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, 75 percent of government expenditures for transportation in the United States in the postwar generation went for highways as opposed to 1 percent for urban mass transit" (250). Still, "the government pays seven times as much to support the operation of the private car as to support public transportation" (Jane Holtz Kay, "Stuck in Gear," D1). The preference in Washington for roads over rails was due in no small part to influence peddling by the auto industry, as continues to be the case. With and without the government's blessing, the automakers have a history of mercenary acts, the most notorious of which was portrayed in the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* In what Jim Kunstler describes as "a systematic campaign to put streetcar lines out of business all over America," a consortium of auto, tire, and oil companies purchased and tore up over one hundred streetcar systems nationwide, an act for which General Motors was ultimately convicted of criminal conspiracy and fined a grand total of $5,000 (James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere,* 91–92).

to follow them out. But unlike America's prewar suburbs, the new subdivisions were being financed by programs that addressed only homebuilding, and therefore neglected to set aside any sites for corner stores. As a result, shopping required not only its own distinct method of financing and development but also its own locations. Placed along the wide high-speed collector roads between housing clusters, the new shops responded to their environment by pulling back from the street and constructing large freestanding signage. In this way the now ubiquitous strip shopping center was born.

For a time, most jobs stayed downtown. Workers traveled from the suburbs into the center, and the downtown business districts remained viable. But, as with the shops, this situation could not last; by the 1970s, many corporations were moving their offices closer to the workforce—or, more accurately, closer to the CEO's house, as ingeniously diagrammed by William Whyte.* The CEO's desire for a shorter commute, coupled with suburbia's lower tax burden, led to the development of the business park, completing the migration of each of life's components into the suburbs. As commuting patterns became predominantly suburb to suburb, many center cities became expendable.

While government programs for housing and highway promoted sprawl, the planning profession, worshipping at the altar of zoning, worked to make it the law. Why the country's planners were so

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* William Whyte, *City: Rediscovering the Center,* 288. Whyte noted: "Of thirty-eight companies that moved out of New York City to better quality-of-life needs of their employees, thirty-one moved to the Greenwich-Stamford area. . . . Average distance from the CEO's home: eight miles." Whyte also documented how, over the next eleven years, those thirty-eight companies that moved experienced less than half the stock appreciation of thirty-six randomly chosen comparable companies that chose to remain in the city (294–95).

uniformly convinced of the efficacy of zoning—the segregation of the different aspects of daily life—is a story that dates back to the previous century and the first victory of the planning profession. At that time, Europe's industrialized cities were shrouded in the smoke of Blake's "dark, satanic mills." City planners wisely advocated the separation of such factories from residential areas, with dramatic results. Cities such as London, Paris, and Barcelona, which in the mid-nineteenth century had been virtually unfit for human habitation, were transformed within decades into national treasures. Life expectancies rose significantly, and the planners, fairly enough, were hailed as heroes.

The successes of turn-of-the-century planning, represented in America by the City Beautiful movement, became the foundation of a new profession, and ever since, planners have repeatedly attempted to relive that moment of glory by separating everything from everything else. This segregation, once applied only to incompatible uses, is now applied to every use. A typical contemporary zoning code has several dozen land-use designations; not only is housing separated from industry but low-density housing is separated from medium-density housing, which is separated from high-density housing. Medical offices are separated from general offices, which are in turn separated from restaurants and shopping.*

As a result, the new American city has been likened to an unmade omelet: eggs, cheese, vegetables, a pinch of salt, but each

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* The strict separation of housing types actually hints at a more insidious cause of sprawl, economic discrimination, or sometimes simple racism. In the words of F. J. Popper: "The basic purpose of zoning was to keep Them where They belonged—Out. If They had already gotten in, then its purpose was to confine Them to limited areas. The exact identity of Them varied a bit around the country. Blacks, Latinos and poor people qualified. Catholics, Jews and Orientals were targets in many places" (Peter Hall, *Cities*

consumed in turn, raw. Perhaps the greatest irony is that even industry need not be isolated anymore. Many modern production facilities are perfectly safe neighbors, thanks to evolved manufacturing processes and improved pollution control. A comprehensive mix of diverse land uses is once again as reasonable as it was in the preindustrial age.
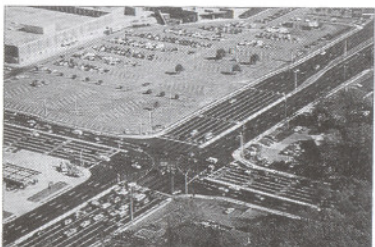
The planners' enthusiasm for single-use zoning and the government's commitment to homebuilding and highway construction were supported by another, more subtle ethos: the widespread application of management lessons learned overseas during the Second World War. In this part of the story, members of the professional class—called the Whiz Kids in John Byrne's book of that name—returned from the war with a whole new approach to accomplishing large-scale tasks, centered on the twin acts of classifying and counting. Because these techniques had been so successful in building munitions and allocating troops, they were applied across the board to industry, to education, to governance, to wherever the Whiz Kids found themselves. In the case of cities, they took a complex human tradition of settlement, said "Out with the old," and replaced it with a rational model that could be easily understood through systems analysis and flow charts. Town planning, until 1930 considered a humanistic discipline based upon history, aesthetics, and culture, became a technical profession based upon numbers. As a result, the American city was reduced into the simplistic categories and quantities of sprawl.

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of Tomorrow, 60). It has been well documented by Robert Fishman and others how racism was a large factor in the disappearance of the middle class from the center city ("white flight"), and how zoning law clearly manifests the desire to keep away what one has left behind.

Because these tenets still hold sway, sprawl continues largely unchecked. At the current rate, California alone grows by a Pasadena every year and a Massachusetts every decade.[*] Each year, we construct the equivalent of many cities, but the pieces don't add up to anything memorable or of lasting value. The result doesn't look like a place, it doesn't act like a place, and, perhaps most significant, it doesn't feel like a place. Rather, it feels like what it is: an uncoordinated agglomeration of standardized single-use zones with little pedestrian life and even less civic identification, connected only by an overtaxed network of roadways. Perhaps the most regrettable fact of all is that exactly the same ingredients—the houses, shops, offices, civic buildings, and roads—could instead have been assembled as new neighborhoods and cities. Countless residents of unincorporated counties could instead be citizens of real towns, enjoying the quality of life and civic involvement that such places provide.

WHY VIRGINIA BEACH IS NOT ALEXANDRIA

Because sprawl is so unsatisfying, it remains tempting to think of it as an accident. For those who wish to take refuge in that thought, the caption under this photograph may come as a surprise: "Becoming a Showcase: Virginia Beach Boulevard–Phase I celebrated its

Becoming a Showcase: Virginia Beach Boulevard-Phase I celebrated
its completion in December. This project involved the removal of

A modern town center: the apotheosis of suburban zoning laws

[*] Data given by Nelson Rising at the second Congress for the New Urbanism, Los Angeles, May 21, 1994. From 1970 to 1990, Los Angeles grew 45 percent in population and 300 percent in size (Christopher Leinberger, Robert Charles Lesser & Co. original research). According to the *Population Environment Balance* newsletter, we pave an area equal to the size of the state of Delaware every year. All told, seven thousand acres of forests, farms, and countryside are lost to sprawl each day, totaling well over 50,000 square miles since 1970 (Will Rogers, *The Trust for Public Land* membership letter, 1–2).

completion . . ." This "city center" is regarded with pride, for it is the successful attainment of a specific vision: eleven lanes of traffic and plenty of parking.

What is pictured here is the direct outcome of regulations governing modern engineering and development practice. Every detail of this environment comes straight from technical manuals. After reading them one might easily conclude that they are organized, written, and enforced in the name of a single objective: making cars happy. Indeed, at Virginia Beach they should be happy: no more than eight cars ever stack at the light, and the huge corner radius of the intersection means that turning requires minimal use of the brake. The parking lots are typically half-empty, since they have been sized for the Saturday before Christmas. Such excess is inevitable; anyone who has shopped in suburbia knows that the inability to find a parking space makes the entire proposition unworkable. As a result, the typical suburban building code has ten or twenty pages of rules on the design of parking lots alone, with different requirements for each land use. For retail locations, the square footage of parking often exceeds the square footage of leasable space.

Perhaps surprisingly, the creation of this environment is also guided by rules pertaining to aesthetics. These mostly came about during the sixties, when Lady Bird Johnson's beautification campaign and the nascent environmental movement opened the door for tree and sign ordinances. Notice the trees preserved in the parking lot, and the absence of large signs. These regulations result in suburban settlements that are neat, clean, and often more appealing than their deteriorating counterparts in the older city. In truth, a lot of sprawl—primarily affluent areas—could be considered beautiful.

This raises a fundamental point: the problem with suburbia is not that it is ugly. The problem with suburbia is that, in spite of all its regulatory controls, it is not functional: it simply does not efficiently serve society or preserve the environment.

A clue to this dysfunction can be found in the same photograph: the thin ribbon of concrete between roadway and parking lot. It is a safe bet that, in the years since that sidewalk was built, it has never been used by anyone except indigents and those experiencing serious car trouble. We have witnessed this phenomenon ourselves. Walking alongside a street near Orlando's Disney World, we were intercepted by a minivan—"Are you all right?"—and whisked aboard. It was a security vehicle, the roving patrol for stray pedestrians.

The virgin sidewalk—the physical embodiment of sprawl's guilty conscience—reveals the true failure of suburbia, a landscape in which automobile use is a prerequisite to social viability. For those who cannot drive, cannot afford a car, or simply wish to spend less time behind the wheel, Virginia Beach Boulevard will never be a satisfactory place to live.[*] But even those who love driving must acknowledge that there is an inherent inequity in sprawl, an environment of outsize physical dimensions determined by automotive motion. Public funds build and support sprawl's far-flung infrastructure. Pavement, pipes, patrols, ambulances, and the other costs of unhealthy growth are paid for by taxing drivers and non-drivers

[*] There is no arguing that the automobile is a wonderful instrument of freedom for those who are able to drive one. Indeed, it is hard to beat the sheer physical enjoyment of moving quickly through space in command of 200 horsepower and two tons of steel. As of this writing, the three authors have yet to give up their cars. This does not blind them, however, to the fact that what was once our servant has become our master, and that an instrument of freedom is a very different thing from an instrument of survival. The problem with cars is not the cars themselves but that they have produced an environment of dependence.

alike, whether they are the inhabitants of sprawl or the citizens of more efficient environments, such as our core cities and older neighborhoods.[*]

Not far from Virginia Beach is Alexandria, a fine example of the traditional neighborhood pattern. It is an old place, laid out by, among others, a seventeen-year-old George Washington. It was built following six fundamental rules that distinguish it from sprawl:

Alexandria, Virginia: efficient, beloved, and illegal

1. The center. Each neighborhood has a clear center, focused on the common activities of commerce, culture, and governance. This is downtown Alexandria, understood by residents and tourists alike as a unique place to visit to engage in civilized activity.

2. The five-minute walk. A local resident is rarely more than a five-minute walk from the ordinary needs of daily life: living, working, and shopping. In the downtown, these three activities may be found in the same building. By living so close to all that they need, Alexandria's residents can drive much less, if they have to drive at all.

3. The street network. Because the street pattern takes the form of a continuous web—in this case, a grid—numerous paths connect one location to another. Blocks are relatively small, rarely exceeding a quarter mile in perimeter. In contrast to suburbia, where walking routes are scarce and traffic is concentrated on a small number of highways, the traditional network provides the pedestrian and the driver with a choice. This condition is not only more interesting but more useful. A person who lives in Alexandria is able to adjust her path minutely to and from work on a daily basis, to drop off a child

[*] The cost of suburban growth is financed through federal, state, and local taxes, which are levied on all citizens irrespective of their location. Even at the local level, city and county taxes often relocate resources within a jurisdiction from its older center to its newer edge. It has been demonstrated time and time again that most new suburban growth is heavily subsidized by older sections of the city, often unwittingly.

at daycare, pick up the dry cleaning, or visit a coffeehouse. If she chooses to drive, she can constantly alter her route—at every intersection if necessary—to avoid heavy traffic.

4. *Narrow, versatile streets.* Because there are so many streets to accommodate the traffic, each street can be small. Of all the streets pictured here, only one is more than two lanes wide. This slows down the traffic, as does the parallel parking along the curb, resulting in a street that is pleasant and safe to walk along. This pedestrian-friendly environment is enhanced by wide sidewalks, shade trees, and buildings close to the street. Traditional streets, like all organic systems, are extremely complex, in contrast to the artificial simplicity of sprawl. On Alexandria's streets, cars drive and park while people walk, enter buildings, meet, converse under trees, and even dine at sidewalk cafés. In Virginia Beach, only one thing happens on the street: cars moving. There is no parallel parking, no pedestrians, and certainly no trees. Like many state departments of transportation, Virginia's discourages its state roads from being lined with trees, which are considered dangerous. In fact, they are not called trees at all but FHOs: Fixed and Hazardous Objects.[*]

5. *Mixed Use.* In contrast to sprawl's single-use zoning, almost all of downtown Alexandria's blocks are of mixed use, as are many of the buildings. Despite this complexity, it is not a design free-for-all. All of the above characteristics are the intended consequence of a town plan with carefully prescribed details. There is an essential discipline regarding two factors: the size of the building and its relationship to the street. Large buildings sit in the company of other

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[*] Virginia Department of Transportation Regulations, 8/95 edition, table A-3-1. The manual adds that "every effort should be made to remove the tree rather than shield it with a guardrail."

large buildings, small buildings sit alongside other small buildings, and so on. This organization is a form of zoning, but buildings are arranged by their physical type more often than by their use. When buildings of different size do adjoin, they still collaborate to define the space of the street, usually by pulling right up against the sidewalk. Parking lots, if any, are hidden at the back. In those rare cases where a building sits back from the sidewalk, it does so in order to create a public plaza or garden, not a parking lot.

6. *Special sites for special buildings.* Finally, traditional neighborhoods devote unique sites to civic buildings, those structures that represent the collective identity and aspirations of the community. Alexandria's City Hall sits back from the street on a plaza, the site of a thriving farmers' market on Saturdays. Even within a fairly uniform grid, schools, places of worship, and other civic buildings are located in positions that contribute to their prominence. In this way, the city achieves a physical structure that both manifests and supports its social structure.

All the above rules work together to make Alexandria a delight, the kind of place that people visit just to be there. While some of the design principles applied there were simply common sense, many others were spelled out in the early settlers' building codes, which dictated such items as building setbacks and gable orientation.*

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* One of the things that make Alexandria special was the rule that only public buildings were allowed to face the gable end of a roof toward the street. All private buildings were required to face the eaves to the front, creating a calm and steady background for the more important civic buildings. The codes for Williamsburg, Virginia, were equally stringent, specifying the location of civic buildings and mandating setbacks and fences for much of the private property (Witold Rybczynski, *City Life,* 71).

These rules are still available to us today, and provide a fully valid framework for the design and redesign of our communities. Unfortunately, in most jurisdictions around the country, all the old rules are precluded by the new rules dictating sprawl.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS VERSUS SPRAWL PLANS

The zoning plan of Coral Gables: a fine grain of mixed land uses and densities within an interconnected street network

A modern zoning plan: a strict separation of land uses, a few big roads, and little else

Since places are built from plans, it is important to understand what distinguishes plans for neighborhoods from plans for sprawl. On the left is the plan of Coral Gables, one of the large successful new towns of the early twentieth century. Coral Gables was designed when the American town planning movement was at its apogee, in the 1920s. The great planners of this era determined the form of their new cities by studying the best traditional towns and adjusting their organizational principles only as necessary to accommodate the automobile. A modern city, Coral Gables is zoned by use, but the zoning is as tightly grained as an Oriental rug. Different uses, represented by different shades, are often located directly adjacent to one another. Mansions sit just down the street from apartment houses, which are around the corner from shops and office buildings. It takes a sharp pencil to draw plans this intricate.

Below, in fat marker pen, is a land-use plan—more accurately referred to as a bubble diagram—typical of those being produced for greenfield sites across the country. All the municipal government cares to know—and all the developer is held to—is that growth will take the form of single-use pods along a collector road. Is it any wonder that the result is sprawl? This plan guarantees it, since a mix of uses is not allowed in any one zone.

This sort of plan manifests the public sector's abrogation of responsibility for community-making to the private sector. Many would argue that its only purpose is to give the developer the utmost flexibility to build whatever physical environment he wants, at the public's expense. It is an irony of modern zoning that this plan is, in effect, much more restrictive than Coral Gables'. While it is dangerously imprecise about urban form, it is utterly inflexible about land use. A developer who owns a twenty-acre pod of sprawl can provide only one thing. If there is no demand for that one thing, he is out of business.

The bubble diagram is not the only restriction that the developer has to deal with. It is supplemented by a pile of planning codes many inches thick. As exposed in Philip Howard's *The Death of Common Sense,* these lengthy codes can be burdensome to the point of farce. But the problem with the current development codes is not just their size; they also seem to have a negative effect on the quality of the built environment. Their size and their result are symptoms of the same problem: they are hollow at their core. They do not emanate from any physical vision. They have no images, no diagrams, no recommended models, only numbers and words. Their authors, it seems, have no clear picture of what they want their communities to be. They are not imagining a place that they admire, or buildings that they hope to emulate. Rather, all they seem to imagine is what they *don't* want: no mixed uses, no slow-moving cars, no parking shortages, no overcrowding. Such prohibitions do not a city make.

In the end, perhaps this is the most charitable way to consider sprawl. It wasn't an accident, but neither was it based on a specific vision of its physical form or of the life that form would generate. As

such, it remains an innocent error, but nonetheless an error that should not continue to be promoted. There is currently more sprawl covering American soil than was ever intended by its inventors. While there are some people who truly enjoy living in this environment, there are many others who would prefer to walk to school, bicycle to work, or simply spend less time in the car. It is for these people, who have access to ever fewer places that can accommodate their choice, that an alternative must be provided. And the only proven alternative to sprawl is the traditional neighborhood.