

# **Urban Sprawl**

**CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES & POLICY RESPONSES**

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# Urban Sprawl and the Uneven Development of Metropolitan America

Gregory D. Squires

“If you people can’t afford to live in our town, then you’ll just have to leave.”

Bill Haines, Mayor of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, 1970  
(Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal 1995, 2)

“Urban sprawl is public enemy No. 1.”

Suburban Milwaukee resident (Lorenzen 2000, 13A)

One fall afternoon in 1999, two soccer moms played cat-and-mouse games during the homebound rush hour on the increasingly congested Interstate 65 outside of Birmingham, Alabama. After tailgating, lane changing, and brake slamming over four miles of expressway, they came to a red light. Gena Foster jumped out of her sport-utility vehicle and approached Shirley Henson in her Toyota 4Runner. Henson grabbed her .38 caliber revolver, lowered her window, and shot Foster to death. In recent years, traffic has doubled on this stretch of highway, which remains just two lanes each way, as the pace of sprawl outgrows Shelby County’s ability to expand the local infrastructure. Heightened “road rage” is just one of the costs.

Nationwide, the American Automobile Association’s Foundation for Traffic Safety reported an increase of road rage incidents of nearly 60 percent between 1991 and 1996 resulting in 28,000 deaths annually during these years. Increasing traffic congestion and the accompanying stress that are associated with urban and suburban sprawl reflect the social costs of the nation’s emerging patterns of metropolitan development

(Putnam 2000: 142–143; Sipress 1999). The social impact of uneven spatial development in urban America, however, is not a new story.

Uneven development has long been the preeminent feature of urban and metropolitan growth in the United States. In recent years, the word “sprawl” has crept into the vocabulary of scholars, public officials, and community organization leaders who are wrestling with diverse challenges posed by urban life (Galster et al. 2000). Anthony Downs, long one of the nation’s most distinguished students of the city, concluded, “Suburban sprawl has been the dominant form of metropolitan-area growth in the United States for the past 50 years” (Downs 1998, 8).

The patterns of growth noted by Downs are intricately interwoven with the range of problems long associated with cities. This book examines the multifaceted causes and consequences of sprawl and uneven development generally as well as the debates over a range of proposed policy responses. It explores the many social costs attributed to sprawl as well as the benefits that some attribute to this form of development. In addition, it examines what has been learned from various efforts to counter emerging patterns of uneven development and mitigate the accompanying costs. The overriding focus of these debates remains the uneven development of the cities and suburbs that form the nation’s metropolitan communities.

### **Structural, Spatial, and Social Development of Metropolitan Communities**

Sprawl can be defined as a pattern of urban and metropolitan growth that reflects low-density, automobile-dependent, exclusionary new development on the fringe of settled areas often surrounding a deteriorating city. Among the traits of metropolitan growth frequently associated with sprawl are unlimited outward extension of development; low-density housing and commercial development; leapfrog development, “edge cities,” and more recently “edgeless cities”; fragmentation of land use planning among multiple municipalities; reliance on private automobiles for transportation; large fiscal disparities among municipalities; segregation of types of land use; race and class-based exclusionary housing and employment; congestion and environmental damage; and a declining sense of community among area residents (Downs 1999; Garreau 1991; Katz and Bradley 1999; Lang 2000; Rusk 1999). However, these spatial patterns of development are rooted in a context of substantial economic restructuring. Moreover, these spatial and structural

changes exacerbate a number of social problems that have long plagued urban communities. Each of these trajectories of change, in turn, feeds back and nurtures the other.

During the past five decades, two major forms of economic restructuring have changed the face of urban communities. The loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs coupled with the growth of service positions—including high-paid producer service industries (e.g., accounting, finance, law, management, information processing) and low-wage personal services jobs (e.g., hotel and restaurant workers)—have fueled the uneven development of metropolitan areas. If the 1970s represented the decade of deindustrialization, the basic pattern persisted through the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1988 and 1998, manufacturing employment dropped from 19.3 million to 18.8 million, while those employed in services and retail trade grew from 50.5 million to 66.5 million (Bluestone and Harrison 2000, 228). Increasing globalization of the economy, whereby production is decentralized while control and administration are centralized, has furthered these trends. The growing significance of finance, information, and communication industries has exacerbated these geopolitical dimensions of economic activity (Bluestone and Harrison 1982, 2000; Harrison and Bluestone 1988; Wilson 1987, 1996, 1999; Sassen 1994). These economic shifts have stimulated the development of downtown office space, convention centers, and cultural facilities where relatively well-off professionals work and play, and the suburban communities where they tend to live. So downtown and outlying suburban development has proceeded while many urban neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs have deteriorated.

These structural and spatial developments have, in turn, nurtured growing inequalities of income and wealth. Between the early 1970s and mid-1990s, median household income declined by 2 percent from \$33,006 to \$32,264. While it rose slightly in the late 1990s, it remains below the 1989 median in terms of purchasing power. Those in the bottom fifth saw their share of income drop between 1977 and 1999 from 5.7 percent to 4.2 percent while the share going to the top fifth grew from 44.2 percent to 50.4 percent. More significantly, the buying power of household income for those in the bottom 60 percent—the majority of households—declined, with the steepest declines experienced by those in the bottom fifth. Meanwhile, those in the top 1 percent experienced a 120 percent increase in their household income, from \$234,700 to \$515,600. During the mid-1970s, CEOs at major corporations earned 41 times the income of typical factory workers. By 1996, this ratio

reached 209. The share of total wealth held by the top 1 percent grew from 33 percent in 1962 to 39 percent in 1997. Such inequalities are the highest in the industrial world (Blau 1999, 12–17; Wolff 1994, 8–10; Marshall 2000, 3–7; Johnston 1999, 14). Moreover, despite many advances in civil rights, black median family income dropped from 58.7 percent of the non-Hispanic white median in 1972 to 57.0 percent in 1998. The decline for Hispanic families was even steeper, from 70.0 percent to 57.4 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 1999, B-8, B-9). The economic expansion of the 1990s began to trickle down to those in the lower economic rungs in the last two or three years of the decade, but this has not altered the fundamental patterns that have emerged over the past quarter century (Teixeira and Rogers 2000, 57–61).

These developments feed back on each other. Households with lower incomes and the greatest economic need find housing in suburban communities, where jobs are growing fastest, increasingly difficult to afford. As jobs become more distant, it is also more difficult to participate in informal networks through which job placements are often made. This is most evident for racial minorities and particularly African Americans. As jobs and particularly those that pay a living wage become harder to find, poverty, and the concentration of poverty, increase in urban areas. Tax revenues and public services decline. As physical conditions deteriorate and resources leave the community, so-called “underclass behaviors” that are at variance with what are traditionally viewed as mainstream or middle-class norms increase. These communities become less attractive to private capital. These cycles are mutually reinforcing. Uneven economic, spatial, and social development are all interrelated pieces of the metropolitan puzzle (Jargowsky 1996; Wilson 1987, 1996; Massey and Denton 1993).

It is important to note that these developments are not inevitable, and they do not flow naturally from free market forces. Markets are real and people do make choices. However, markets operate within, and individual choices are constrained by, public policy and private sector decisionmaking. Tax policies have long favored new development in outlying communities and overseas over reinvestment in older urban facilities and communities. Demands for tax breaks from state and local governments and concessions from unions, along with the proliferation of contingent work forces, have intensified various trajectories of economic inequality. Many employers have replaced full-time workers with part-time and temporary workers, consultants, subcontractors, and other

contingent workers. Two-tiered wage plans have been implemented, offering far lower wages to new entrants into the workforce than veterans performing the same tasks receive. Moreover, while the minimum wage was recently increased, corporate pressure continues to keep its value below what it was 20 years ago. Urban renewal programs destroyed many city neighborhoods in favor of downtown business development. Federally subsidized highways and mortgage loans fueled suburban development and expedited inner city decline. Exclusionary zoning laws by most suburban municipalities, racial steering by real estate agents, and redlining by financial institutions created and continue to reinforce segregated housing patterns (Orfield 1997; Holland 1986; Goldsmith and Blakely 1992; Jackson 1985; Rusk 1999; Squires 1994; Harrison and Bluestone 1988; Marshall 2000; Luria and Rogers 1999).

This confluence of intersecting forces of uneven development has framed the evolution of urban and metropolitan communities in recent decades. It is also the context within which prevailing debates over urban and suburban sprawl have emerged.

### Sprawling Patterns of Development

For decades, cities have been expanding upward and outward. Technological innovations like structural steel and elevators made high-rise buildings possible, fueling a proliferation of skylines and concentrated settlements across urban communities. Air-conditioning opened up the South to development (Contosta 1998). More dramatic has been the outward expansion of cities and metropolitan areas. The sheer numbers of people accounted for part of this growth, but the number of square miles of land that has been developed has proceeded at a far greater pace than the increase in population. Transportation technologies, including the emergence of trains and automobiles, played an important role. But the outward expansion has been driven by a number of political, economic, and social forces and has been closely associated with emerging inequalities in the distribution of wealth produced in those communities and nationwide.

Between 1950 and 1990, metropolitan areas expanded from 208,000 square miles housing 84 million people to 585,000 square miles housing 193 million. Population in these communities grew by 128 percent while the land area on which they resided grew 181 percent. Population density declined from 407 to 330 persons per square mile. Urban commu-

nities have been consuming land at a rate that is approximately 50 percent greater than the population growth (Rusk 1999, 68). In the 1990s, land consumption proceeded at twice the rate of the population increase (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, 40). At the same time the number of political jurisdictions within metropolitan areas increased from 193 to approximately 9,600 cities, towns, villages, townships, and counties (Rusk 1999, 67). In 1960, the nation's population was roughly one-third urban, one-third rural, and one-third suburban. By 1990, suburbanites were close to half the population (Schneider 1992, 33) and in 1992, for the first time, they accounted for a majority of the nation's voters (Dreier 2000, 7). In addition, while in recent years several downtown areas have experienced a population increase and project more in the near future (The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and the Fannie Mae Foundation 1998), the overwhelming continuing pattern is the exodus of households from central cities to the suburbs. In 1996 alone, 2.7 million people left a city for a suburb while just 800,000 made the opposite move (Katz and Bradley 1999, 27). Between 1970 and 2000, the suburban share of the total metropolitan population increased consistently from 55.1 percent to 62.2 percent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, 63). This pattern accelerated in the 1990s relative to the previous decade. Between 1990 and 2000, the suburban population grew by 17.7 percent compared with 8.0 percent for central cities (U.S. Census Bureau 2001; Lewis Mumford Center 2001).

More significant than these demographic shifts is the growing inequality associated with the spatial developments. In 1960, per capita income in cities was 105 percent of their surrounding suburbs. By 1990, that ratio fell to 84 percent (Cisneros 1993, 25). Poverty rates rose by more than half in the nation's cities, increasing from 12.6 percent in 1970 to just over 20 percent in 1995, while rising slightly in the suburbs from 7 percent to just under 9 percent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1997, 32, Exhibit 8). Cities tended to gain lower-income residents and lose upper-income residents, while the share of families in each income group remained virtually unchanged in the suburbs. Between 1969 and 1998, the share of families in central cities with low incomes grew from 21.9 percent to 25.5 percent while the share with high incomes declined from 18.3 percent to 16.6 percent. In the suburbs, low-income residents accounted for 14.8 percent of the total in 1969 and 14.9 percent in 1998, while high-income families accounted

for 26.2 percent and 25.8 percent during these years (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, 22). Middle-income residents declined in central cities from 59.9 percent to 57.6 percent, while the share of middle-income residents remained virtually the same in the suburbs (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1997, 38). These income disparities reflect shifts in the number and types of jobs by region. Manufacturing and professional service jobs shifted toward suburban and downtown areas generally benefiting suburban over urban residents (Ginzberg 1993). Even during the mid-1990s, at the heart of one of the longest economic expansions in the nation's history, job growth was greater in suburban than in urban communities. A study of 92 large metropolitan areas found that 75 percent of cities lost private-sector employment market share to their suburbs (Brennan and Hill 1999, 1). Between 1992 and 1997, the share of metropolitan area jobs located in the suburbs increased from 55 percent to 57 percent, with the rate of job growth reaching 17.8 percent in the suburbs compared with 8.5 percent in cities (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, X, 10). While cities have made a slight comeback relative to their suburban ring on some economic measures, development patterns of recent decades have overwhelmingly favored suburban communities, and it would be premature to conclude that this basic trend has been reversed (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, iv).

Perhaps even more noteworthy are four concomitant trends. First, disparities between central cities along with their inner-ring suburbs and the newer outer-ring suburbs (the "favored quarter") in many metropolitan areas are growing (Orfield 1997). Second, in most metropolitan areas, incomes in central cities and suburbs have tended to move in the same direction. During the 1980s, when incomes of central cities increased, the incomes of suburban residents increased as well, but at a higher rate. When incomes of central city residents declined, so did that of neighboring suburbanites, though not to the same extent (Cisneros 1993, 23, 24; Luria and Rogers 1999, 10–11). Third, poverty has become much more concentrated. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of census tracts in which the poverty rate was 40 percent or greater and the number of people living in such tracts doubled (Jargowsky 1996, 30). Fourth, racial segregation persists as a central feature of metropolitan housing markets, particularly in those communities with large African-American populations. The 2000 census shows that a substantial number of racial minorities moved to the suburbs during the 1990s. In the nation's 100 largest

cities, non-Hispanic whites constitute a majority of the population in just 52 cities, down from 70 in 1990. However, racial minorities, and particularly African Americans, remain highly segregated from white households and neighborhoods (Lewis Mumford Center 2001; Schmitt 2001). Unlike the case for other racial minorities, education and income do not affect the extent to which African Americans are segregated from whites in the nation's dual housing markets (Massey and Denton 1993; Denton 1999).

Overall, the basic pattern of urban development during the post-World War II years has been one of outward expansion. People, resources, and wealth have consistently shifted away from city centers. Moreover, this expansion has been associated with various trajectories of inequality and uneven development.

### Causes of Sprawl and Uneven Development

Families choose to live in those communities that offer the most attractive bundle of goods the families can afford. The quality of local schools, crime rates, access to retail shops, availability of parks and playgrounds, fire and police protection, and transportation networks are among the amenities most families consider. Similarly, businesses locate where it is most profitable for them to do so. Safety and transportation issues are a concern to businesses as well. Access to markets and raw materials are often considerations. In his influential essay, Charles Tiebout (1956) argued that metropolitan areas are best served by competition among local governments to provide the most attractive bundle of goods that households and businesses will select by voting with their feet. This perspective continues to shape much land use planning and scholarly debate on metropolitan development (Hayward 1998). However, these competitive processes do not exist, and individual choices are not made, in the laissez-faire environment envisioned by such rational choice proponents. Public policy decisions at all levels of government and decisions by many private businesses, particularly large corporate entities, sharply curtail the choices for many and nurture the uneven development of cities and metropolitan areas.

A critical feature of land use planning in the United States is the deference state governments have long provided to local jurisdictions. Ease of municipal incorporation coupled with a fiscal system that finances most local services from the local tax base has led to the balkanization of

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many metropolitan areas and pervasive exclusionary practices among outlying suburban authorities (Altshuler et al. 1999).

In his discussion of “the sprawl machine,” David Rusk (1999, 82–100) describes the major forces that have nurtured this pattern of development. Subsidies for homeownership and the automobile have been particularly critical. The advent of the long-term, 30-year mortgage, coupled with federally subsidized mortgage insurance in the 1930s that permitted routine down payments of 20 percent and often 10 percent and even less, made homeownership available to many households that otherwise could never contemplate owning their own home (Jackson 1985). The creation of government-sponsored enterprises such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Ginnie Mae provided far greater access to mortgage credit, particularly in newer suburban communities. Federal tax laws that enable homeowners to deduct the interest on their mortgage loans and property taxes on their homes further subsidize homeownership and encourage those who can afford to buy to purchase even larger, more expensive homes. This multibillion dollar tax break, more than half of which goes to households with incomes above \$100,000, far exceeds any assistance going to renters or low-income households generally (Goldsmith 1999, 4; Harney 2002). In 1997, the foregone taxes were more than four times HUD’s direct spending on housing subsidies, a benefit more likely to accrue to low-income families (Pastor et al. 2000, 175). In 2000, this deduction provided \$74 billion in benefits, with the wealthiest 1 percent of taxpayers receiving 21 percent of the benefit compared with a benefit of less than 2 percent for the bottom half of all taxpayers. HUD’s total annual subsidies for low- and moderate-income housing reaches approximately \$16 billion (Fox 2001). Federally subsidized highways, cheap fuel provided by keeping taxes on gasoline far below the rate of other industrialized countries, and the far greater pressure on mass transit systems than highways to pay for themselves all assist outlying auto-dependent suburban development, often at the expense of urban communities.

The exclusionary nature of these policies has sometimes been indirect, but at other times it has been quite explicit. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which insured mortgage loans almost exclusively in suburban communities from its inception in the 1930s through the early 1960s, “warned of inharmonious racial groups” and observed in its early underwriting manuals that “if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes. A change in social or racial occupancy

generally contributes to instability and a decline in values" (U.S. Federal Housing Administration 1938, par. 937). Until the 1948 Supreme Court case of *Shelley v. Kramer*, racially restrictive covenants were enforceable by the court system. Exclusionary zoning ordinances (e.g., minimum lot sizes, maximum density requirements, and limitations on multifamily housing) persist in most suburban communities today. While the stated objective generally is to preserve the character of the local community, racial segregation is often the effect. Moreover, this is not always an unintended effect. When the mayor of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, told those people who could not afford the cost of housing in his community that they would simply have to leave, there was little doubt in anybody's mind that he was referring to people of color.

Government, however, is not acting alone. Various arms of the private housing industry have shaped and perpetuated dispersed and racially segregated housing markets. Racial steering by real estate agents, red-lining by mortgage lenders and property insurers, and discriminatory appraisal practices all serve to favor development in outlying, predominantly white communities while acting to limit housing choice and undercut property values in low-income urban communities, particularly those with high concentrations of minority populations (Fix and Turner 1999; Turner and Skidmore 1999; Squires 1997).

Dispersal of business activity also reflects both public policy and private decisionmaking, again with adverse racial affects and in ways that exacerbate inequality generally. When businesses relocate or expand in outlying suburban areas and avoid more central urban locations, they often do so, again, because of the amenities and profit-making potential those locations offer. Undeveloped "greenfield" sites outside of central cities are often cheaper to develop than "brownfield" sites within cities that had previously been used for other purposes. Reducing the cost of labor has been another objective. Dispersal has also long been a strategy used by some businesses to discourage organizing efforts and to allow management to exert greater control over labor (Gordon 1978). However, these decisions are not simply responses to signals emitted by a free market. Public policy decisions that result in increasing subsidization of roads, sewer systems, and other infrastructure requirements of newer, outlying communities coupled with the deterioration of the urban infrastructure, at least in part because of inadequate public investment, help local businesses make such decisions.

In efforts to compete with neighboring jurisdictions and to attract capital from outside the region altogether, local jurisdictions often offer

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tax abatements, below-market-rate loans, training grants, and other subsidies. There is much debate over the impact of such development strategies, particularly in terms of whether they result in increased economic activity, tax revenues, and jobs, or simply a rearrangement of where that economic activity, which would have taken place anyway, occurs (Barnekov, Boyle, and Rich 1989; LeRoy 1997; Ellen and Schwartz 2000). While some communities may gain, at least in the short run, there is evidence that such competition often hurts central cities while benefiting already-prospering surrounding suburban municipalities. One recent study of the Twin Cities area, for example, found that the suburb of Anoka—located 15 miles northwest of Minneapolis—attracted 29 firms and 1,600 jobs with a tax incentive. All the relocations occurred within the metropolitan area, with 15 of the firms moving from Minneapolis or one of its inner-ring suburbs. The net effect of these subsidized relocations was to move jobs away from the region's minority and low-income population (LeRoy, Hinkley, and Tallman 2000). The city of Minneapolis and its inner-ring suburbs were clearly hurt by this move. While Anoka benefited, it is unclear if this represented a net gain for the region, or whether the outlying suburbs needed such subsidies to grow. As one local observer stated, "Subsidizing economic development in the suburbs is like paying teenagers to think about sex" (Wray 1999).

### Costs of Sprawl, Benefits of Sprawl

A number of costs have been attributed to sprawl and uneven development. In addition, several benefits have been noted as well. In fact, some of the apparent liabilities of sprawl have been pointed to as evidence of its contribution to the welfare of metropolitan areas.

Perhaps the most concrete costs associated with sprawl are various environmental problems that are exacerbated by this pattern of development. The outward expansion of metropolitan areas, particularly given the automobile-dependent lifestyle it nurtures, increases air pollution and a range of diseases including asthma, lung cancer, and heart problems. Water quality erodes as development increases pollution that poisons rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water. Consumption patterns stimulate greater use of energy, despoil forests, damage the stratospheric ozone layer, and possibly contribute to global warming. Farm and forestland itself is consumed as residential and commercial development proceeds

outward (Goldsmith 1999, 19). In chapter 2, "The Environmental Impacts of Sprawl," David Cieslewicz examines the range of environmental impacts and their uneven consequences for metropolitan areas and their surrounding regions.

Fiscal disparities among communities are intensified, which augment several trajectories of inequality. Outlying wealthy communities have a larger tax base and fewer social service needs to finance. Disparities in the quality of public services grow. Equal educational opportunity has become a mirage in part because of the reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools. As industry seeks out those outlying communities, the relocation of jobs exacerbates urban/suburban economic disparities. The growing concentration of poverty and hypersegregation of urban communities are both causes and effects of these trends. In turn, these developments are associated with crime rates, drug use, racial tensions, and other social costs that are higher than might otherwise be the case (Altshuler et al. 1999; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987, 1996; Jargowsky 1996; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). In chapter 3, "Sprawl, Concentration of Poverty, and Urban Inequality," Paul Jargowsky examines the increasing inequality and concentration of poverty in metropolitan areas. In chapter 4, "Sprawl, Fragmentation, and the Persistence of Racial Inequality," John Powell shows how that concentration is "racialized" and explores the impact of sprawl on the opportunity structure confronting racial minorities generally.

Discussions of sprawl and associated costs often focus on transportation and land use. Sprawl often leads to inefficient land use practices. Sprawling development requires large infrastructure investments for roads, sewer systems, schools, and other public services. At the same time, infrastructure within central areas goes unused and, in some cases, deteriorates due to inadequate public investment. Traffic congestion results in more people spending more time in their automobiles (Downs 1998, 9; Duany et al. 2000, 85–99; Sierra Club 2000). In addition, it contributes to the increasing occurrence of road rage leading to conflicts—and increasingly killings—among drivers, as noted earlier in the shooting death of a young mother in a Birmingham, Alabama, suburb (Sipress 1999). An emerging issue that has not been systematically explored is the impact of such development on families. In chapter 5, "Transportation, Land Use, and the Impacts of Sprawl on Poor Children and Families," Amy Helling reveals how the quality of life for many households, particularly those in disadvantaged circumstances, is limited by common planning practices and the sprawling patterns of development they nurture.

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Sense of community and connectedness to place are often undermined by these patterns of development and not just for those at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. While there are obvious benefits to mobility, freedom itself and the capacity to fully actualize one's individuality can be harmed by the absence of a place and community in which one's life is embedded (Bellah et al. 1985; Langdon 1994; Leach 1999; Moe and Wilkie 1997; Duany et al. 2000). Sprawl undercuts civic engagement due to the time spent commuting, the increasing segregation and homogeneity of neighborhoods, and the growing separation of home and work, all of which nurture physical and social fragmentation (Putnam 2000). Spatial and socioeconomic polarization are intricately integrated phenomena. Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich wrote about "the secession of the successful" in describing how the wealthiest fifth of U.S. families were basically removing themselves from the public lives of their communities, and the severe costs of that secession (Reich 1991). Wealthy families increasingly move into gated communities (Blakely and Snyder 1997) where they are protected by private security guards. They seek out their recreation at private clubs. They send their children to private schools. In doing so, their support for public services, including public schools, wanes, and those institutions, along with the people served by them, suffer.

Even many of the apparent winners in the process of sprawl and uneven development, however, are starting to experience severe costs. Families of inner-ring suburbs who thought they had escaped the woes of the city now find that they incur some of the same costs as development spins further outward. Many suburban employers cannot find the workers they need, in part because of the unaffordability of suburban housing. The cost of housing has increased much faster than incomes for decades, but even during the recent economic expansion, between 1997 and 1999, rents and house prices grew by more than twice the rate of inflation (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2000, viii). Some employers have taken extraordinary measures to assist selected employees. For example, the Milwaukee suburb of Elm Grove, where the median housing value is approximately \$250,000 compared with \$120,000 for the metropolitan area, subsidizes a second mortgage of \$65,000 for three years for its village manager so that person can afford to live in the village. This incentive is worth almost \$4,000 to the incumbent. Since the funds are taken from an account that pays 5 percent interest, which is the rate of the loan, all the village loses is some liquidity, according to Village Manager Andrea Steen Crawford (2000). According

to Michele Frisby of the International City Management Association, more lucrative incentive programs are increasingly common in communities where the cost of housing is well above the metropolitan area average (Ortiz 1999). Many employers find they have to offer higher salaries, pay more for relocation expenses, buy an employee's former home, and subsidize various costs associated with homeownership to attract executives (Dreier, Schwartz, and Greiner 1988). Many communities would also like schoolteachers, police officers, firefighters, and other municipal employees to live in town. Moreover, some private firms would like their factory workers and office staff to have a similar opportunity. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult to accomplish (Squires et al. 1999).

Urban and suburban sprawl do provide benefits for at least some residents. Such development provides a low-density lifestyle with ease of commuting and access to shopping for those who live and work in selected suburban areas. It provides greater separation from the problems of poverty, racial conflict, and other issues generally associated with city life. Clearly, many families prefer single-family homes on large lots in communities that are distant from urban centers (Danielsen, Lang, and Fulton 1999, 521–522; Downs 1998, 8; Gordon and Richardson 2000, 6, 14–15). Arguing that the share of land consumed by development is quite small relative to the total amount of land in the United States (about 3.4 percent), further sprawl is advocated as a key to creating opportunities for racial minorities and immigrants who are just starting to enjoy the American dream and to encourage economic growth generally (Easterbrook 1999, 543). If there are costs associated with sprawl, from this perspective they are well worth the price. For example, traffic congestion may be a problem for some. But, it is argued, this reflects the increasing opportunities for women and racial minorities to get good jobs, buy decent cars, and get to work in the same comfort that others have long enjoyed (Hayward 1998, 12).

No doubt many families have indeed enjoyed the lifestyle afforded them by current patterns of uneven spatial and socioeconomic development. However, the costs are mounting and communities are starting to respond. In 1998, more than 240 initiatives were placed on local and state ballots seeking to limit the adverse effects of sprawl. In 1999, 1,000 land use measures were introduced in state legislatures and 200 were enacted into law (Rinard 2000). That same year President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore issued a "Building Livable Communities" proposal calling for several federal actions to ameliorate sprawl (Office of

the Vice President 1999). Many of these initiatives call for regional planning to stem the growth of outward development and encourage development in central locations through brownfield redevelopment, in-fill housing, and new business expansion that utilizes existing infrastructure. If most of these proposals focused on preserving open space and reducing traffic for middle-class residents enjoying their suburban lifestyle, it is also the case that affordable housing, access to jobs, and related equity issues have drawn increasing attention. Over the past few decades, public policy has therefore been somewhat contradictory; some actions fueled sprawl while others were designed to limit this pattern of development. Hank Savitch discusses the contradictions that have emerged from the intersections of federal, state, and local policy in chapter 6, "Encourage, Then Cope: Washington and the Sprawl Machine."

### Responses to Sprawl and Uneven Development

Contradictory forces, both public and private, have historically shaped urban and metropolitan development. In recent years, many communities have responded to the phenomena of sprawl and uneven development with a range of so-called "smart growth" proposals that embody many common themes and practices. In general, such proposals call for more metropolitan or regional planning that makes more efficient use of existing resources and provides a more equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of uneven development. Among the objectives of many proposals are

1. more effective reuse of existing land and infrastructure resources,
2. restrictions on development in outlying suburban and exurban areas,
3. development of a range of transportation modes and less reliance on the automobile,
4. concentration of residential and commercial development in central locations and along the lines of mass transit arteries,
5. creation of areawide revenue sharing and regional investment pools,
6. more affordable housing construction and distribution of such housing throughout metropolitan areas,

7. more vigorous enforcement of fair housing laws, and
8. increased public and private investment in central cities to achieve more balanced development throughout the region.

Some communities now have several years of experience with anti-sprawl policy initiatives. Others have more recently launched ambitious planning efforts. While the jury is still out on many of these initiatives, some of the results are in.

Atlanta, for example, is often referred to as the poster child for urban sprawl. In 1999, the governor of Georgia was given substantial zoning and land use planning authority allowing him to override local controls in order to stem sprawl and encourage development within the city. In chapter 7, "Suburban Expansion in Atlanta: 'The City without Limits' Faces Some," Charles Jaret examines events leading up to these developments in Atlanta and what has transpired in these early efforts.

In 1979, Portland, Oregon, created an urban growth boundary around the metropolitan area that encourages investment in the downtown and central city areas while discouraging development beyond that boundary. There has been considerable debate over the impact of this policy, whether it has achieved the intended effects, and whether there have been unintended negative consequences. In chapter 8, "Planning a Sustainable City: The Promise and Performance of Portland's Urban Growth Boundary," Carl Abbott examines Portland's history and concludes that overall it is achieving the original goals.

In recent years a legislative coalition in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area has created and expanded the authority of the Metropolitan Council to address several land use planning issues. One of the most controversial policy initiatives in that community has been a successful push for regional tax base revenue sharing, which has substantially reduced per capita property tax disparities in the region. In chapter 9, "Politics and Regionalism," Myron Orfield examines the historical contours of regional reform efforts and how initial opposition to tax base sharing in the Twin Cities was overcome by the creation of a coalition that included the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and older inner-ring suburbs experiencing fiscal and social distress.

Chicago has experienced many of the same trends that have affected the Twin Cities and many other metropolitan areas. In chapter 10, "Less Sprawl, Greater Equity? The Potential for Revenue Sharing in the Chicago Region," Wim Wiewel, Joe Persky, and Kimberly Schaffer exam-

ine the potential benefits that might accrue to Chicago residents from some form of tax base revenue sharing.

In 1997, the state of Maryland enacted one of the most comprehensive, statewide smart growth legislative programs providing incentives for in-fill development while denying similar subsidies for projects outside of the target area. In chapter 11, "Maryland's 'Smart Growth': Using Incentives to Combat Sprawl," Jim Cohen explores what will be required for this initiative to have a positive impact on urban development.

These policy initiatives and the regional planning perspective generally have their detractors. As indicated above, some observers find sprawl to be a sign of progress that should be encouraged rather than a problem to be ameliorated. From this perspective, efforts to limit sprawl are self-serving tactics to preserve a lifestyle for those who have already achieved it while pulling up the ladder behind them and denying it to others (Easterbrook 1999). It is argued that there are unintended consequences, such as the rising prices of housing in Portland, which make homeownership more difficult for low-income residents (Hayward 1998; Gordon and Richardson 2000). To the extent that there are problems, market-based solutions would be more effective from this perspective. For example, if traffic congestion is a problem, then perhaps the solution is more tolls for those who use the roads and highways (Fischel 1999). In the 12th and final chapter, "Equity and the Future Politics of Growth," Jeff Henig examines the competing claims and potential steps that might be responsive to the problems of sprawl, focusing on the equity issues associated with uneven development.

### The Uneven Future of Metropolitan Development

In 1999, the Fannie Mae Foundation surveyed 149 urban experts—members of the Society for American City and Regional Planning History—to compile a list of the top 10 influences on the American metropolis over the past 50 years and the 10 most likely influences for the next 50 years (Fishman 1999, 2000). Almost every item on each list constitutes a critical piece of the current debate over urban sprawl and what, if anything, should be done.

The top 10 influences of the past 50 years were

1. the 1956 Interstate Highway Act and dominance of the automobile,
2. FHA mortgage financing and subdivision regulation,

3. deindustrialization of central cities,
4. urban renewal,
5. Levittown and the mass-produced suburban tract home,
6. racial segregation and job discrimination in cities and suburbs,
7. enclosed shopping malls,
8. sunbelt-style sprawl,
9. air-conditioning, and
10. the urban riots of the 1960s.

All of these influences have been identified as engines fueling the dynamics of sprawl and uneven development. Potential future consequences of such development, and potential solutions to the associated costs were also noted in the 10 most likely future influences:

1. growing disparities of wealth
2. suburban political majority
3. aging of the baby boomers
4. perpetual "underclass" in central cities and inner-ring suburbs
5. "smart growth" environmental and planning initiatives to limit sprawl
6. Internet
7. deterioration of "first-ring" post-1945 suburbs
8. shrinking household size
9. expanded superhighway system of "outer beltways" to serve new, edge cities
10. racial integration as part of the increasing diversity in cities and suburbs

Clearly, sprawl has been the dominant pattern of urban and metropolitan development over recent decades and one that is likely to persist into the near future. However, it is not simply a spatial phenomenon. Sprawl is a pattern that is both a cause and consequence of economic restructuring and emerging social inequalities. These three trajectories of change—spatial, structural, and social—are parts of the same complex process of uneven development shaping urban and metropolitan development. This complex process presents many challenges for policy-makers, business leaders, community groups, and citizens alike. It is a challenge that may well be the central social policy question for the early years of the 21st century if not longer.

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