PORTLAND: A MODEL FOR NATIONAL POLICY?

by Wendell Cox 05/28/2009

United States Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and *Washington Post* columnist George Will have been locked in debate over transit. Will called LaHood the "Secretary of Behavior Modification" for his policies intended to reduce car use, citing Portland's strong transit and land use planning measures as a model for the nation. In turn, the Secretary defended the policies in a National Press Club speech and "upped the ante" by suggesting the policies are "a way to coerce people out of their cars."

These are just the latest in a series of media accounts about Portland, usually claiming success for its policies that have favored transit over highway projects as well as its "progressive" land use policies. Portland has also become the poster child for those who advocate planning restrictions and subsidies favoring higher density development in parts of the urban core.

Indeed if Secretary LaHood has his way, Portland could become *The Model* for federal transportation policy. So perhaps it is appropriate to review what it has accomplished.

Portland's Mediocre Results

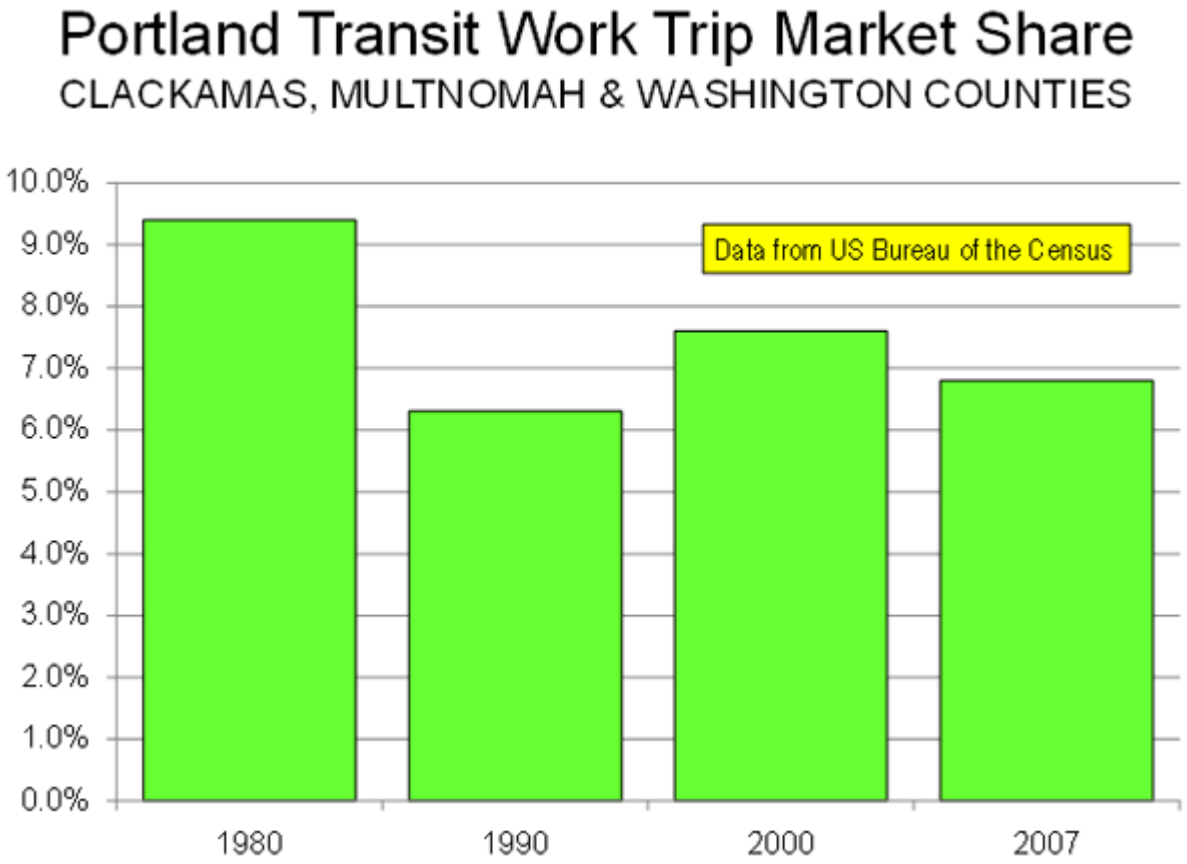
Portland's record of transit emphasis began more than 30 years ago, when the area "traded in" federal money that was available to build an east side freeway to build its first light rail line. The east side light rail opened in 1986. Since that time, Portland has significantly increased its transit service, especially opening three more light rail lines (West Side, North Side and Airport) as well as a downtown "streetcar."

Portland's Static Transit Market Share: With these new lines and expanded service, Portland has experienced a substantial increase in transit ridership. Passenger miles have increased more than 130 percent since 1985, the last year before the first light rail line was opened. This is an impressive figure.

However, over the same period, automobile use increased just as impressively. In 1985, approximately 2.1 percent of motorized travel in the Portland urban area was on transit and it remained 2.1 percent in 2007, the latest year for which data is available.

Portland's Declining Transit Work Trip Market Share: One of transit's two most important contributions to a community is providing an alternative to the automobile for the work trip (the other important contribution is mobility for low income citizens). Work trip rider attraction is important because much of this travel is during peak periods, when roadways are operating at or above full capacity. In 1980, the last year for which data is available before the first light rail line opened, United States Bureau of the Census data indicates that transit's work trip market share was 9.5 percent in the Portland area counties of Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington covered by Portland's strong land use policies. Yet despite this, and the transit improvements, the work trip market share has *not* grown. By 1990, transit's market share had dropped a third, to 6.3 percent. It rose to 7.6 percent in 2000 and by 2007 had fallen back to 6.8, despite opening two new light rail lines since 2000 (Figure 1). Remarkably, transit's 2007 work market share was 28 percent behind its 1980 share and had fallen 10 percent since 2000.

Figure 1:



Yes, Portland did increase its transit use, but failed to increase the share of travel on transit and the proportion of people riding transit to work declined.

Driving the Portland Evangelism: GHG Emissions

Secretary LaHood's affection for Portland appears to principally be that its policies can materially assist in the objective of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The data is available to test that claim.

We examined GHG emissions per capita by transit in Portland and the urban personal vehicle fleet, including cars and personal trucks (principally sport utility vehicles). Overall, including upstream emissions (such as refining and power production), transit in Portland is about 50 percent more GHG friendly per passenger mile than the 2007 vehicle fleet. If all of the increase in transit passenger miles from 1985 to 2007 replaced automobile passenger miles, then reduction of approximately 50,000 GHG tons can be said to have occurred as a result in 2007 (though as is indicated below, things are not that simple).

That sounds like a large number, until you consider that Portland traffic produces more than 8,000,000 GHG tons per year. Transit's expansion has reduced GHG emissions by approximately 0.6 percent annually over 22 years. This pales in comparison to the 83 percent national reduction over a 45 year period that would be required by the Waxman-Markey bill being considered by Congress.

The Cost of GHG Emission Reduction

Moreover, GHG emission reduction requires a context. Not all GHG emission reduction strategies make sense. Given the widely held principle that GHG emission removal must not hobble the economy, it is crucial that costs (per ton of GHG removed) be a principal criteria. If excessively costly strategies are employed, the result will be wasted financial resources, which will translate into diminished economic growth and higher levels of poverty. According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), between $20 and $50 per ton is the maximum amount necessary to accomplish deep reversal of CO2 concentrations between 2030 and 2050. It is fair to characterize any amount above $50 per ton as wasteful and likely to impose unnecessary economic disruption.

Even that cost may be high. The current "market rate" is about $14 per ton, which appears to approximate the amount that figures such as former vice-president Al Gore, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger pay to offset their GHG emissions from flying.

Portland Costs of GHG Emission Reduction

This $14 to $50 range provides the context for comparing the cost of GHG emission reduction through transit expansion in Portland. Annual transit costs in Portland more than tripled from 1985 to 2007 (including inflation adjusted operating costs and the annual capital costs of the light rail lines), an annual increase of more than $325 million. This figure is reduced to capture the consumer cost savings from reduced automobile gasoline and maintenance costs. The final result is a cost of approximately $5,500 per ton of GHG removed.

This is 110 times the IPCC $50 maximum and nearly 400 times the Gore-Pelosi-Schwarzenegger standard. If the United States were to spend as much to remove each ton of the likely 83 percent national reduction target, the cost would be $30 trillion annually, more than double the gross domestic product. To call the Portland GHG cost reduction figure extravagant would be an understatement.

Traffic Congestion Increases GHG Emissions

There is not a one-to-one relationship between reduced driving levels and reduced GHG emissions. As traffic congestion increases, urban travel speeds decline and "stop-and-start" traffic increases, fuel consumption is reduced (miles per gallon declines). Some or even all of the supposed gain from reduced driving can be negated by the higher GHGs from traveling in greater traffic congestion.

Portland's traffic congestion has increased substantially since before light rail. Further, by 2007 Portland's traffic congestion had become worse than average for a middle-sized urban area and worse than in much larger Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Phoenix.

Further, according to information in the Texas Transportation Institute's *Annual Mobility Report*, the amount of gasoline wasted due to peak period traffic congestion in Portland rose 18,000,000 gallons from 1985 to 2005 (latest data available, adjusted for the population increase), simply due to greater traffic congestion. The increase in GHG emissions from this excess fuel consumption is estimated to be approximately 200,000 tons annually. This is four times the estimated reduction in GHG emissions that was assumed to have occurred from the increase in transit ridership.

The bottom line: The Portland *model* inherently produces more congestion and increases GHG emissions. Failure to expand roadways to meet demand and forced densification increase traffic congestion.

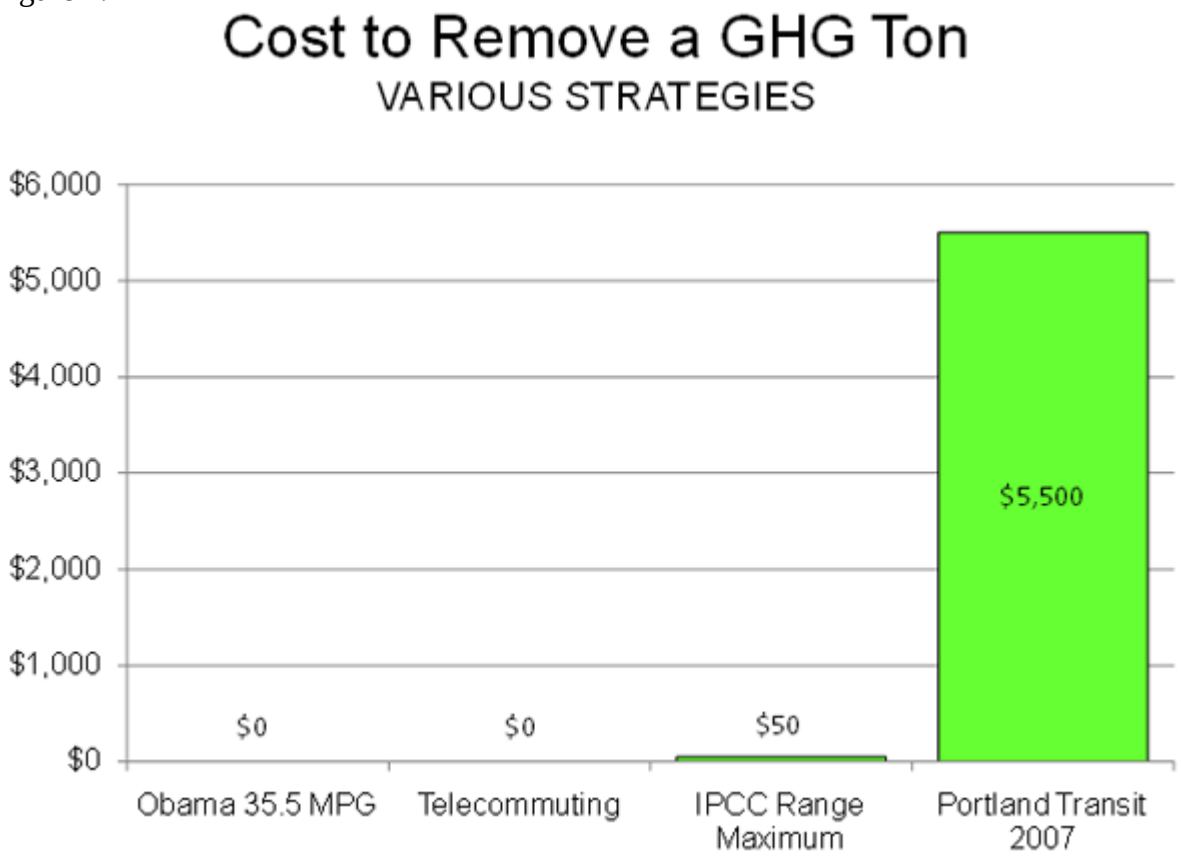
Better Models

The ineffectiveness of Portland's *model* strategies in GHG emission is in contrast to other strategies. Between 2000 and 2007, the share of people working at home in Portland rose more than one quarter. If transit and working at home should continue their 2000s rates, transit's work trip share will be less than that of working at home by 2015. Working at home eliminates the work trip, resulting in substantial GHG emission reductions and does it at a cost of $0.00 per ton.

Another approach is the Obama Administration's automobile fuel efficiency strategy. About the same time as the LaHood-Will debate was heating up, the President announced that automobile manufacturers would be required to increase their corporate average fuel efficiency for cars and light trucks to 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016, a 75 percent performance improvement from that of the present fleet. If this fuel efficiency could be achieved in Portland today, the reduction in GHG emissions would be more than 40 percent. This new policy would eventually close 90 percent of the gap between personal vehicles and transit in Portland.

President Obama indicated that this strategy is costless. The higher costs that consumers will pay for cars will be more than made up by the fuel cost savings. Thus, according to the President, this policy costs $0.00 per ton of GHG emissions removed, less than the IPCC's $50 and less than Portland's $5,500. Of course, it is not possible to achieve 35.5 miles per gallon now, but it will be (Figure 2).

Figure 2:



The best hybrid cars now achieve 50 miles per gallon, which makes them less GHG intensive than transit in Portland. President Obama has gone further, indicating the potential for developing 150 mile per gallon cars. The curtain could be rising on a future of cars that emit less GHG emissions per passenger mile than transit. People and officials genuinely concerned about GHG emissions should applaud these advances. On the other hand, people and officials who value coercive behavior modification more than GHG emission reduction are likely to resist.

The Consequences of Coercing People Out of Cars

Moreover, Portland policies ignore a crucial factor: how automobiles facilitate economic growth and employment. Generally, the research indicates that the economic performance of metropolitan areas is enhanced by greater mobility. Moreover, no transit system provides the extensive mobility made possible by the automobile, not in America and not even in Europe. Coercing people out of cars coerces some out of employment and into poverty.

Even where transit service is available, it generally takes longer than traveling by car. In 2007, travel to work by transit took 3:50 (three hours and 50 minutes) per week longer than driving in the nation's largest metropolitan areas. With all of Portland's transit improvements, it still takes approximately 3:15 longer per week to commute by transit than by driving. It appears that Secretary LaHood would add more than three hours (time many don't have) to our work trip each week.

The Land Use Cost

The second plank of *The Model* is strong land use regulation (smart growth), which economic research shows to materially increase house costs, which would lead to a lower standard of living.

Time to Turn Off the Ideological Autopilot

The policies of *The Model* Portland have no serious potential for reducing GHG emissions and could even make it worse. On the other hand, the rapidly developing advances possible from improved vehicle technology, something the Administration espouses, show great promise. Behavior modification *a la* The Model turns out not only to be undesirable, but also unnecessary.

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Salt Intake Is Strongly Associated With Obesity

ScienceDaily (Nov. 13, 2006) — A study published in the journal "Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases" refutes the frequently repeated claims that a comprehensive salt reduction would not produce any overall health benefits, or would even increase diseases and shorten the life-span.

Professors, Dr. Heikki Karppanen of the University of Helsinki and Dr. Eero Mervaala of the University of Kuopio report that an average 30-35 % reduction in salt intake during 30 years in Finland was associated with a dramatic 75 % to 80 % decrease in both stroke and coronary heart disease mortality in the population under 65 years. During the same period the life expectancy of both male and female Finns increased by 6 to 7 years.

The most powerful explaining factor for the favorable changes was the more than 10 mmHg ("point") decrease in the average blood pressure of the population. A marked decrease in the average cholesterol levels of the population also remarkably contributed to the decrease of heart diseases. The extensive use of drugs contributed less than 10 % of the observed decreases in blood pressure, cholesterol, and cardiovascular diseases.

"To our surprise, the sales figures of the American Salt Institute divulged that salt intake increased more than 50 % in USA during 15 years from mid-1980s to the late 1990s", says Professor Karppanen. The study reports that the prevalence of high blood pressure, which had long shown a decreasing trend, turned to a marked increase concomitantly with the increase in salt intake.

Perhaps the most interesting finding of the study is the close link between salt intake and obesity. The study reports that increasing intakes of sodium (salt) obligatorily produce a progressive increase in thirst. The progressive increase in the average intake of salt explains the observed concomitant increase in the intake of beverages which, in turn, has caused a marked net increase in the intake of calories during the same period in the United States.

Between 1977 and 2001, energy intake from sweetened beverages increased on the average by 135 % in the United States. During the same period, the energy intake from milk was reduced by 38 %. The net effect on energy intake was a 278 kcal increase per person a day. The American Heart Association has estimated that, to burn the average increase of 278 kcal a day and avoid the development or worsening of obesity, each American should now walk or vacuum 1 hour 10 minutes more every day than in 1977. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

In a decade from 1976-1980 to 1988-1994 the prevalence of obesity increased 61 % among men and 52 % among women. During 1999 to 2002, the prevalence of obesity

was 120 % higher among men and 99 % higher among women as compared with the 1976 to 1980 figures. The increased intake of salt, through induction of thirst with increased intake of high-energy beverages has obviously remarkably contributed to the increase of obesity in the United States.

It is noteworthy that, until 1983 the use of salt did not change or even showed a continuous decreasing trend in the United States. The prevalence of obesity was relatively low and remained essentially unchanged from early 1960s to early 1980s. The study suggests that a comprehensive reduction in salt intake, which would reduce the intake of high-energy beverages, would be a potentially powerful means in the so far failed attempts to combat obesity in industrialized societies.

The authors conclude that there now is conclusive population-wide evidence, which indicates powerful beneficial health effects of comprehensive salt reduction. Decrease of obesity is now added to the previous list of recognized benefits. The population-wide long-term experience from Finland indicates that a remarkable decrease in the salt intake has not caused any adverse effects. Professor Karppanen states that "the repeated warnings of various industries on possible harmful effects of comprehensive salt reduction are unjustified and even unethical".

THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF SEATTLE: A VISION OF 2040 FOR PUGETOPOLIS

by Richard Morrill 08/06/2008

I have been attacked as a defender of 'sprawl' although I consider myself a man of the left, with a political-economy philosophy that is 'social democratic – far to the left of the contemporary Democratic party. I view global warming as very serious, but consider continuing global warfare over resources, land and religion, and increasing national and global economic and political inequality as even more critical.

As a realist/naturalist/skeptic, rather than idealist, I believe a scientist's goal is to understand and explain the rich variety of actual needs, motivations and behavior of individuals, groups and institutions. I chose geography instead of planning, because I am uncomfortable with a normative approach of telling people how they ought to behave (in the absence of adequate theory and evidence).

In my long career in planning I have become skeptical about many things that are widely considered "progressive." This includes disbelief in two icons of a normative New Urbanist planning: urban growth boundaries and rail transit. In my original testimony to the Growth Strategies Commission 20 years ago, I warned that use of a crude geographic tool (growth boundaries) would lead to land and housing price inflation, leapfrog development and would benefit the rich at the expense of the poor. Sadly, this proved to be the case. Rather than use zoning to create open space, I believe fairness dictates it be acquired through public purchase for public use.

On rail, my skepticism grew out of considerations of class fairness, since it squanders limited public resources for limited results, and again benefits the rich at the expense of the poor. The real transit problem is not capacity but accessibility to people and jobs. I like trains and have been on dozens of rail or subway systems around the world, many successful, others relative failures. Unfortunately, the geography of Seattle militates against rail's success here.

Before we try to guess what greater Seattle might or could (not "should" or "will") look like in 2040, we must be clear about the nature of the geographic setting, and needs and preferences of its people. For example, there are distinct populations who prefer denser urban living (structures and neighborhoods), and those who prefer less dense living (single-family homes and neighborhoods).

Some economic activities require dense agglomerative settings; others need greater horizontal space or external connections.

In the immediate Seattle region currently about 40 percent of people and jobs are at the denser more agglomerative and 60 percent at the less dense, more dispersed end. Unfortunately for New Urbanist idealism, far more than half of people do not live within walking or biking distance to work or school. By 2040 the share of people preferring or accepting denser urban living in the close in areas could rise to 50 percent (for demographic and land cost reasons) but that will still leave 50 percent or 2.5 of 5 million people preferring a lower density environment. Planners should have learned that many people need private space (yards) as well as public (parks and playgrounds). And it is truly difficult to envision a higher share of more agglomerative jobs; costs of transportation will likely bring residences and workplaces closer to the peripheral communities.

Another inescapable reality is that trucks will remain the dominant mode for goods transport and that the car, personal transport, will still, yes, be the dominant mode of person movement. Transit (and walking and bicycling) could rise to 25 percent and carpooling could become a lot higher, but cars, far more efficient and greener, will still be the rule. It is absurd to imagine otherwise – this is precisely the kind of innovation that at which American technology excels.

Most political leaders and senior planners know these "realities" perfectly well but seem to have trouble reining in the their often overly idealistic staff. Yet an intelligent view of what will be in 2040 rests on facts and people's demonstrated preferences, not on New Urbanist theorizing.

So what does 2040 look like? The population will likely grow but the forecast of a 50 percent increase is far from sure. The odds are better than even that growth will be moderately less, because of demography (aging population, lowering fertility of past immigrants), and the high cost of Seattle for residence and for business. Instead we likely will see growth spill over to less costly and restrictive cities like Spokane, Bellingham, Yakima and the Tri-Cities.

We don't know the likely degree of housing affordability and of the relative severity of constraints on the land supply. Again based on history and demography/education, I'd say the odds are in favor of continuing constraints, over-regulation and housing unaffordability.

Personal transport will still prevail in 2040, but much of transport technology and policy is uncertain. There will probably be new trains, because people seem to want them, although their contribution to mobility will be modest.

Smaller communities around Seattle would be well-advised not to allow themselves to be pulled too closely into a downtown-centric transit network since, as Nobel economist Paul Samuelson showed in 1956, this almost guarantees that the outlying centers will lose high level functions and income to the central node. Tacoma, Everett and Bellevue would each be better off developing themselves than

subordinating their destiny to downtown Seattle. Bellevue's success as a competitive edge city is because of the barrier effect of Lake Washington!

So given these considerations, what will Seattle and its region look like in 2040? Look around you because the future city will look and feel amazingly like the present city, just as the city today is much like the city of 1975. It will be somewhat denser, especially in the core region but overall the urban footprint will grow only slightly and begrudgingly. Instead, most substantial growth in Pugetopolis will occur in satellite towns and adjacent counties and beyond, which is not necessarily a bad thing but may offend many planners.

In this new configuration, the central city of Seattle will do fine – due to its popularity, site and situation benefits (and the high land prices). There will be continued gentrification, dominated by the childless affluent, and displacement of the less well off to some of the older, less amenity rich suburbs. Inequality will remain high and segregation by class will probably increase. Transportation congestion and substantial long distance commuting will not have lessened, despite trains or the implementation of demand management, because of likely over-investment in large glamour projects, and the continued separation of residences and jobs.

Experience suggests to me that the future Pugetopolis will continue to be the uneasy compromise between the idealist visionaries of the golden city and the dictates of the human condition and the economy. This is not a pessimistic forecast, rather a realistic one. The metropolis of 2040 may well be a somewhat better place than it is now, but just not very!

Richard Morrill came to Seattle 53 years ago for graduate school, and after stints in Illinois and Sweden, returned to the University of Washington Geography department in 1961, where he has taught for 44 years.

Things are so grim that Kunstler foresees a time when "we shall all have to give up mass automobile use"[10]

Portland, Oregon, plays the part of Nirvana in the anti-sprawl movement. Portland is widely touted for its claimed successes in anti-sprawl regional planning, its urban growth boundary, and its conscious efforts to increase traffic congestion in hopes of forcing drivers into mass transit. The reality is that trends are little different in Portland than in urban areas that have not adopted anti-suburban policies. Moreover, even in Portland those policies have begun to unravel (see Chapter 8).

America on the Decline?

Much of the anti-suburban movement believes that things are not as good as they used to be in the United States. In *The European Dream*, Jeremy Rifkin talks of the "steady downward mobility of middle and working class Americans."[11] Architect Peter Callithorpe notes, "family wealth is shrinking."[12] Dolores Hayden says that households have to spend a larger part of their income on housing and cars than before.[13]

Middle-income households are portrayed as facing an economic struggle that has been worsening for decades. Consistent with this view, the anti-sprawl movement has largely bought into "the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer" assessment of the economy. Forty years ago, Peter Blake found plenty of reason to condemn suburban environments:

> The results are palpable: children play in the street; parents spend most of their time maintaining a front garden they can't use; the community has to maintain long roads and long utility lines to service its strung-out houses; and the suburbs go broke.[14]

Echoing Kunstler, Rifkin declares, "America is no longer a great country" and claims that "The American Dream…has increasingly become an object of derision" and "outmoded," and "something to fear, or abhor."[15] This entire line of reasoning is at variance with the facts, as will be shown below.

Defining Urban Sprawl

The use of semantics has been an unqualified success for the anti-sprawl movement. It begins with the term "sprawl" itself. One Merriam-Webster definition of sprawl is "to cause to spread out carelessly or awkwardly." *Careless* and *awkward* are inherently negative terms. The *American Heritage Dictionary* characterizes

sprawl as spreading out in a fashion that is "straggling or disordered," terms at least as undesirable as *careless* and *awkward*.

The anti-sprawl movement itself provides the most damning characterizations of urban sprawl. For example, the Sierra Club says that sprawl is "irresponsible, often poorly-planned development that destroys green space, increases traffic and air pollution, crowds schools and drives up taxes." Surely, no one could be in favor of something that is both irresponsible and poorly planned. But, of course, words do not necessarily convey reality, and value-laden words such as *irresponsible* are particularly unreliable. What is irresponsible to the Sierra Club may be responsible to others, and what is poorly planned to the Sierra Club may be well planned to others.

A respected dictionary should rise above subjectivity and define the term in an objective way. However, this is not so, at least not for the *American Heritage Dictionary,* which defines urban sprawl as "the unplanned, uncontrolled spreading of urban development into areas adjoining the edge of a city." The terms *unplanned* and *uncontrolled* convey negative connotations to a world conditioned to believe that planned is desirable and unplanned is not. This perception, of course, flies in the face of the collapse of planned economies and the continued success of economies that are relatively unplanned.

One of the frequent "places rated" publications provides another example. *Cities Ranked and Rated* devotes an entire page to urban sprawl, parroting commentary by the Sierra Club.[16] *Cities Ranked and Rated* goes on to note that a disadvantage of living and working in Atlanta is urban sprawl. Certainly, with its low population density, Atlanta can be considered the most sprawling major urban area in the world. Yet, the "scourge" of sprawl has not deterred people from moving there. Atlanta is not only the world's most sprawling large urban area, but it is also the high-income world's fastest-growing large urban area. *Cities Ranked and Rated* goes on to rank Atlanta as the best large metropolitan area in which to live. Perhaps the publication was engaging in an all-too-frequent obligatory condemnation of urban sprawl, or perhaps it, like the people moving to Atlanta, see urban sprawl as being nothing to be terribly concerned about.

Six smaller metropolitan areas are ranked above Atlanta, but none has more than 1,000,000 residents. This means, of course, that Atlanta is rated above Portland, the urban planning Nirvana. However damning urban sprawl might be in the dogma of the anti-suburban movement, it is not a barrier to an attractive and superior quality of life.

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Objective Terms

Objective discourse requires objective terminology. If urban sprawl is an undeniable scourge, then objective analysis and terminology will not prevent its diagnosis and cure. If, on the other hand, urban sprawl is not inherently evil, no amount of ideological or religious condemnation or damning terminology will make it so.

A semantically biased debate has great potential to lead to misdiagnosis and adoption of strategies that would worsen long-term outcomes. It is not necessary to venture outside the topic of urban planning for a precedent. In the 1950s and 1960s, urban planners in the United States were convinced that cities would be strengthened by urban renewal and high-rise public housing for low-income citizens. Of course, these views have been so roundly discredited that today's urban planners seem to pretend that the planners who implemented the programs were not their intellectual ancestors.

However, objective terminology is available, as provided by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*:[17] "the spreading of urban developments (as houses and shopping centers) on undeveloped land near a city."

In this definition, Merriam-Webster does not offer an opinion on whether *spreading of urban developments on undeveloped land on land near a city* is good or bad. As a result, the definition achieves the necessary objective.

Moreover, the *spreading of urban developments on undeveloped land on land near a city* is both simple and consistent with the perceived problems as expressed in much of the anti-sprawl literature. The anti-sprawl movement generally believes that urban areas have expanded their land area too much and that further expansion must be stopped or severely restricted. At the same time, those who do not see urban sprawl as an inherent evil will generally have no difficulty defining urban sprawl as *the spreading of urban development on undeveloped land near a city.* As used herein, *urban sprawl* will refer to the Merriam Webster definition, *the spreading of urban development on undeveloped land near a city.*

However, a problem remains. The doctrinaire connotations that accompany the term *urban sprawl* are so intense that its use in objective discussion is difficult. Thus, a synonym is needed that is not laden with the negative connotations of urban sprawl. Fortunately, there is one. *Suburbanization* is a virtual synonym of *urban sprawl.* Merriam-Webster defines *suburban* as "an outlying part of a city or town." Thus, suburbanization is the process of developing *an outlying part of a city or town,* the same as *the spreading of urban development on undeveloped land near a city.* Indeed, as will be shown (Chapter 3), contemporary urban sprawl

might be thought of as urban growth, because nearly all urban population growth has been suburban (sprawling) for decades throughout the high-income world.

Suburbanization and urban growth do not convey inherently negative or positive connotations. Thus, the terms *suburbanization*, *suburban*, and *urban growth* will be used as objective synonyms to describe the pejorative term *urban sprawl*. Those who seek to stop or curb suburbanization will be referred to as anti-suburban.

Purported Suburbanization Ills and Smart Growth

Sustainability is at the core of transport and land-use policy around the world. Perhaps the most quoted definition comes from the Brundtland Report of the World Council on Environment and Development in 1987: "Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The anti-suburban movement generally believes that modern urbanization patterns cannot be sustained, largely because of environmental considerations.

The anti-suburban movement has also successfully employed semantics to characterize their purported solutions, calling them *smart growth*. Few would want to position themselves against something so semantically virtuous. As a result, interest groups from environmentalists to homebuilders have attempted to define the term *smart growth* to suit their own purposes.

The term *smart growth* has become little more than a mantra that means one thing to anti-suburbanites and quite another to others. Smart growth has become, in words penned by St. Paul, "all things to all men."Some smart growth strategies would place significant restrictions on development and people. Other smart growth strategies, such as liberalizing residential zoning requirements, would increase development opportunities and make more choices available to people. The focus here will be on the intrusive strategies that interfere with the pursuit of preferences by people.

The Anti-Suburban Vision

The anti-suburban vision seeks more compact urban areas, in which it is assumed there would be much greater reliance on mass transit, and much less use of cars. Planning would be focused at the regional level, and less at the local government level. People would live closer to where they worked. Retail stores would be smaller and closer to residences. It is claimed that housing would be less costly, and there would be less traffic. The more compact development would, it is claimed, reduce government costs.