REFRAMING THE AMERICAN DREAM:

HOW LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE CAN BE A CATALYST FOR SUBURBAN

DEVELOPMENT CHANGE

by

ELIZABETH TABB ORMSBY

(Under the Direction of David Spooner)

ABSTRACT

The American Dream of home ownership - a detached single family house with a yard and car - has become deeply ingrained in the American psyche and culture. It has historically dictated suburban development patterns. This suburban development style causes many of the environmental, social and health problems plaguing American society today. An increasing number of Americans desire to live in walkable, diverse and environmentally responsible communities. Nevertheless, the entrenched ideology of the dream, and the powerful business and governmental interests that support it through marketing and political policies, prevent meaningful changes to existing development practices - preventing new development models to take root. This thesis will propose and outline the creation of a collaborative organization bringing together Architects and Urban Planners, under the leadership of Landscape Architects. This coalition can reframe the American Dream, by challenging business and political interests opposing a new American residential landscape.

INDEX WORDS: The American Dream, Home ownership, Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations, suburbia, suburban development, landscape architecture, suburban history, New Urbanism, Smart Growth, LEED ND

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ELIZABETH TABB ORMSBY

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Major Professor:	David Spooner
Committee:	Douglas Pardue
	Lara Mathes
	Gregg Hudspeth

DEDICATION

      This is dedicated to my father, who taught me to value education and love of learning. I wish you could be here to celebrate this accomplishment with me.

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Chapter I -

Overview: The American Dream (home ownership)

The American Dream reflected in home ownership - a detached single family house with a yard and car (Teaford 159; Archer 260) - has been carefully crafted by government and business interests to promote economic growth and national stability since its inception in the eighteenth century. The dream has changed over time, starting with Jefferson's ideal of the yeoman farmer, moving to the idea of the 'dream house,' and finally becoming The American Dream as it is now recognized following World War II. This dream - the postwar idea of it - is deeply ingrained in the American psyche and in many ways dictates suburban development patterns throughout the United States. This is in large part due to the representation of the single family house in advertising and media outlets as a secure place to raise a family away from the moral decay and squalor of city life, as a sound long term investment and as a status symbol of having 'made something' of yourself.

However, this dream and the sprawl development patterns based off of it, are shown to have caused environmental degradation, social stratification, and health problems such as hypertension and obesity (Teaford 190; Batchis 379). Suburban development patterns since World War II have emphasized car-oriented single family home developments where residents are separated not only from each other but from daily needs such as the grocery and work. These have single family detached homes, each with a yard and all connected by a network of neighborhood, feeder and arterial roads (Teaford 159; Batchis 398). This physical reality has caused Americans to walk less and drive more (Calthorpe 17), an activity that due to traffic congestion and the distances between destinations causes stress, hypertension and, ultimately

isolation (Teaford 188; Archer 293). Car oriented developments, and the lifestyle they enforce, disallow the informal social interactions that previous generations engaged in through daily errands and pedestrian interactions, unwittingly promoting an insular, socioeconomically stratified, and fearful society (Teaford 194; Nasser; Batchis 377; Farr 43).

In addition to these issues, traditional residential suburban patterns, based off of the family values and primary demographics of home owners of the mid twentieth century, were designed for the nuclear family (Archer 260). Home owners today are as likely to be empty nesters, singles, young couples without children, or single parents - all of whom are showing an increased desire to live in walkable, integrated communities as opposed to the typical suburban neighborhoods (Florida; Hester 208; Nelson 396). While these societal and environmental issues are well documented - and many design professionals have recently proposed healthier, walkable, mixed use development patterns - little has been done to make any sweeping changes in suburban build-out and design (Farr 29). These new development patterns, and the people and organizations supporting them, work on a site by site level focused on changing local regulations and zoning ordinances. They do this by working with activists, developers, and decision makers within a given community to change regulations and promote new development styles ("Smart Growth Network"; Farr 35). This approach has succeeded in amending local regulations that, until recently, made it illegal to build more compact, walkable, complete developments. However, it has had limited success in making large scale changes to national government policy or capturing the imagination of the general public.

The socially ingrained ideology of The American Dream creates barriers to making the policy changes necessary to redirect the course of suburban development - from traditional postwar patterns to newer patterns such as Smart Growth, New Urbanism, or LEED for Neighborhood Development. The modern idea of The American Dream comes from carefully constructed public relations, advertising campaigns, and political policies all put in place to grow

the American economy and secure public support (Strand; Archer 249-89). The traditional

American suburb is supported and protected by powerful business interests and lobbies that do

not wish to see changes in their profit margins (Strand; Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green*

Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 246; Archer 249-89). These groups understand the power

of advertising and public relations - and propaganda - and use them relentlessly as business

tools.

Today the American Dream of home ownership is a product of that public relations,

advertising and lobbying. It promotes a development style that forces tax payers to pay for the

infrastructure - new sewers, schools, roads and electricity - needed to support development

farther and farther from the urban core (Farr 49-50; Smith 8; Teaford 190). This destroys natural

areas and agricultural land in favor of single family subdivisions; a development model that

fewer and fewer American's prefer to live in (Hester 227; Florida; Nelson 396). Many landscape

architects, architects, planners, engineers, and social activists have independently tried to make

the public aware of the problems of traditional suburban development. They have had limited

success due to the strength of the businesses and lobbies backing existing patterns and the

embedded power The American Dream has within the American society psyche (Hayden

Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 246).

There are large groups of designers and planners who believe that changes in suburban

development patterns in the U.S. are necessary for our national health and well-being. A partial

list would include; members of the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) and United States Green

Building Council (USGBC), as well as practitioners of Smart Growth, Landscape Urbanism,

Sustainable Urbanism, and Transit Oriented Design. While all of these are good individual

efforts at change, the movement is lacking one concerted effort by all interested parties that

could rival the special interest groups that sustain the status quo. In addition to lacking unity

"...there has been an understandable but unfortunate tendency toward self-validation, resulting in an unwillingness to engage a larger, more comprehensive agenda (Farr 29)."

This is an unfortunate reality. While each of these design styles propose different methods of altering traditional suburban development patterns, they have many similarities. Each creates developments with a variety of residential options and associated retail areas that are pedestrian friendly, have access to alternative forms of transportation, and often incorporate green building practices into site design and planning. This style of development is referred to throughout this thesis as a 'complete community' due to the fact that it promotes a diversity of uses and socioeconomic groups, walkability, density and, general sustainability. These values often are important to retrofitting the American Dream, and through it, the American suburb. These ideals are generally shared among practitioners of landscape architecture, planning and architecture who are working for change to development practices. Thus, they can be used as a rallying point to bring these diverse and often competitive groups together.

It is important to note that it is not the goal of this thesis to argue which of the above groups has the 'right' design solution for America's suburbs. Nor is it to create a design solution, because the list of solution proposals is already a long one. That traditional development patterns continue is not due to a lack of other options but, as is theorized in this thesis, because of the lack of effective methods for educating the American public about alternative development styles and communicating the reasons for change. The focus is thus on the commonalities of the groups and people working for development change, and to propose a unified method of delivering their message that utilizes the same marketing and public relations techniques that created the modern American Dream of home ownership.

In addition to the problem of not having a unified voice, design professionals are also at the disadvantage of not having the marketing and public relations experience of the vested interest groups that stand against new policies and practices. These groups have won the

minds of the American public by creating broad support at the base. The new design patterns and theories mentioned above all call for top down education and change as opposed to working with the general public in order to create change from the bottom up. The large scale, far reaching revision of traditional development patterns will require popular support to force policy changes by both business and government. One of the most effective ways to gain this type of support is through an advertising and marketing campaign uniting landscape architects, planners and architects behind a shared message of changing development practices. This will inform the public of the very real social and environmental problems associated with traditional suburban patterns and show them the advantages of alternatives.

An example of two like-minded entities coming together for the purpose of challenging big business and to "... put forward a unified message on every front (Merchant)" can be seen in the recent merging of the climate action groups 350.org and 1Sky. The reason for the merger is not that dissimilar to those mentioned above, the April 2011 press release cited:

> ...[our antagonist is] a very unified fossil-fuel industry. Working through the Koch brothers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and a couple of other fronts, they're busy buying votes and supplying disinformation. And they're winning ... To fight back effectively, we need a much louder voice (Merchant).

The profession of landscape architecture is equipped to bring landscape architects, architects, and urban planners together in a similar way for the shared purpose of bringing about changes in suburban development patterns. Over the last couple years "...landscape architects [are] increasingly taking lead positions on large-scale projects, winning urban design competitions around the world, and expanding [their] design market share... (Gendall 95)."

The question this thesis will explore is: considering the history of landscape misuse due to the American Dream of home ownership, what steps are available to landscape architects to redress these wrongs and define their profession for the twenty-first century? This will require

changing public perceptions and expectations in order to positively enhance suburban development patterns. It is, therefore, imperative that a partnership or alliance between the American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA), The American Institute of Architects (AIA), and the American Planning Association (APA) be formed to obtain these worthy goals. This would give advocates of change in development practices a stronger platform on which to stand, and would allow us to speak effectively with a one central message.

This thesis will examine and explore the problem from its historic roots to the present, and will proffer ideas for a solution. To better understand the ideologies, myths, and politics that created The American Dream, Chapter Two will explore the roots of this dream. Here its evolution will be traced from its Puritan and Jeffersonian beginnings to the contemporary definition of a single family detached house with a yard and car. In each era the American dream home had a different meaning to the American public. Its definition was driven by government and business interests looking to nurture good citizens and strengthen the economy. How the home was perceived historically drove the design and development styles of the time and continues to be reflected through present suburban design and residential architecture and landscaping.

Chapter Three will focus on this history in greater depth by discussing suburban patterns in the United States looking specifically at how The American Dream of home ownership influenced government policy and how social realities have shaped the modern American society and landscape. The American Dream, and the post-World War II development patterns associated with it, have caused a host of health, environmental, and societal issues. Chapter Four will discuss these issues and how new models of development, such as New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and LEED ND are working to correct them. These newer models have the ability to create the complete communities that a growing number of Americans desire as well as lessening the rate of greenfield and agricultural destruction. They have become, however, a

matter of contention in many areas across the country. This chapter will also look at why these

new development patterns relate positively to The American Dream as well as the difficulties

they encounter making in-roads with the American public.

Chapter Five will examine how advertising and public relations function to change public

perceptions and behavior. Looking specifically at the tools used to sell the idea of home

ownership and consumerism in the 1950s, and how they are still being used to sell the same

ideas today. Finally, Chapter Six will explain how landscape architects can seize the opportunity

to use these same tactics and tools. They can act as catalysts to bring the design professions

together in a concerted effort to promote positive change in suburban development patterns.

Chapter II -

The Roots of Suburbia: The American Dream and Pastoral Ideology

Post-World War II and contemporary suburban development patterns are informed by the American ideal of home ownership and pastoral ideology. Both of these are part and parcel of The American Dream of home ownership and rooted in our nation's history, political ambitions, and economic goals. While rooted in our nation's history, it has evolved to meet the needs and ambitions of each new American era. We know it today as a single family detached home with a yard and car, and sheltering a nuclear family (Teaford 159; Archer 260).

Often the needs of any given era were defined by political and economic tides, and so the meaning of the American home became a pawn in the larger game of national stability. It is also a deeply rooted part of the American psyche and a driving force behind suburban design as well as development patterns. It is a force to be reckoned with for the landscape architects, architects, and urban planners working to change those patterns. This chapter will discuss the roots of The American Dream of home ownership, where this ideal comes from, and how this dream has influenced the contemporary suburban landscape. This exploration of The American Dream will start by looking at its Puritan and Jeffersonian roots and progress through the evolution from that ideal into the societal dream that we know today. Finally, we will examine America's pastoral ideology and how it works to inform and strengthen The American Dream of home ownership.

Historic Roots

The American Dream, although long-standing in history, was first penned by James Truslow Adams in the 1930s. He defines it as "...that American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank, which is the greatest contribution we have made to the thought and welfare of the world..." (qtd.Cullen 4). Since that statement, the idea of the American dream has become a very popular topic and widely defined. A Google search for 'the American Dream' returns 22,600,000 responses which lead to the top two following results. Wikipedia's definition, which can be trusted to adequately represent public opinion, states that "[t]he American Dream, sometimes in the phrase 'Chasing the American Dream,' is a national ethos of the United States in which freedom includes a promise of the possibility of prosperity and success."

The second top result is from wiseGeek, a website devoted to giving "clear answers to common questions." WiseGeek claims that "[t]he term 'American Dream' is used in a number of ways, but essentially The American Dream is an idea which suggests that all people can succeed through hard work, and that all people have the potential to live happy, successful lives." These definitions are not specific and do not focus on the symbols of the American dream. A final search result identifies symbols and is from 'The American Dream Coalition,' a group that is dedicated to defending the traditional American suburb. Their definition states "[f]or most people, a home with a yard and an automobile to get them where they want to go is how they define the American Dream."

In this last definition it is understood that anyone who owns a home and has a car has worked hard to gain those physical markers of prosperity. The true power of The American Dream is that most people reading these quotes are aware of its deeper meaning and are able to recognize and interpret the symbolism of the house, yard and car. In short, its power is understood without being defined - it exists in the subconscience (Cullen 7).

From the subconscious, the idea of The American Dream is able to be influential to an individual as well as to the American culture as a whole. Because it exists without a specific definition it allows each person to have a similar but different American dream. If, as James Truslow Adams suggests, The American Dream is of a "better, richer and fuller life (qtd. Cullen 4)," then the variation is in each individual's belief of what better, richer and fuller mean, as they are not defined. To some people these ideas might mean a life where everyone has food and healthcare, to others it might be the ability for private enterprise without restrictions, to still others it might simply be a house, yard and car, but these concepts are internally consistent. This means simply that within the diverse American population many different groups could all be pursuing The American Dream, yet each group could be striving for different goals (Cullen 7).

The key components of The American Dream are generally agreed upon, they are hard work, success, prosperity, individuality, and happiness for all. It has been argued that "[t]he omnipresence of 'the American dream' stems from the widespread - though not universal - belief that the concept describes something very contemporary. At the same time, however, much of its vitality rests on the premise... that it is part of a long tradition (Cullen 5)." Often The American Dream is associated with something very modern like a specific car, a trip to Disney World, or a well paid job, but the components listed above can all be attributed to traditional American values of the Puritans and the Declaration of Independence.

The values and ideas put forth in the Declaration of Independence are influenced by the country's Puritan religious history and by the political and philosophical beliefs of the Enlightenment. The Puritans left Europe in search of religious freedom and a place where their children could have a better life. They were hard workers who had a strong sense of discipline. Central to their belief system was the idea "...that the world is a corrupt place, but one that could be reformed (Cullen 15)," and that is exactly what they hoped to do in this new land; create a

moral, godly society away from the monarchs of the old world. Here they would have the ability

to be individuals and have control over their own lives.

Simultaneously, across Europe the Enlightenment was taking place. This philosophical

movement was centered in the intellectual, scientific, and social thought of the time, and placed

a high importance on rationality. At its core was the idea that one must critically question

"...traditional institutions, customs and morals ("Age of Enlightenment")." This movement also

put importance on the ideas of self realization and property ownership. In fact, John Locke is

thought to be the first person to put forward the idea of 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property"

in his Second Treatise on Government in 1689 (Cullen 46). These ideals, combined with the

principles of Puritanism, are at the heart of the Declaration, which in turn, is at the heart of The

American Dream.

The Declaration could be considered one of the first American dreams, as it made

America a country and centered the dream of freedom and separation from the British, which is

well articulated in the first paragraph. This is not the part of the Declaration that most people

remember or the part that has stirred Americans since the Revolution to take up arms to protect

it. That influential piece can be found at the beginning of the second paragraph: "We hold these

Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator

with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

(Jefferson)." This piece of the Declaration defined the country that moved forward after

declaring independence and clearly defined its people and their desires (Cullen 38). As it was

also influenced by the Enlightenment and John Locke, it had a strong basis in the ideas of self-

awareness and property ownership, two things that would quickly be combined into one.

The signing of the Declaration of Independence was understood by the Founding

Fathers to be the attainment of their dream of self-determination for their burgeoning country.

They understood that breaking away from England for the purpose of creating independence

from unfair taxes and laws could open Pandora's Box and create other smaller revolutions

across the new country (Cullen 47). Thomas Jefferson had long put forward the ideal of a

country of yeomen farmers, independent men who each had a personal stake in their land and

country (Cullen 140; Tuan 237). This ideal, combined with the Lockean ideal of property

ownership, was seen as a way to stabilize the country and create a population with a personal

interest in its government. By promoting the concept of land ownership, the government was

able to accomplish two things: create a population that would support the government as well as

a population that would oppose the government if it was to over step the boundary between

public and private(Cullen 47; Archer 174).

There was one final incentive for the government to advocate land and home ownership,

it gave men a place to mold, train and promote their individuality. Being a self-aware individual

was a key to manhood in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and it was believed that a

private home and property was an ideal place for a man to reach his full potential. John Archer

asserts:

> ...this heightened emphasis on the role of the man in the household afforded
>
> fertile new possibilities for the integration of domestic architecture into the
>
> economic and political agenda of the new republic. This was especially the case
>
> in connection with one key American ideological tenet of the nineteenth century,
>
> the 'self-made-man,' a notion that became essential to understanding the
>
> dwelling as an instrument for definition, articulation, and nurture of the owner -
>
> the self (174).

It was also believed that a home could help to shape the self, and teach moral values

and proper behavior. Nineteenth century designers such as Andrew Jackson Downing and

Catherine Beecher planned houses and made recommendations based on this belief. A house

was meant to show an individual's tastes, moral character, and status. It did this through

physical design elements, including landscaping, as well as placement of furnishings - every piece of a private home was a symbol of the moral character of the family. Because of this, Downing considered the detached home, situated on its own piece of land, as the "ideal republican dwelling (Archer 182)" (Figure 2.1).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the ideal of property ownership, put in place by the Enlightenment values of the Declaration of Independence, had less emphasis on Jefferson's idea of the independent yeomen farmer and more emphasis on property and home ownership. Jefferson's ideal had not disappeared but simply morphed from *property* ownership to *home* ownership. A home was considered a significant means of reaching the Enlightenment's ideal of manhood, which was seen as necessary to becoming a good citizen.

The Dream House

The American frontier spirit and love of independence supported the promotion of private home ownership as a means of financially stabilizing the individual, the economy, and social stability of the country. By the late nineteen century this had become the idea of the 'dream house.' The 'Dream House' was popular in American culture long before The American Dream of home ownership had been truly cemented. Like The American Dream of home ownership, the dream house was a little place in the country or on its own parcel of land, that served as a happy domestic center for a nuclear family (Archer 261). However, the dream house was not seen as something to which every American was entitled. It favored the wealthy.

It was under the Harding and Coolidge administration of the 1920s that this small difference began to disappear and The American Dream of home ownership truly took form. As business friendly administration, one of the platforms that Harding and Coolidge campaigned on, was to make the 'Dream House,' a single family detached home, not just a goal but the ideal

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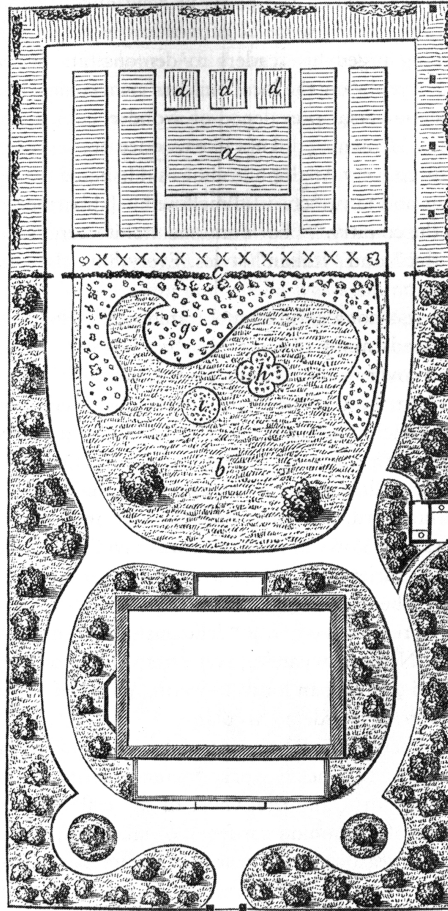
"A suburban cottage for a small family," Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residences,* 1842, including main floor plan, second floor plan, and landscape plan for the yard. The kitchen garden with vines at right contains an asparagus bed (*a*), herbs (*d*), rhubarb (*x*), lawn (*b*), ornamental trellis (*c*), outer border of trees and shrubs (*e*), turf border with fragrant shrubs (*f*), arabesque border of perennials (*g*), bed of roses (*h*), and bed of mignonette (*i*). The yard also includes a two-seat outdoor privy at right.

Site plan of Andrew Jackson Downing's 'ideal republican dwelling.'
Figure 2.1: A Suburban Cottage for a Small Family

Delores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000
(1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003) 31, Print.

within reach of every American family. In *Architecture and Suburbia*, John Archer explains that

this platform was:

> ...[un]ndertaken at least as much in response to the specter of the bolshevism as
>
> in the interests of American capitalist enterprise, one goal of the campaign was to
>
> ensure that property ownership would be as widespread as possible among the
>
> American population (263).

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As such, The American Dream of home ownership was born by combining the ideals of the

Declaration of Independence and the Enlightenment with the aspirations of the American

populace and combining all this with the fear of communism and anti-business sentiment.

Home and property ownership were seen as a protection against bolshevism. This

threat would create a population with an interest in keeping in place a political system that

allowed the individual to save and enjoy the fruits of his labor. In essence, property ownership

was a means of keeping the American public from revolting against the government and from

being disenfranchised. Calvin Coolidge went so far as to suggest that home-ownership is a

patriotic duty, and that it should be a goal to implant the ideal of home-ownership in children at

an early age so they believed that an owned home was the center of a happy family (Archer

264). While this era was responsible for putting in place much of the groundwork for merging

the 'American Dream' and the 'Dream House,' it was in the post-World War II era that the single

family house became something to which every American became entitled (Archer 271).

Prior to World War II, the American populace dreamed of a single family house of their

own, but it was during the post-war years that this dream house became an indelible piece of

the American Dream . During the post-war years, the government and industrial interests

reinforced the idea of the dream house as a patriotic duty by using it in commercials,

advertisements, government sponsored radio shows, and movies. This showed a home in

suburbia to be one of the rights that the soldiers were fighting for and something to look forward

to owning at the end of the war (Archer 271).

Many of the ads promised returning soldiers and their wives happy lives in modern

houses in landscaped developments. These ads often talked about the ideal of home-

ownership but implied that it was not a dream. "Rather, it was the realization of the nation's

destiny, now secured by the war effort: 'a strong, vital and growing America - where every man

and every woman will have the freedom and the opportunity to make their dreams come true

(Archer 271).'" Significantly, each of these dreams are embedded within a single family house, similar to the values and morals associated with single family homes of the late nineteenth century.

An example of this type of real estate advertisement based in the idea of The American Dream of home ownership can be seen in General Electric's 1943 "It's a Promise" advert (Figure 2.2). This advertisement shows a young couple, the man in an Army uniform, sitting on a bench drawing their dream home in the dirt; it is implied that the couple is discussing the happy life they will have after the war's end. The text underneath promises that following the war, modern 'victory homes' with "better living built in" will make their family happy and successful. General Electric is promising to make "everyday an adventure in happiness" for the suburban families of the future.

Here again the ideas of home and property ownership were used by the government and industries to influence American perceptions and habits, changing social thinking. Like the colonial period and the early twentieth century, the idea of home ownership was used for a political end; the promotion of capitalism and continued economic growth. John Archer explains that:

> [b]y the late 1940's, then, a complex of government, media, and corporate
> interests had forged a dream-house ideal that would, in considerable measure,
> govern the production of housing and the shape of the American landscape into
> the next century. (278)

The sprawling suburban developments of the post-War era that came to define American development, and the American dream house, have become indelibly linked to the American Dream of home ownership as we know it today. This Dream - identified as a single family detached house with a yard and an automobile - is rooted in American values and history and lives in the American psyche.

Figure 2.2: "It's a Promise"

John Archer, Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690--2000 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 271. Print.

Pastoral Ideology

The American Dream of home ownership is well grounded in ideals such as individuality and freedom, and values as reflected by the small family farm. These are essential elements of 'pastoral ideology,' an archetypal myth that is fundamental to American culture (Green 30). The Collins English Dictionary defines 'ideology' as: "1. a body of ideas that reflects the beliefs and interests of a nation, political system, etc and underlies political action; 2. the set of beliefs by which a group or society orders reality so as to render it intelligible." The United States 'pastoral ideology' is most often associated with Jefferson's independent yeoman farmer - a past that is seen as "...a lost Golden Age as the image of the idealized world from which humanity fell (Green 30)." Green goes on to say "...the pastoral idyll as literary form represents escape from the confines of society, whose artificial norms and structures separate humanity from the freedom of nature (30)."

The idea that freedom and individuality can only be found by escaping society and owning your own land is at the heart of The American Dream of home ownership. This pastoral ideology, however, is in fact a separate piece of one whole. When combined, these pieces come together to create and define residential environments across the United States. In contemporary America the nostalgia of the pastoral is most often for a rural pre-industrial time (Green 37) which is visible in design and naming practices of suburban residential areas and often used to sell suburbia to the public (Norris 365).

Subdivision naming practices generally draw on nostalgic pastoral themes that relate to the image of a landed gentry. This can be seen in the popularity of the Cape Cod and Tudor housing styles as well as in the many single family subdivisions using the word 'estates' in the name. Norris's study on suburban development naming practices allows a good understanding of how developers and builders capitalize on the American impulse for the nostalgic pastoral

(see figure 2.3). It helps to define and create identity and a perceived lifestyle for a suburban development. The design of the subdivision then reinforces the identity created by the name as an environment in which each house sits on its own piece of landscaped 'countryside' and each home owner is the master of his own domain.

In short, post-World War II and contemporary suburbs combine The American Dream of home ownership with America's pastoral ideology to make the house into an 'icon' or "...a thematized commodity: an object, person, or experience that has acquired added value through the commercial heightening of meaning (Sternberg 4)." By making a house into an icon it is

Table 3. Name Elements and Allusions in New Single-Family Home Subdivisions.*

Total N = 146	N	%	
The Natural Environment	146	50.7	
Seasons and Elements	8	2.8	Autumn (3), Whispering (2), Wind, Sunrise, Breeze
Surface Geology	8	2.8	Stone (6), Drumlin, Cobblestone
Riverine Features	19	6.6	Creek (8), Brook (4), Run (4), River, Lake, Pond
Shoreline Features	15	5.2	Landing (3), Point (3), Bay (2), Cliff (2), Bluffs (2)
Elevated Terrain	34	11.8	Hill(s) (11), Heights (5), View (4), Ridge (4), Crest (2), Highlands (2)
Secluded Terrain	7	2.4	Valley (3), Glen (2), Hollow, Vale
Wooded Terrain	22	7.6	Wood(s) (17), Chase (2), Grove, Sylvan, Arbor
Trees, Plants, Animals	33	11.5	Pine (4), Hickory (2), Cherry (2), Trees (10), Plants (6), Animals (9)
The Rural Landscape	44	15.3	
Landscape Features	35	11.5	Meadow (11), Farm(s) (4), Orchard(s) (3), Hedge(s) (3), Commons (2), Country (2), Trail (2), Shire (2)
Antiquity	3	1.0	Centennial, Heritage, Legends
Built Legacy	6	2.1	Village (3), Corners, Mill, Station
Country Gentry, *Rus in Urbe*	50	17.4	
Proprietary	24	8.3	Estate (20), Manor (3), Preserve
Landscape Design	10	3.5	Park (8), Garden (2)
Streetscape	6	2.1	Court (3), Place, Square, Crescent
Architecture	4	1.4	Regency, Villas, Carriage House, Roman
Status	4	1.4	Images, Place One, Royal, Country Club
Urban Allusions	2	.7	Town, Boro
People and Place Identities	38	13.2	
Place Names	19	6.6	British (11), Colonial (4)
Native American	2	.7	Indian, Cherokee
Other Elements	10	3.5	
Cardinal Directions	7	2.4	
Positive Adjectives	3	1.0	Crystal, Crimson, Silver

Figure 2.3: Name Elements and Allusions in Single-Family Home Subdivisions

Darrell A. Norris, "Unreal Estate: Words, Names and Allusions in Suburban Home Advertising." (Names (American Name Society) 47.4 1999) 365-80. Print.

distanced from its everyday purpose and instead creates an "...emotion construct, imbued with idealized notions of family life and of relationships both to nature and a wider community (Ward 110)."

While the American Dream of home ownership has been molded by government and business interests throughout history, America's pastoral ideology has always been used to inform it. The American longing for a simple rural life can be seen as far back as the Puritans and Andrew Jackson Downing's "ideal republican dwelling." This family home was the perfect place to cultivate the morals and values needed to be a good American citizen. It was envisioned to be situated in the countryside where the family could be insulated from the corruptive ideas and morals of the outside world. Contemporary suburbia is seen as a modern version of Downing's ideal, something of a happy land, a place where suburban residents are promised a safe and healthy retreat from societal problems and urban decay. These themes are part and parcel of the overall pastoral myth and the American Dream of home ownership.

Summary

The American Dream of home ownership has a long and rich history and many advocates throughout the country and across time. It has been protected and nurtured by Thomas Jefferson, Calvin Coolidge, and groups like the American Dream Coalition, whose mission is to defend the dream of a home, yard and automobile. It is rooted in our collective history, from the Enlightenment's ideals of property ownership, individuality, and self-realization to the Puritan's work-ethic and their aspiration for a better home and life for their children. These ideals were written into the Declaration of Independence and have been passed down to generations of Americans.

Initially politicized and used to stabilize the people of America, home ownership evolved into a tool used by the government to strengthen the economy and nurture good citizens. A

house situated on a plot of land with access to good air and water and separated from the threat of outside intervention. This was seen as the perfect method for men to reach the ideal of self-determination and for families to learn good American citizenship.

The idea of the 'dream house,' already well established as a societal myth in the 1920s-30s, morphed into the American Dream of home ownership by the 1950s with the help of government propaganda, advertising, and popular radio and television shows. At that point the Dream became what we know it as today - a single family detached house with a car and yard - in a landscaped development. As such the house becomes a symbol of a mythical American lifestyle rooted in a nostalgia for small town America, pastoral landscapes, and the more simple happier days of past eras.

The American Dream of home ownership and the corresponding pastoral ideology are now deeply ingrained in American mythology and social consciousness. So much so that urban planning, growth, and development have mirrored its values with little reflection on the environmental and social problems such development patterns were cause. In changing development patterns, design professionals will face the daunting task of retrofitting this Dream. The question the landscape architects, architects and urban planners must ask is what role they wish to play in defining, designing, and altering the future.

Chapter III -

The History of Suburbia

As discussed in the last chapter, The American Dream - particularly that of home ownership - is often referenced in political speeches, advertising, the news, and popular culture. It has shaped our suburban national landscape. In his book, "The American Dream," Jim Cullen titles each chapter after various versions of the American dream, including: "Puritan Enterprise," religious freedom; "The Declaration of Independence," independence; "Upward Mobility;" "Equality;" and "Home Ownership (Cullen ix-x)."

This chapter will explore the history of home ownership and suburban development in the United States. Since World War II there has been a proliferation of detached single family homes and subdivisions. The movement out of urban areas and into 'the country' has a long history in the United States and is based on government and private interests, social and wellness beliefs, and the cultural importance of property ownership.

The chapter will conclude by looking at the political, theoretical and technological reasons behind suburbia throughout American history, and specifically the post-World War II period. This era is of particular interest for three reasons: a large amount of development was undertaken during that time, the 1950s suburb became a defining development pattern and these patterns have shaped contemporary urban experiences and space. The suburbs have long been a piece of the urban fabric in the United States, and it is based in historical models and practices that can best be understood in this context.

The American Suburbs

The first developments, in the early eighteen hundreds, were mostly for upper middle

class and upper class Americans who wanted an escape from the grime and poverty that were

defining factors of the urban environment. The Borderlands (Fig. 3.1), the first suburban

development pattern in the U.S began to appear around the 1820s. These were communities

set a mile or two from the city where residents could be closer to nature and have better

environmental conditions such as, "...pure air, pure water, access to fields and gardens,

meadows where children might play, lanes where women might walk, [and] trees that would

offer shady relief from stifling summer heat..." (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and*

Urban Growth, 1820-2000 22). These communities were outside of the city yet easily

accessible to it by ferry, horseback, or carriage allowing the men to go into the city and giving

the women and children an escape from it. While this style gave the wealthy a detached house

in the 'country' where the families could work toward the Enlightenment principles of self-

determination, these homes - because of their proximity to the city and industry - were not safe

from urban growth. This would become a recurring problem for suburban developments,

spurring people to look ever farther away from the city and toward more seclusion (Hayden

Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 21-44).

In the hope of creating communities safe from the moral decay and squalor of the ever

expanding urban environment, Picturesque Enclaves (Fig. 3.2) began to appear in about the

1850s, approximately thirty years after the advent of Borderland communities. These

communities shared many of the characteristics that made the Borderlands popular - clean air

and water, access to nature and proximity to the urban center. These homes, like those in the

Borderlands, fulfilled the patriotic duty of Andrew Jackson Downing's "ideal republican dwelling

(Archer 182)." However, instead of being a collection of unaffiliated houses, they became

separate developments; i.e., wholly new communities with curvilinear roads and shared green
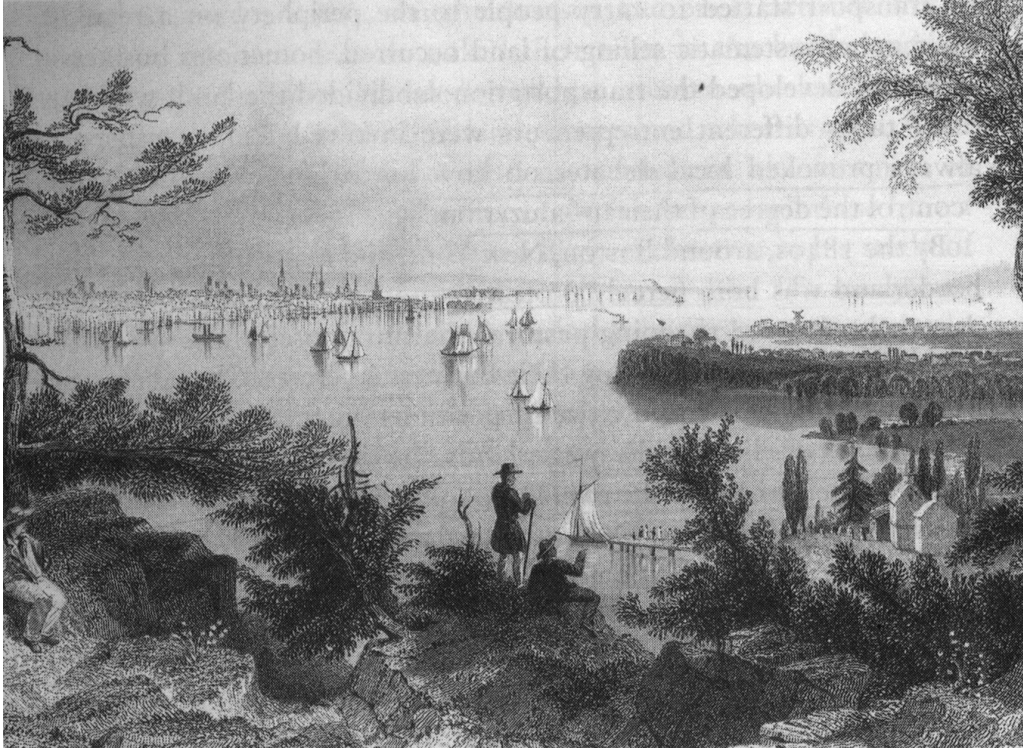
View from a Borderlands community toward New York City
Figure 3.1: Detail of 'View of New York, from Weekawken

Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000
(1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003) 25, Print.

space all set among heavily planted hills and dales (Teaford 6). Modern subdivisions are in

many ways watered down versions of these developments owing them their curvilinear roads,

street set-backs and street trees. These communities were often gated or in some other way

buffered from the outside world and could protect the home buyer from the advance of the city,

and in so doing, protect the country aesthetic desired by the buyers (Hayden *Building Suburbia :*

Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 45-70; Teaford 8).

Often these communities were part of a larger "communitarian movement whose

adherents believed that building a model community in a natural setting led to the reform of

society" (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 45). The

Communitarian movement began in Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

centuries as a response to the massive changes happening in the urban areas stemming from
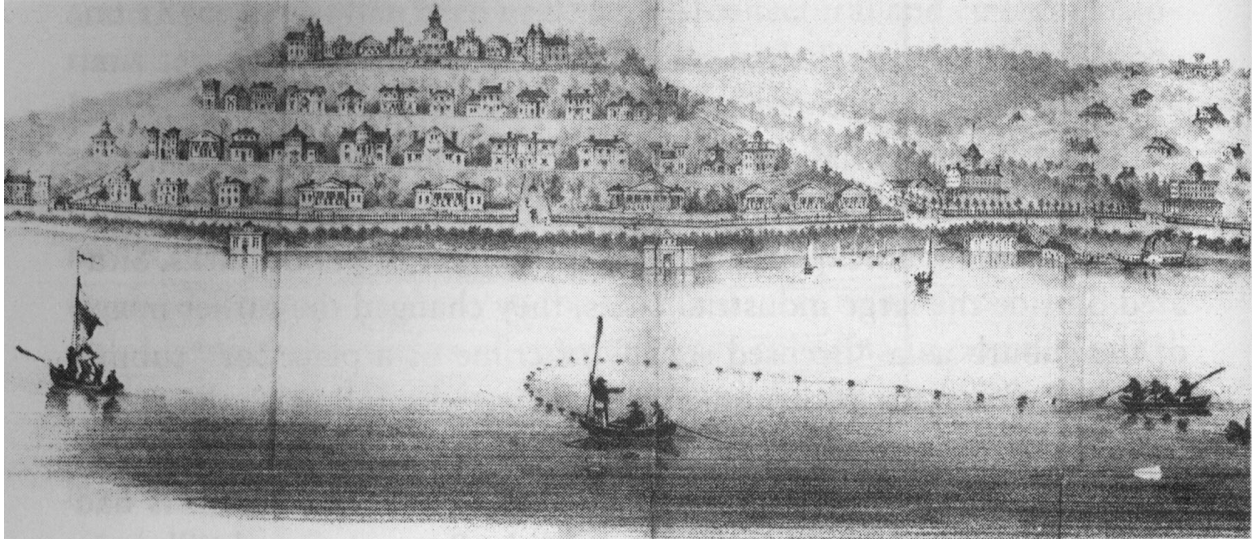
the Industrial Revolution. The leaders of the movement were "...determined to build an ideal society - a society that would eliminate poverty, epidemics, and unhygienic living conditions. [They were] pioneers of a social way of thinking, they provide us with the first models of humanitarian environmental planning." (*Urban Forms, Suburban Dreams* 17). The communities in Europe - both built and imagined - included administrative, industrial and housing areas and were meant to be complete and independent.

These examples, especially those of Charles Fourier, were models for the designs of the U.S.'s oldest Picturesque Enclaves - Llewelyn Park (Fig. 3.3) and Riverside. Fourier's ideal city (Fig. 3.4) was circular and divided into three zones: commercial and administrative in the center, industrial areas around that and housing on the fringe of the city with each area divided by a green belt (*Urban Forms, Suburban Dreams* 18). This model would serve to influence many urban designers to come, including A.J. Davis, Fredrick Law Olmsted, and, in due time, Le Corbusier.

Plan of a Llewellyn Park, both a Picturesque Enclave and Communitarian development
Figure 3.3: "Site of Llewellyn Park, and Villa Sites on Eagle Ridge in Orange and West Bloomfield, New Jersey, 1857"

Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 (1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003) 55, Print.
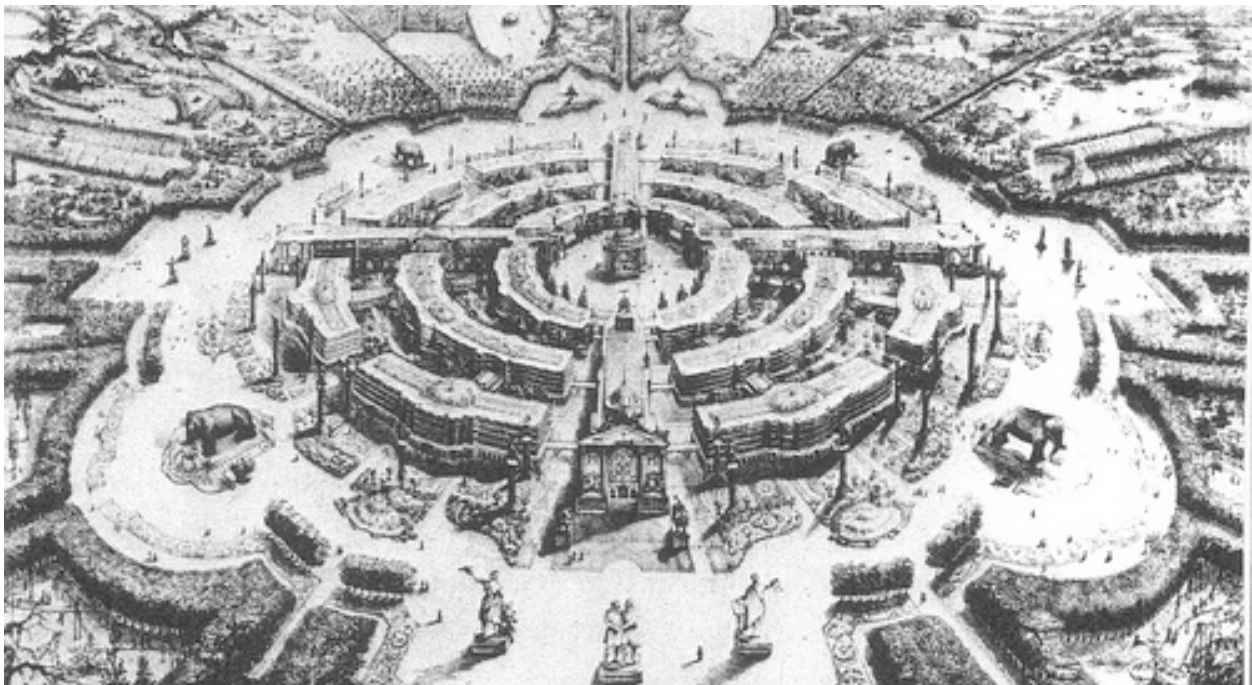

Figure 3.4: "Charles Fourier's 'garantiste' city"

Hubert-Jan Henket, Hilde Heynen, (Ed.) Back from Utopia - The Challenge of the Modern Movement (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010 Publishers, 2002) 281, Print.

Neither Olmsted's Riverside nor Davis' Llewelyn Park are directly modeled off of

Fourier's concept. Both designers had a belief in the power of shared green space to create a

community life, which was not seen in the Borderlands or Picturesque communities.   As such,

in the U.S., these communities tended to be more villa parks, with houses situated on large lots

surrounded by shared greenspace and landscaping. It was a living style that, like the

Borderlands, was almost exclusively for the well-to-do and that created communities based on

similar status and wealth. These Picturesque Enclaves were a reflection of the communitarian

movement but not fully of it, however they too would go on to inspire modern suburban form

(Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 50).

The Borderlands and Picturesque Enclaves were the domain of the wealthy not only due

to the expense of living there, but also because housing for the working class necessarily had to

be in close proximity to their place of employment. As transportation improved with the

inventions of the omnibus, horsecar, and electric streetcar new developments called Streetcar

Build-outs (Fig. 3.5) began to appear. These were generally linear in nature because they relied

on new transit lines (Teaford 3). They often were populated by second generation immigrants

and the middle class who, like the wealthier people in the Borderlands and Picturesque

Enclaves, were looking to leave the slums of the inner city (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green*

Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 71). Many of these developments would attempt to

create, or at least claim, an aesthetic similar to that found in the Picturesque Enclaves.

However, the lots were smaller, little public greenspace was left, and infrastructure was only

occasionally provided . On the other hand they did have a built in public transportation system

and a mix of uses, allowing for commercial activity on the street level of main thoroughfares

(Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 74). These

developments brought the republican ideals of home ownership to a group of people who would

not otherwise have had a chance for this experience, and began the era of the 'dream house.'

Plan of a typical Streetcar Suburb
Figure 3.5: Plat of Grossdale

Delores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000
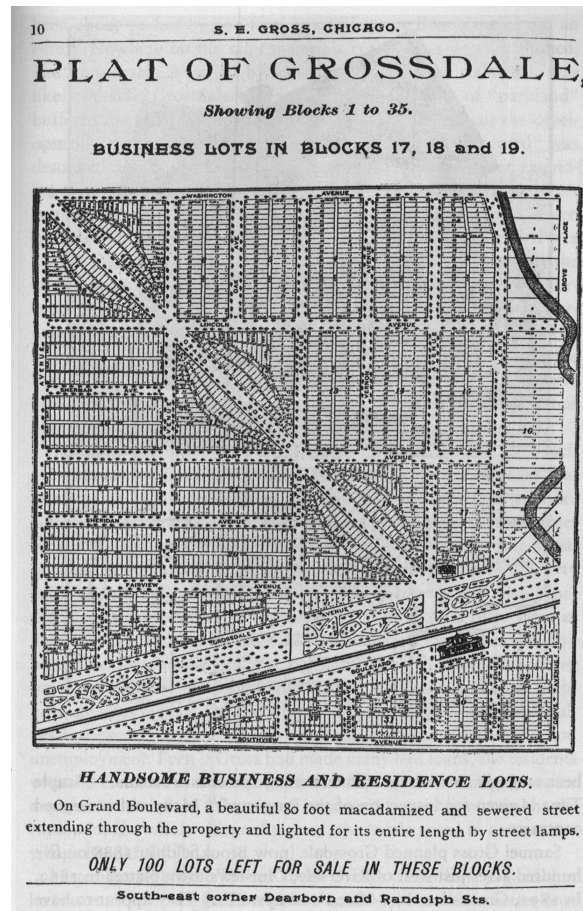*(1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003) 85, Print.*

Each of these settlement types have distinct differences, but with one very strong

similarity: the people moving to these developments were looking for a way to leave the city in

hope of a better life with cleaner air and water, proximity to gardens, pastureland and nature. In

short, they gave people the feeling of freedom and of a better life for themselves and their

children. In the years to come, this opportunity would be open to more people as housing prices

became more affordable and new transportation options more widely available. The omnibuses

and streetcars were just the beginning. New technologies, like the automobile, would again

revolutionize settlement patterns in the United States. With the help of government subsidies

and new theories of urban design based on the convenience of the car and the health of country living, a new era of housing was about to begin.

Modernism and Government Support

In the early twentieth century, to bolster the depressed economy and to protect against communism, government and business converged to make the societal idea of the 'dream house' into a goal and reality of every American household. To help everyday people afford such a house, the government, with the backing of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) - currently one of the most influential lobbies in Washington - passed several pieces of legislation. They pressed the goal of making it easier to get a mortgage (Federal Home Loan Bank Act, 1932) and to modernize existing homes (National Housing Act, 1934), as well as making it less risky for developers to buy and develop land (Federal Housing Administration, 1934) (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 123).   These pieces of legislation, started under President Hoover and enacted under President Franklin Roosevelt, are the key components that would facilitate the suburban boom of the post-World War II era. Aided by the Veteran's Administration loans that returning veterans could take out for housing, it was cheaper for most Americans to buy a house than rent an apartment (Cullen 151). This made The American Dream of home ownership readily available to all but the poorest Americans.

However, because there had been essentially no building during the Depression and War years, the supply of new homes was stagnant and demand was limited. Although there was little physical building accomplished at the beginning of the twentieth century, nevertheless, this period sponsored theorizing on what a modern city should be and how it should function and look. These theories were driven by the Modernist movement whose architectural and

urban design principles were influenced by Bauhaus, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, and would become an influence on the development patterns of Post-war suburbia.

Modernism was born out of the inter-war period in Europe and, as explained in "Buildings Across Time," was influenced by the destruction wrought during World War I:

> In the wake of the horrors of World War I, many young architects shared a general disillusionment, indeed a sense that European culture had failed and would have to be replaced by a transformed society; they believe[d] that architecture could and should become an instrument of this transformation. (451)

In many cases the belief that European culture had failed made Modernists somewhat hostile towards traditional urban design, thought, and values. In the case of cities and housing this often meant throwing out all the traditionally accepted design methods and creating new solutions that were based in rationality, functionality, efficiency, transparency, and mechanization.

Many of the architects, planners, and artists that began the Modernist movement in Europe, specifically Germany, were targeted by the Nazi's and forced to flee Europe for America at the beginning of World War II. Among them were Walter Gropius, who started the Bauhaus in Germany and in 1937 became the head of the Department of Architecture at Harvard, and Mies van der Rohe, who was also a member of the Bauhaus and in 1938 became the head of the Architecture school at what is now Illinois Institute of Technology (Moffett 493). From these positions they educated, prepared and influenced the planners and architects that would be in charge of solving America's Post- World War II housing deficit.

Modernists strived to create urban Utopias, and believed a properly designed city could affect changes to make society better. They believed that this new, perfect city would embrace technology and "advocated the creation of forms that were universal, spatially unbounded, and attuned to modern technology (Moffett 477)." Technology was the future; this view was based on

the rationality and efficiency of processes like Henry Ford's automobile assembly line. They believed that a modern urban environment should harness this efficiency and that in doing so, the city could be more wholesome. Utopian cities would create a "...harmony between man and an urban environment that [would] be controlled, rational and transparent (Nauert-Riser 124)." Modernists saw the result of this ideal as a highly efficient urban machine, something that could easily be replicated and, in the case of a disaster or simple aging, replaced when necessary - like one of Mr. Ford's cars from the assembly line. Their designs struggled against the historical model of a large dense urban center, instead creating spread out connected urban environments, compartmentalized by uses and connected by various means of transportation. The catch-words of the time were: 'concentration,' as seen in high rises and the separation of uses; and 'decentralization,' to deal with the Industrial Era's problem of urban density (Neumeyer 300).

There are many different examples of Modernist city plans. Le Corbusier's Radiant City (Figure 3.6) was influenced by Charles Fourier's circular Utopian communities, and had a city center of businesses and retail spaces with homes around the periphery. Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer envisioned a Highrise City (Figure 3.7), and placed all retail and businesses on the lower levels of high-rises, with apartments and homes above. The buildings were connected on ground level by roads, in the air by pedestrian sky-ways, and also a below ground public transit system. Frank Lloyd Wright designed Broadacre City (Figure 3.8) which he saw as the perfect American city. Similar to Le Corbusier, Wright had a central city area, however it was small and dispersed, as he assumed transportation and technology would make the city center nearly unnecessary. Wright's basic housing unit was the ideal manner of living in America and utilized some of the characteristics of the American dream - a love for open land and a desire for independence (Moffett 496).

The city planning theories of the Modernist would have great influence on Post World War II city planning in the United States from the institution of zoning to communities like Levittown. Zoning played a major role in shaping our developments and urban community character by regulating the development of private land to create concentrated zones such as residential, industrial, and retail. This practice has its roots in the Modernists' ideals of 'concentration' and 'decentralization' discussed earlier in this chapter. While modern zoning is less rigid than the Modernist proposal, it does have both advocates and detractors. In the best situations, zoning is a tool that reinforces a master plan. It allows residents of an area to determine their environs, as well as participate in its planning and growth (Smith 30). However, more often than not, it is used by property owners as a tool for discrimination. They can keep their property values high through the exclusion of unwanted businesses. They can exclude less affluent undesirables through the specification of lot and house sizes. In sum, zoning
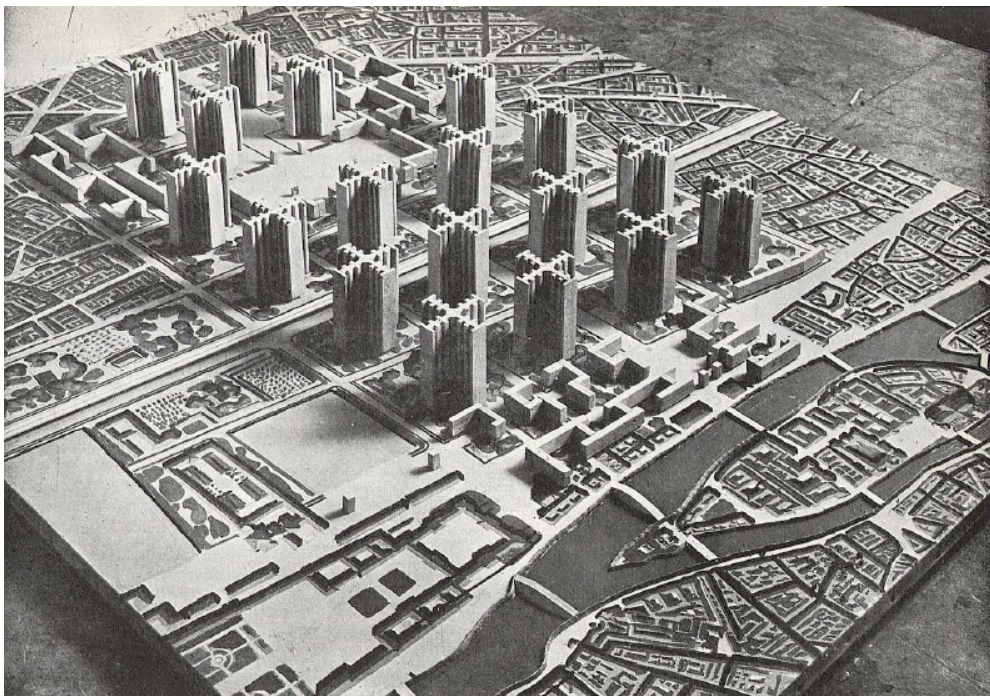
Figure 3.6: The Plan Voisin in Paris
The Plan Voisin in Paris, 12 Apr. 2011 (http://www.nyu.edu/classes/reichert/sem/ city/lecorbu_img.html)
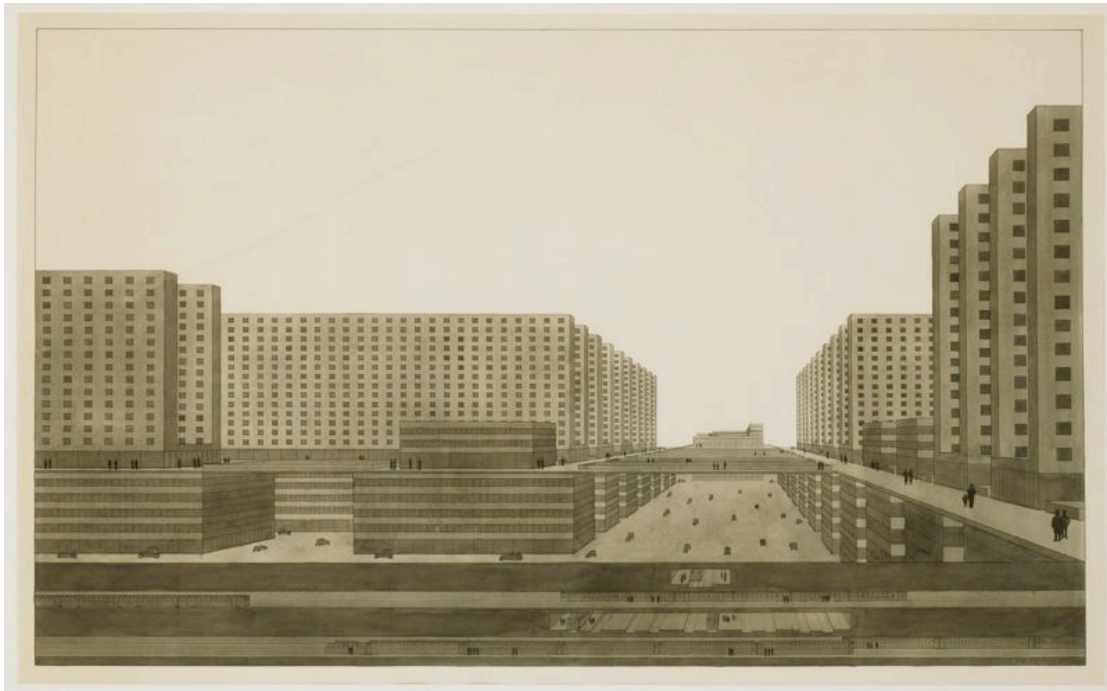
Figure 3.7: Highrise City

Highrise City (Hochhausstadt): Perspective View: East-West Street, 1924, 12 Apr. 2011 (http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/101043?search_id=1).
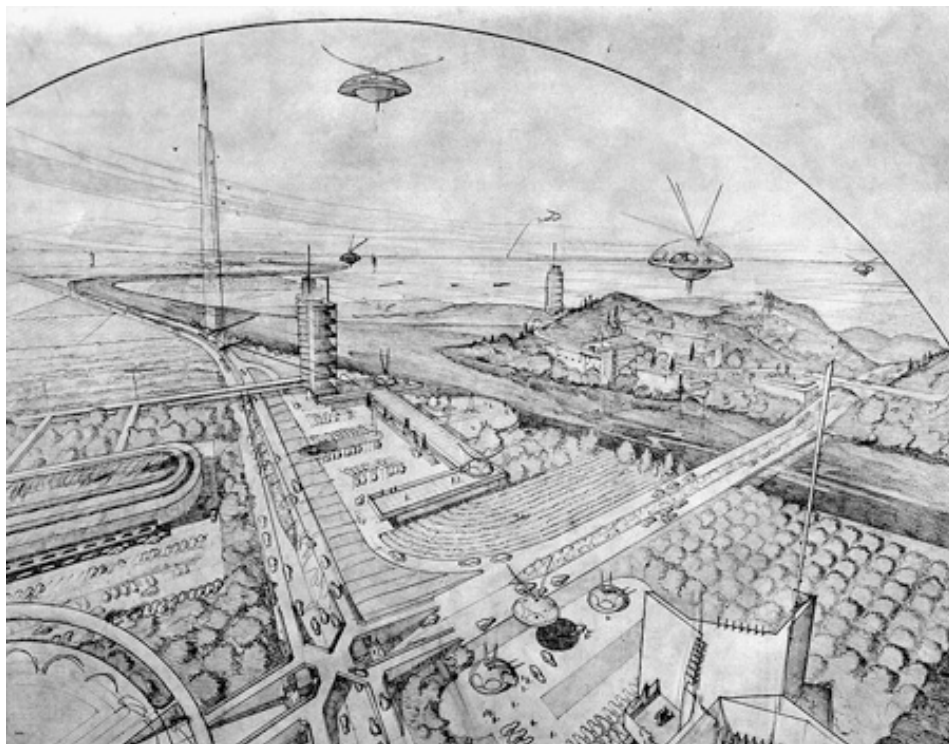
Figure 3.8: Birdseye View of Broadacre City

Broadacre City - F.L. Wright, 5 Jan. 2010, 12 Apr. 2011 (http:// betacurea.tumblr.com/post/318480551/broadacre-city-f-l-wright).

allows the separation of businesses, single family dwellings, apartments, condominiums and duplexes for better or worse (Batchis 380).

The Assembly Line

Levittown, like most subdivisions, follows the single use model suggested by the Modernists. While Levittown was not the first post-war suburban development, its size and the speed at which it was built - on a single day 30 houses could be completed - revolutionized the building industry (Cullen 151). The designs for the homes were uniform and built with extreme efficiency in an assembly line manner. Materials would be dropped off at each lot where teams of workers assigned to do one specific task, such as framing, would assemble the pieces and then move to the next lot (Fig. 3.9).

Aside from the extreme efficiency of building, the Levittown model also had a Modernist feel and style. This was thanks to Alfred Levitt, one of the sons of Levitt and Sons, the developers of Levittown. He was a self taught architect and designer who was in charge of creating the house and community designs for the family business.   The houses he designed took many elements from Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian House, which was originally designed to be small and affordable. In 'Last Harvest,' Witold Rybczynski describes the Wright's design:

> To reduce cost, he invented a highly simplified and modular method of wood construction. He eliminated the basement and the attic, and replaced the garage with a carport. He introduced a novel form of heating - under the floor. He made the kitchen a small work area and combined the living and dining rooms into a single space. He used polished concrete floors and exposed wood walls and ceilings - natural looking as well as economical... (160)

Levittown's homes did not follow this model exactly. It's first model had two bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, bathroom and large attic. Over the years Alfred added other Usonian
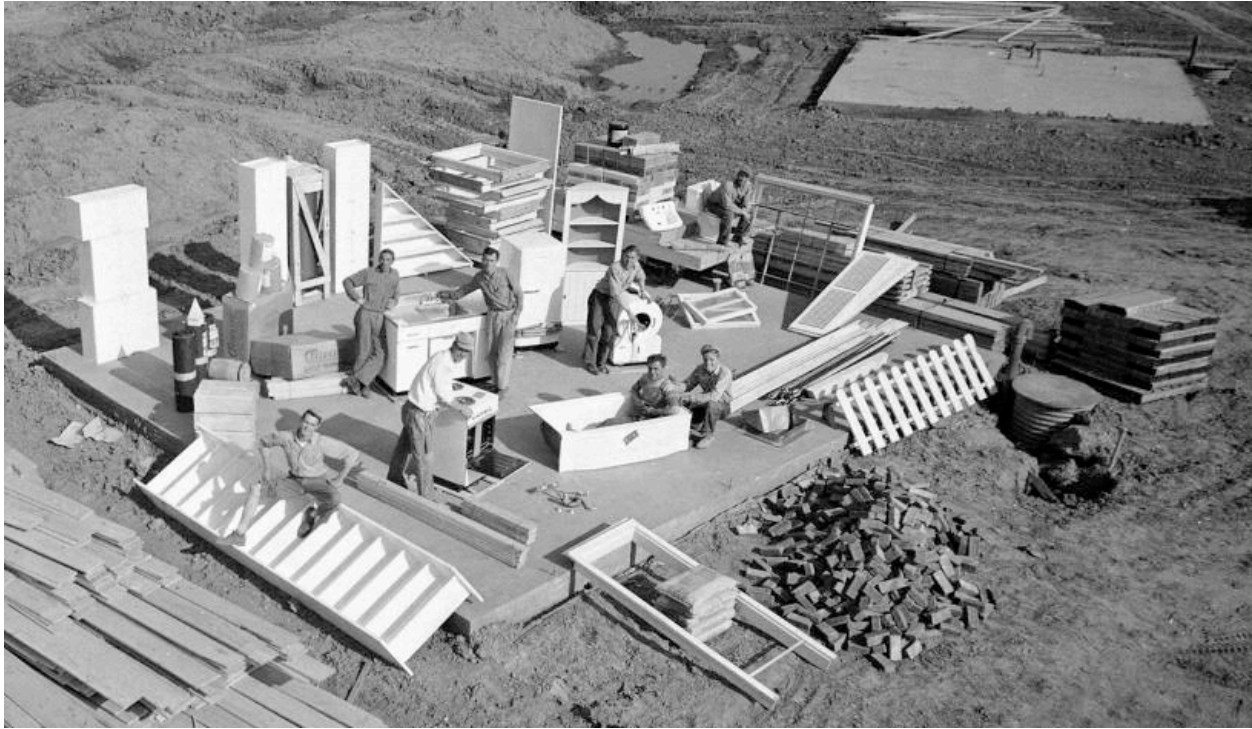
Levittown house site with materials drop off and ready to be assembled.
Figure 3.9: Levittown Home Site

Alexis Madrigal, "What Levittown Got Right," Powering the Dream, 13 Nov. 2009
(http://www.greentechhistory.com/2009/11/rethinking-levittown/) 13 Apr. 2011.

touches. These included radiant heating, a combined kitchen, living and dining space, an open

fireplace, and a built in television and carport. Each of these houses was situated on a relatively

large lot allowing the family privacy and independence.

In many ways, Levittown was the epitome of Modernist ideals. It embraced technology

by being built like a machine, it was highly efficient, decentralized, had a single

compartmentalized use and allowed for the separation of homes from the central business

district (Fig. 3.10). This dream would guide development practices and shape cities from the

1940s into the next century, and would define the character of the American landscape.

Developments like Levittown also fused public and private interests. The government's desire

for a nation of home owners was reinforced by real estate developers and industrialists, who,

seeing an opportunity to make profit, worked with the government to successfully market the

American home as The American Dream.

Summary

Typified by small single family homes set driving distances apart from grocery stores

and other daily needs, the postwar suburban subdivision was designed for a single user group -

the nuclear family. Through government subsidies and design, the houses were affordable to all

but the poorest of families. They represented upward mobility, financial security, independence

and freedom. In short, they represented and continue to represent The American Dream as it

was perceived at that time. This reality is due in large part to the government and businesses

who, at the end of World War II, feared the national economy would slow down if companies did

not continue to produce goods at the same rate as during the war. The two interests fused the

Figure 3.10: Aerial View of Levittown

"Levittown Through the Years", New York TImes (http://www.nytimes.com/
slideshow/2007/10/12/nyregion/
20071013_LEVITTOWN_SLIDESHOW_index.html) 13 Apr. 2011.

ideas of the dream home, consumerism, and patriotism - and created The American Dream of home ownership as it is known today. This idea has become ingrained in America's cultural consciousness and has been widely adopted and protected.

The post-World War II era development style continues to be our primary suburban development model. However, as will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, while development patterns have remained the same, American society has changed. New family types and environmental and economic concerns have changed the realities of American family life and these changes are reflected in the types of housing many families prefer (Florida; Hester 208; Nelson 396).

The idea of the American dream house remains strong but it is morphing, as it did during the post World War II period. Unlike then, the government and industries are not working together to affect the change. Still more important, society as a whole is not unanimously in favor of the change. People who already own suburban homes, government officials, and developers see new development patterns as a threat to their vested lifestyle and well being. Others see the change as a necessity, citing the facts that the U.S. continues to lose natural areas and farm land; that local economies cannot continue to support the infrastructure needed for an endless array of new subdivisions and that as oil prices soar, a commuter culture cannot be sustained as a viable option.

Chapter IV -

New Suburban Models

Traditional suburban development patterns are closely associated with The American Dream of home ownership and are clearly a materialization of that dream. However, this development pattern has resulted in demonstrable social, economical, and environmental problems across the United States (Archer 293; Batchis 377; Calthorpe 17; Farr 43; Nasser; Teaford 188). Many designers have created theories and plans of new forms of residential living to counteract current problems with suburbia and to create healthier more resilient cities and communities. Many of these new models harken back to urban forms that were discarded during the Modernist period in favor of separation of uses, decentralization, and the free use of the automobile. This style of living is becoming more appealing to many Americans due to a shift in the demographics of home owners since the 1950s (Florida; Hester 208; Nelson 396). As such, they go against many of the deeply entrenched ideals of The American Dream of home ownership by suggesting a return to smaller homes, higher density living, and public transportation.

However, the post-World War II style of development dominates the housing market and the American psyche, making it very difficult for other residential options to be made readily available (Teaford 195; Batchis 376-77). This chapter will discuss the realities of suburbia at the beginning of the twenty-first century and how it has affected elements of America's society, economy and environment. It will also discuss three new suburban development styles suggested by contemporary landscape architects, architects, and urban planners. These new patterns address many of the social, health and environmental issues associated with traditional

suburban areas and work to create a new American suburban model more in tune with the needs of contemporary society (Florida; Hester 208; Nelson 396). Each of these models face societal barriers to their widespread implementation and are often viewed as an attack on The American Dream of home ownership ("Defending Your Freedom, Mobility and Affordable Homeownership"; Teaford 195). As discussed in this chapter, while these models are clearly a departure from the traditional and accepted form of The American Dream of home ownership they are not an attack upon it, they are simply a revisioning.

Where We Are Now

Since the 1950s, owning a single family house in a suburban community has been the best way for an individual to achieve The American Dream. It is seen as the right of every American to be able to own their home and their own piece of the countryside (Smith 5; Teaford 159). In general, the developments of the early twenty-first century are built along the same model as Levittown and other Post-war suburbs. They are purely residential, with single family homes on large lots and highly automobile dependent. In an attempt to satiate an American populace that is always craving new and larger houses, the suburban ring surrounding cities continues to expand outward, consuming farm land, natural resources and public money (Teaford 187; Hester 1).

The American Dream house, situated in suburban communities, has as many advocates as it does detractors. Advocates believe that suburbs, as they now exist, are a natural extension of what The American Dream has always been - and is what Americans demand. They should, therefore, continue to be constructed without challenge. Detractors, on the other hand, believe that the market has long been skewed by business and government. Thus, there are few other options to conventional subdivisions. Moreover, zoning has made it nearly impossible to create the traditional neighborhoods that would be a viable option (Batchis

376-77). They cite the destruction of natural landscapes and farm land as valid reasons development must be checked and controlled. They do not agree that The American Dream must include large homes and extended car trips (Hester 3).

The modern suburban landscape has many causes, key among them is zoning - which has for decades legislated the form of development in suburban areas. Exclusionary zoning practices, put in place in the early mid twentieth century through Modernist city planning theories, were originally designed to keep property values stable by keeping out undesirable land usage and people. This has resulted in creating low density single-use zoned areas - residential, commercial, industrial - which are then further broken down by markers such as lot size or allowable density. In his book *Enabling Sprawl,* Wayne Batchis explains exclusionary zoning this way:

> It legislates minimum lot sizes and square footage of homes, specifies precisely who and how many people may live in particular residential areas, and meticulously maps out a voluminous array of single-use zones that define with specificity how structures can be used in each zone of a municipality (380).

Property values are based not only on the piece of property for sale, but also on what is around it. By keeping 'less desirable' land uses away from a subdivision, property owners - generally middle to upper class - keep their property values high. This causes difficulty by giving property owners little incentive to change zoning laws that are protecting them. Ultimately, this is unhealthy for society as a whole as it "...insidiously segregates society according to race, class, and lifestyle (Batchis 380)."

Zoning has also effectively separated and stratified society based on socio-economics and race. While society has always been stratified to some extent, there were common informal meeting points, such as streets and public markets, that no longer exist. This pattern offers little opportunity for interaction between people of diverse groups and has served to assist in the

creation of a society that is fearful of neighbors and 'otherness.' As it was succinctly put in John

C. Teaford's book "Sprawl has turned neighbors into strangers, and strangers into threats

(194)."

In addition to societal and health problems, our current zoning practices also encourage

low density residential and retail development which consumes natural areas and farmland at

an alarming rate. One report by the National Resource Defense Council estimates that

"...America loses approximately 365 acres of land to suburban sprawl development each

hour" (Batchis 376). This rate of growth and type of development is neither sustainable nor

efficient. The low-density sprawl, combined with the webbing of roads, propel development

farther from the urban core, while eating away at the country's natural resources and agricultural

land. The majority of this land is regraded and then built out with impervious big box stores,

parking lots, excessive roads, and houses - causing floods, soil degradation, and heat islands

(Figure 4.1).

Zoning has also been cited as affecting the health and well-being of the people living in

suburban areas who are statistically less likely to walk during leisure time (Batchis 379), making

them more likely to have hypertension and be obese. This stems from the fact that most

suburban developments are designed to be automobile-oriented as opposed to pedestrian-

friendly. Many developments leave out sidewalks all together (Teaford 188), creating what

home buyers see as a country aesthetic that includes wide roads and large yards in which

children are free to move about and play (Gold 166).

By leaving sidewalks from suburban designs, residents are dissuaded from walking as it

appears the community does not support the activity (Teaford 188). Also, because the wide

streets are designed with economy of materials and finances in mind - not pedestrians - they

neither calm nor slow speeding cars. The plans that do include sidewalks often lack a valid,

interesting or necessary destination within a quarter mile - which is the range studies have
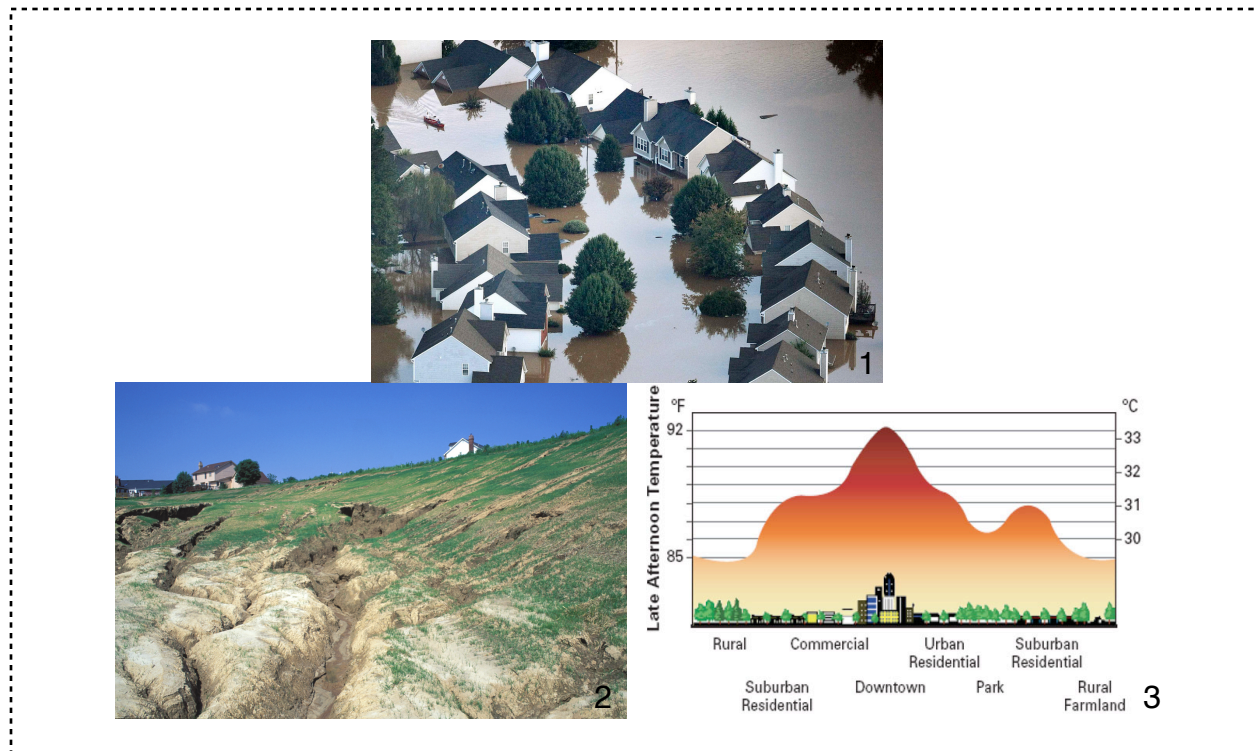
Figure 4.1 - Environmental Problems Associated with Suburbia

1.) 2009 Atlanta Flood, Paul Skinner, "Flooding in the Southeast". 2009. Boston.com. AP Photo/ Journal Constitution. 11 May 2011. <http:// www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/09/flooding_in_the_southeast.html>.
2.) Soil Degradation, "Urban/ Suburban". Missouri NRCS United States Department of Agriculture. 10 May 2011. <http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/ news/MOphotogallery/Urban%20Suburban/erosion1.jpg>.
3.) Heat Island Diagram, "Get Sustainable with Newlook's Eco-Friendly Concrete Stains and Polishing Systems". NewLook International. 11 May.2011. <http:// www.getnewlook.com/Sustainability.html>.

shown most people are willing to walk (Dover 177). For all these reasons, people in traditional suburban neighborhoods do not walk for pleasure (there is no where to go) nor for access to daily needs (the stores are not close enough) - hence, they have a higher likelihood of obesity.

The increase of hypertension is related to the isolation that many people in suburbs feel (Calthorpe 18). Suburban houses prompt families to put all their needs under one roof or within the bounds of their fenced yard. This means that it is less likely people will engage with their neighbors. The separation of society due to zoning and the excessive amount of time

Americans spend in their cars causes a general loss of community interaction (Nasser) and the reduction of civic engagement throughout contemporary American society (Batchis 377). Further, another important cause of hypertension arises from the stress of spending large amounts of time in automobiles fighting traffic (Teaford 188). By separating homes from daily necessities such as grocery stores, offices, and day care, people are forced to drive everywhere - crowding arterial roads and creating traffic congestion.

America's auto-dependence also has farther reaching effects that can be seen via major news networks or at any gas station: oil dependence. While the distances driven by Americans are only a piece of a much larger problem, it is a piece that has the potential to cause vast changes in growth and development practices. Subdivisions built prior to World War II were located along major transportation routes, such as trains, trolleys, rivers and roads (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 71). Post World War II development is almost exclusively centered around the idea that at least one person in every American family will have a car, giving families the freedom to get wherever they need at their convenience. Owning an automobile has always been an important part of The American Dream of home ownership (note the plethora of garages today) largely because after the initial purchase, it was inexpensive to own a car due to low fuel prices.

Up to the present, looking past the oil crisis of the 1970's, America's ever expanding and increasing growth relying on cheap oil, and its auto-dependence, has continued unabated. However, many scientists believe we are coming to the end of cheap oil and must soon face the reality of Peak Oil. Peak Oil is defined as the point where half the world's usable oil has already been used (Greene et al.), at which point oil production will begin to steadily decrease and prices will increase until unaffordable. U.S. oil production hit peak in the 1970's and simply cannot support our country's present energy demands. Already we spend nearly $4 billion annually to finance our oil consumption and import two-thirds of the oil we use (Greene et al.).

This oil dependence, and America's inability to feed its own energy needs, has affected

government policy and international relations, in some cases resulting in armed conflict

(Greene). On a smaller scale, after over a half century, the ideology of ever expanding growth

through inexpensive and abundant energy has become connected to The American Dream of

home ownership - a home in the suburbs with a car and a yard. As oil prices rise, this dream

will become ever more difficult to obtain as commuting from a single family home into work

becomes too expensive (Greene et al.).

Proponents of suburbia argue that the predominance of the single family model shows

that Americans generally prefer it, and that those working to change development patterns are

trying to force an unwanted lifestyle on Americans (Batchis 376-77). While evidence shows that

the majority of the American population likes the suburbs as they are - or dislikes the idea of

density in general - there is a growing number of people who want viable alternatives to

suburban single family developments (Hester 209)[1]. Often these people would like to live in

denser-mixed use communities that are modeled off of traditional towns, allowing them to do

more of their daily activities within a comfortable walking distance from their house (Florida).

While this segment of the population is not the majority, Arthur Nelson argues in his

article "Leadership in a New Era," that number is large enough to begin to demand new

community designs from real estate developers. He claims, "...the market demand for new

homes through 2025 may be almost exclusively for attached and small-lot units (Nelson 397)."

It is important to understand that he is not saying that people will stop wanting single family

homes or stop wanting to own their own home. His argument is that as more people want to

live in walkable communities we will have more single family homes than demand for them. In

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1 The American LIVES study found that 20.8% of Americans are unhappy with low-density developments
and want communities using new urbanist strategies and higher density; 30.8% like the suburbs as they
are; and 48.4% are unhappy with suburbia and like idea of new urbanism but don't like density.

short, the United States may be heading into an era where we are over stocked on single family detached homes and will instead need to build walkable mixed-use communities.

This shift in what Americans are seeking in housing is due to changes in American society as a whole. The 1950s home was designed for a nuclear family - a working husband who commuted to work while his wife remained at home to take care of their children's needs. In actuality it is not that different from the family situation that Catherine Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing were designing homes to accommodate over a hundred years earlier. However, modern American society has many new family and household types to contend with. These diverse types include: singles, young professionals, single parents, empty nesters, and multi-generational families (Nelson 398). These groups each have different requirements than the original suburban house was designed to meet.

The American Dream of a house in the suburbs has long functioned on the fact that homes were inexpensive to buy, served as a sound long term investment and that cars were relatively cheap to own. However, the current economic downturn has made buying a home more difficult and expensive, while concurrently rising oil prices have made commuting between home and work more costly (Kiviat). Moreover, while people still dream of owning their own home and property, more Americans are concerned about the environmental degradation that is implicit in the building of suburban developments (Lewis 192; Calthorpe 15; Farr 54).

In these hard economic times the government is once again advocating home ownership as a means of economic recovery and stability. It is so tied into the American economy and our perception of its strength that daily reports on home ownership levels across the U.S. can be seen on any major news network. However, many local, state and even federal officials are talking about cutting spending because the government coffers are empty. This may not be a direct result of our development practices however, "... [a] 2000 report on the costs of sprawl estimates that nonsprawling, controlled growth would reap a savings of $12.6 billion in water

45

and sewer infrastructure expenditures over the period of 2000 to 2025, and a $109.7 billion savings in road costs (Calthorpe 190)." Considering the current economic situation, we can no longer afford to develop our cities in such a costly fashion.

By building such low density areas, local governments, and hence, the tax payers, are forced to bear the financial burden of the new infrastructure to support them. In most cases, when new commercial or residential developments are built, the infrastructure needed on the site is considered city infrastructure and its upkeep is paid for with tax dollars instead of by the developers (Calthorpe 190). This means that new commercial areas and single family zoned suburbs are actually paid for by the entire tax base of a municipality, not just by the people living in, or making money from, the development.

For all these reasons the car-oriented, low-density post World War II development patterns should be replaced with patterns that are healthier for our society, economy, and environment. The American public seems to be disinterested in changing the status quo for a multitude of reasons - many of which are deeply rooted in The American Dream of home ownership that tells them that a suburban house is the ultimate marker of having 'made it.' Other reasons are related to NIMBY groups (Not In My Backyard) which want to prevent legislation that would allow denser development and different socio-economic groups into their neighborhood for fear of decreasing existing property values (Batchis 381-82). Another important reason is that Americans like their current lifestyle and are able to disconnect it from the environmental, social health, and international relations problems that it causes (Teaford 190).

The American Dream of home ownership remains intact. The question is then when will the changing social conditions be at the tipping point needed to reshape the dream and change it to fit with modern life and circumstances. There are individuals and groups within the design professions that understand our current style of development is not sustainable; that it cannot

continue due to economic, environmental, and social forces. Several designers and some

interdisciplinary teams from various backgrounds - landscape architects, architects, and

planners - have developed new styles of development that work to solve the problems caused

by traditional suburban planning. Each of these new development styles have different but

similar priorities, and are examples of how designers are contesting long standing, deeply

ingrained ideas of what defines American residential development.

New Suburban Models

Many new construction patterns advocate similar ideals such as environmental

stewardship and conservation, food production, density, walkable interconnected streets, a

pedestrian-friendly environment, and the availability of alternative modes of transportation.

They create complete communities that allow residents to walk to daily necessities and promote

social interaction and diversity, and in so doing, these patterns address many of the health and

societal problems related to traditional American suburban patterns as addressed in earlier

sections of this chapter. While there are many designers and groups advocating these ideas,

there are three development models that have garnered widespread support and public

awareness; these are: New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and LEED for Neighborhood

Development (LEED ND). This section will discuss each of these development styles

examining their history, defining characteristics, and positive and negative qualities.

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) first met in 1993 in Alexandria, Virginia; a

group of 170 designers concerned with the decline of the central cities and resulting separation

between the races and income levels, the financial difficulties facing families in an economy that

requires two incomes, the environmental damage resulting from car centered development, and

the placelessness of the modern suburban condition. At this first meeting attendees discussed

alternatives to traditional development and shared projects that they were working on that

addressed and attempted to remedy the problems of suburban sprawl.   In the same year, CNU

was incorporated into a non-profit by six of the attendees - Peter Calthorpe, Andres Duany,

Elizabeth Moule, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Stephanos Polyzoides, and Daniel Solomon. Its

website states that they have a membership of "...over 3,100 in 20 countries and 49 states,"

and boasts such prominent personages as state governors and federal cabinet secretaries.

The second paragraph of the organization's charter states what the New Urbanists

believe should be changes to traditional development they are hoping to instigate:

> We stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns with coherent
>
> metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities
>
> of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural
>
> environments, and the preservation of our built legacy (v).

To achieve these goals the CNU acts as a support group for like-minded groups and people. It

is also an educational source for other design professionals, policy makers and the public, in the

hope of changing government policies and ordinances that continue to propagate traditional

development patterns ("C.N.U. History").

New Urbanist communities are compact, pedestrian oriented, and mixed-use. The

communities, while called New Urbanism, really take much of their design from the traditional

urban design principles of European and older American cities that had been discarded by the

Modernists early in the twentieth century. As such, their plans create an urban fabric defined by

its historic aesthetic and designed to the human scale as opposed to the scale of the

automobile. Buildings are generally two to four stories tall and are of "...the same relative mass,

height, and architectural styles, regardless of their uses, which may change over time (Lennertz

109)."   They strive for a compatibility of building types, which is defined as: buildings that

"assure privacy, security, and consistent quality of street frontage (Lennertz 109)," a quality that helps to activate the streets making them pedestrian friendly.

CNU puts a high priority, in their charter, on creating interconnected, walkable developments with a diversity of not only uses but races and income levels. To accomplish this this they advocate a mixture of building types offering a variety housing and work options for all income levels. This not only creates equity in housing options for all groups of people but also offers dynamic pedestrian streets of older neighborhood models where people of different social and racial groups interact in an informal social setting.

An often cited example of New Urbanist principles and planning is Seaside Florida (Figure 4.2), designed by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk - two of the founding members of CNU. This community is a good example of New Urbanist design principles. Aside from being built more densely than post-World War II suburbs, it has a network of interconnected streets and pathways to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. The buildings are kept to a human scale and, unlike traditional developments, it is not zoned but coded by building type. Each type accommodates a different use with the buildings expected to be used by a large portion of the community and the most dense areas organized clustered in the town center. A gradient of less dense and more private buildings radiate out from there. The architecture of the community is highly regulated - to guarantee building compatibility - and based off historic building practices of the area, so that Seaside feels like an older Floridian community.

While Seaside, Florida is a good example of a constructed New Urbanist community, it is not a complete picture of the larger agenda of the CNU. The *Charter of the New Urbanism* is organized according to the three scales on which New Urbanism is meant to operate: the region; neighborhood, district, and corridor; and block, street, and building. Seaside and similar New Urbanist developments address the last two of those scales - neighborhood and block - but
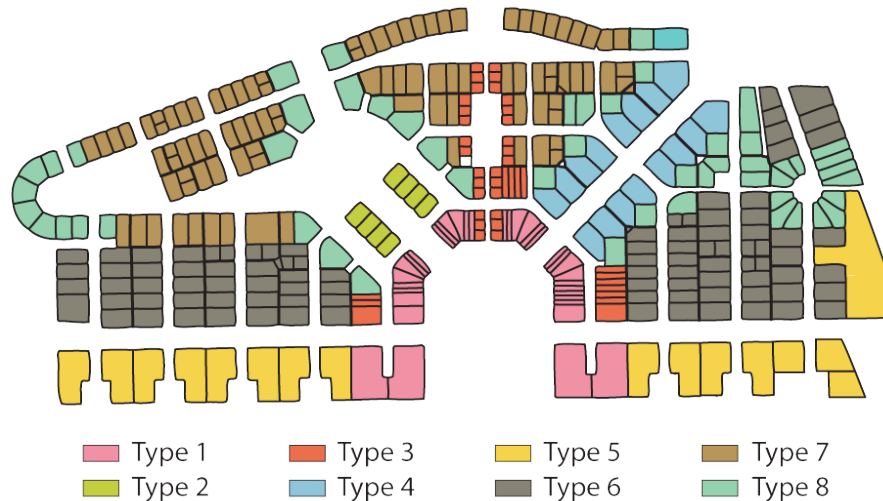
Figure 4.2: Plan of Seaside, Florida showing coded areas

This plan shows the coding by building type of Seaside, Florida. Type 1*, has retail on the ground floor with residential above;* Type 2*, primarily office use with some retail and residential;* Type 3*, warehouse area for storage, workshops and automotive repair;* Type 4*, private housing;* Type 5*, special category for large lots contain several buildings;* Type 6*, freestanding residential with small outbuildings;* Type 7*, small residential;* Type 8*, residential area requiring acknowledgment of a gateway or other special area.*

do not tackle the larger regional scale. This is likely due to the general lack of regional planning in the United States, and illustrates a problem that is shared by all new development models discussed in this chapter.

Because most completed New Urbanist developments lack any consideration of the regional scale, the communities are often criticized for being elitist or overly nostalgic. While New Urbanist designs and ideals speak to inserting these communities into the city framework and connecting them to the surrounding developments, as often as not they are built in urban fringe greenfield locations (Figure 4.3). Many of these communities end up far from the urban core with housing prices that disallow a mix of income levels - such an integral part of the *Charter of the New Urbanism*. These communities, especially Seaside, Florida, have been

Figure 4.3a - Main Street of Norton Commons, KY. a New Urbanist community built in the suburbs of Louisville, Ky. (right).
(image from: http://www.mulloyproperties.com/condo_management/communities_we_manage.asp)
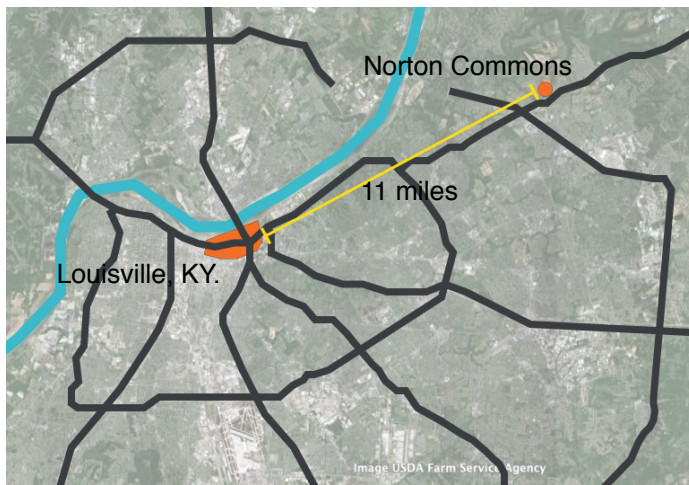
Figure 4.3b - Map showing the relative location of Norton Commons to Louisville, KY. As seen on this map, Norton Commons was built on a greenfield site in the outer suburbs approximately 11 miles from the city. While the development itself was built using New Urbanist principles they were not used to determine site location or connectivity - making Norton Commons in many ways another form of suburban sprawl. (left)

criticized for seeming too perfect, i.e. their historically rooted and tightly controlled design guidelines result in the appearance of a movie set rather than a living community.

In short, one of the largest criticisms of CNU is that it only creates an improved version of sprawl (DeWolf). By working with local governments and policy makers, CNU implements changes in the building ordinances and codes that continue to make it illegal to build mixed-use, dense communities. Because these changes affect street setbacks and lot sizes, and not how growth is managed and planned, development continues to expand from the urban core, but now with the additional option of creating healthier development types.

The Smart Growth Network (SGN)

Like New Urbanism, Smart Growth (SGN) is a movement that promotes denser, walkable communities as opposed to traditional post-World War II subdivisions (Fig. 4.4). Unlike CNU, SGN is rooted in the environmental movement and has its beginnings as far back as the 1970s when the National Land Use Policy Act was introduced with the intent to "encourage states to develop coordinated state land use plans and proposed a new federal agency and land-planning database (Farr 29)." While this policy never passed, it did inspire several state governors to introduce policies that would allow plan and manage urban growth. One such state was Oregon, which in 1973 passed a law stating that all municipalities were to designate Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs), a ring beyond which new development would not be permitted. While this measure helped to control development, many detractors believed that it created "smart sprawl (Farr 29);" and that it promoted well located 1950s style developments.

Since then, SGN has evolved. In 1997 they developed ten principles (Figure 4.5) which allowed them to embrace a larger agenda and begin to unite a host of decentralized environmentalist and community activist groups that, in their fight to stop suburban sprawl, had

Figure 4.4 - Gallery Place, Washington, D.C.

"Success Stories". Coalition for Smarter Growth. 4 June 2011. <http://smartergrowth.net/anx/index.cfm/1,130,395,0,html/Gallery-Place-Washington-DC>.

become anti-development and growth as oppose to anti-sprawl. SGN online, defines the term by saying:

> Growth is 'smart' when it gives us great communities, with more choices and personal freedom, good return on public investment, greater opportunity across the community, a thriving natural environment, and a legacy we can be proud to leave our children and grandchildren.

As is evident from this statement and their principles, the goals of Smart Growth are very similar to those of CNU and often the communities will have many similar characteristics; the CNU is even one of the many listed partners on their website.

The difference between the two groups is that SGN was a project started by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as several other non-profit and government organizations, to address concerns about growth and promote new development methods that, as cited from their website, "...boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality." To achieve this goal, SGN acts as a forum bringing together different

Principles of Smart Growth

Compact Building Design	Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices	Mix Land Uses
Create Walkable Neighborhoods	Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration	Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place	Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

Figure 4.5 - 10 Principles of Smart Growth

"Why Smart Growth?". Smart Growth Online. NCAT. 16 Apr 2011. <http://www.smartgrowth.org/why.php>.

development related constituencies to discuss the best practices of smart growth, raise public awareness, share information, develop new policies, and address barriers to smart growth. However, SGN neither lobbies the government for change nor do they take on individual development projects.

Smart Growth suffers from many of the same critiques of New Urbanism. However, unlike New Urbanism, whose Charter strongly defined its values and how its communities should be designed and built, the ten principles of Smart Growth are less specific. The SGN principles allow for more freedom in the interpretations by municipalities and developers. Many of the communities built under the Smart Growth ideology show minimal improvements to the traditional postwar development patterns. It is for this reason that the designs of SGN do not carry as much authority as other similar new development plans.

LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND)

LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) was introduced by the United States Green Building Council in 2009 as it's newest LEED certification system. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program was introduced in 2000 as a third-party method of verifying that a building was designed using green building practices. To accomplish this, LEED provides building managers and designers with a concise framework detailing how to implement green building practices into the building design. It then measures the building's design and performance in five categories: energy savings, water efficiency, CO_2 emissions, indoor environmental quality, educated and responsible use of materials. Its rating systems began with LEED for New Construction (NC) and has slowly expanded to include: Existing Buildings, Commercial Interiors, Core & Shell, Schools, Retail, Healthcare, Homes, and finally Neighborhood Development. Since its introduction in 2000, LEED has become well known throughout the design, development, and building industries in large part due to the fact

"USGBC is a balanced, consensus-based nonprofit with more than 20,000 member companies and organizations representing the entire building industry (*Leed 2009 Neighborhood Development* I)." Because of its popularity within the industry as well as its growing popularity and name recognition with the general public, LEED has had a positive impact on the construction industry, helping to make green products and green design more readily available.

LEED ND was created through a partnership between the USGBC, CNU and the Natural Resources Defense Council (as the voice of SGN) and is the first of the LEED rating system to address green building within the context of a neighborhood. The rating system is divided into three main sections plus two specializing in design innovation and the consideration of regional circumstances in the design, the three main sections are:

- *Smart Location and Linkage* - *"encourages communities to consider location, transportation alternatives, and preservation of sensitive lands while also discouraging sprawl."*

- *Neighborhood Pattern and Design* - *"emphasizes vibrant, equitable communities that are healthy, walkable, and mixed-use."*

- *Green Infrastructure and Buildings* - *"promotes the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure that reduce energy and water use, while promoting more sustainable use of materials, reuse of existing and historic structures, and other sustainable best practices (Leed 2009 Neighborhood Development I)."*

These three categories show that LEED ND stresses many of the same principles as New Urbanism and Smart Growth - in that it too promotes the ideal of dense, walkable, mixed-use communities. This system adds an equally important focus on creating green buildings and infrastructure within the framework of the community.

This system is promoting the same community design principles as CNU and SGN. It is a brand that is well respected not only among designers, developers, and builders but also among the general public. As is explained in *LEED for Neighborhood Development* "LEED [ND] creates a label, as well as guidelines for both decision making and development, to provide an incentive for better location, design, and construction of new residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments (*Leed 2009 Neighborhood Development* XII)." Because of this level of respect LEED ND has the potential to bring all the design principles and ideals of the development styles mentioned above to a broader audience. However without changes to the American perception of the dream of home ownership it is unlikely that these principles will become part of everyday practice.

New Suburban Models and The American Dream

The new models of suburban development explained above have the ability to offer the compact walkable residential environment that many American homebuyers have been shown to prefer (Florida; Hester 208; Nelson 396). However, building these developments can prove to be difficult. Many of the central ideals of these models (Figure 4.) are seen by developers, builders, land speculators, and portions of the general public to stand against post-World War II understanding of The American Dream of home ownership (Russell; Teaford 206). These include ideas such as regional planning, mix of socioeconomic groups, and higher density development. As Teaford explains:

> Density is a dirty word for many suburbanites, and the idea of building compact settlements flies in the face of their conception of a suburban lifestyle. Coercive planning that prevents landowners from doing what they wish with their property likewise offends the freedom-loving spirit of many Americans (207).

The "coercive planning" that he mentions is referred to in the Charter for the New

Urbanism and other planning books as regional planning. Of the models listed above, all call for

varying levels of regional planning - the Charter for the New Urbanism devotes an entire chapter

to this idea. In each of these models regional planning is seen as a way to organize suburban

development so that communities are built in environmentally and socially responsible locations

and infrastructure needs are maximized but not over built. Regional planning is a rarity in the

United States. Most cities and municipalities have their own urban planning office - meaning

that local politicians generally make planning decisions - and historically there is little

coordination (Batchis 383). Some states have tried to put in place "plans that acknowledge the

inter-relatedness of a metropolitan area's numerous jurisdictions (Batchis 383)," however,

landowners and businesses often fight such regional plans because of their effect on land prices

and development.

A recent example of this can be seen in the battle over Oregon's Urban Growth

Boundary (UGB) which are "...rings beyond which land development was not permitted. These

boundaries were designed to expand in an orderly fashion as each ring of land was developed

(Farr 29)." While the UGB succeeded in saving natural treasures and controlling development,

it has also created a great deal of contention due to the fact that people on the development

side of the dividing line have high property values while those on the non-development side do

not. In 2004, after nearly 30 years, Oregon's UGB came under attack by property-rights

activists claiming that the UGB curbed Fifth Amendment Rights, i.e., that land owners on the

non-development side of the UGB should not be stopped from selling or developing their land

without compensation from the government. Because of deeply enmeshed American beliefs in

the sanctity of private property, the Oregon's UGB laws were all but abolished (Russell).

This example shows the clash between urban and rural, and public and private interests

related to this issue. The Urban Growth Boundary was put in place for the good of the entire

community but was torn down by private interests. If new development patterns and regional planning are to become standard practice in the United States there must be a shift in American perceptions placing community welfare equal to personal welfare.

Such a shift in perception could equally help societal acceptance of the idea of mixing socioeconomic groups, which is generally met with hostility. This concept is important to all the new development patterns listed above because of its ability to create better living conditions for poorer Americans, and to create more vital, less fearful, communities (Calthorpe 15; Teaford 194). As zoning and development practices currently stand, building lower income housing in many suburban areas is considered financially inefficient because of exclusionary zoning practices which, as discussed in this chapter, keep property values high by keeping unwanted businesses and socioeconomic groups out. As with UGBs, this issue relates to constitutional rights as stipulated in the Fifth Amendment. However unlike the UGBs which only affected some members of the population, passing laws that permit and promote mixing socioeconomic groups in suburban areas affects any suburban home owner. Because of this, there are many 'Not In My Backyard' (NIMBY) groups across the country that actively fight developments that aim to reduce lot or house sizes and create housing for differing socioeconomic groups within their communities (Teaford 196).

These same groups fight against higher density developments both because of a perceived loss in property value and because higher density developments reduce the virtuous rural aesthetic that is commonly considered an important characteristic of suburbia (Tuan 108; Hester 205). Low-density, post-World War II development styles allow each homeowner a piece of the American Frontier and independence. Suburban development and migration of the past was based on leaving overcrowded, dirty, unhealthful, and dense urban environments for the healthy, open, and clean semi-countryside (Hayden *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 22). As such, the idea of density continues to carry the stigma of previous

eras when density meant filth and disease. Many American homeowners and buyers continue to hold these beliefs even though there is evidence showing that more Americans want to live and buy homes in denser, walkable communities (Florida).

As with the cultural perceptions and dislike of regional planning and mixing socioeconomic groups, the idea of high-density development is one that does not exactly fit the current definition of The American Dream of home ownership. For new suburban development styles such as New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and LEED ND to become popular and common development patterns across the United States, they must find a way to change the American predisposition toward these ideas.

Summary

As we have seen, traditional post-World War II development patterns diminish the welfare or our environment, society, and national health. This is due to many reasons including: 1.) a reliance on the automobile, which forces people to drive long distances for daily needs, deters walking, and continues our national addiction to foreign oil; 2.) the separation of income levels and racial groups, reinforcing societal fear and distrust; and 3.) the degradation and destruction of natural resources and farmland, causing large scale flooding, and losses to native flora and fauna.

In addition to these large scale problems, American society has changed. There are now new groups of homebuyers seeking housing types that are not congruent with traditional postwar subdivisions. These groups - individuals, single parents, young couples, and empty-nesters - desire neighborhoods that are walkable and offer amenities such as grocery stores, retail spaces, restaurants, and coffee shops. In short, they desire the option to not drive. Interestingly, the data from the 2010 Census shows that "[p]opulation growth continued to be

heavily concentrated in suburban metropolitan counties (Renn)". However, the "2011

Community Preference Survey" conducted by the National Association of Realtors shows that:

> [t]he ideal home today is located closer to the workplace and mass transportation
> and in a neighborhood that's denser and mixed use, with amenities and
> businesses--parks, pharmacies, grocery stores, doctors offices, schools,
> restaurants--that can be walked to (Florida).

This group is growing, however the housing stock reflecting their housing preferences is not.

There are several new subdivision styles that can be utilized in the design and
development of neighborhoods and communities to fit this growing need. New Urbanism, Smart
Growth, and LEED ND all promote and design walkable, mixed-use developments such as
described in the above quote. While each of the above development models have obvious
differences and similarities, they all share common barriers to their widespread implementation.
These concerns are strongly enough ingrained in American society to have become embedded
in our laws and local ordinances, thus making it difficult to initiate change. Many of these
ordinances make it illegal for new development patterns to be built, meaning that policy change
must come before development changes can be made. However, because the federal
government has left land planning to the local municipal governments there is not just one law
to be changed but many across the entire country.

Chapter V -

Retrofitting the Dream

New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and LEED ND are examples of new development models

that have been created by design professionals - architects, planners and landscape architects -

to affect change in American land development practices and how Americans live. These are

not, however, the first examples of design professionals changing development patterns to

create healthier individuals, lifestyles, and communities through environmental design. For

centuries architects and planners have theorized about and designed planned communities for

a host of purposes: colonialism, industrialism, religious beliefs, utopian ideals, and more

recently environmentalism and sustainability.

Designers have been creating and building new towns and mixed-use residential areas

since as early as the late seventeenth century. In many cases these communities are still

considered exceptional, in spite of small older houses, due to the many amenities designed into

the community fabric. In the United Sates, however, the ideals associated with this style of

development did not continue beyond the first generation of occupants. Many plans began with

community centered ideals only to morph into a more standard style of development expected

by Americans. As a result, successfully constructing mixed-use developments continues to be

difficult since these communities are often seen as standing against the American Dream of

independence, self determination, and privacy.

Changes to the land use status quo are especially timely today considering the impact

our automobile dependency has on our society and environment. Design professionals

understand that our current development practices are not sustainable; that it cannot continue

due to economic and environmental forces. We maintain hope that the allure of a new and healthier style of development will eventually be embraced by the American public. This is especially true as the country faces losses in accessible natural areas, ever increasing oil prices, and flash-flooding events due to poor stormwater management.

Many of the new theories of development listed above call for interdisciplinary teams to work together to design and build the site. The teams suggested generally include: architects, planners, engineers, landscape architects, developers, builders, and community members. Apart from working with local officials to get regulations on street setbacks, density requirements, and alleyway restrictions altered, there is little attention given to the promotion of any better ideas available outside of these teams. To date, it seems that designers such as Peter Calthorpe, Randall Arendt, Douglas Farr, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk have had an "if you build it they will come" approach to establishing 'complete communities[2]' as the predominant development pattern. To enable these ideas to take hold the designers who originated these concepts, as well as the landscape architects, architects, planners, and professional organizations who agree with their theories, must work in concert to promote new development practices, educate the public, and be the catalyst for large scale changes in American development practices.

Precedents of Design Driven Planning

Historically, the intellectual and theoretical conversations of design professionals have driven large scale changes in urban and suburban development. Some of the more recognizable examples are the City Beautiful Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, Modernism from the early and mid-twentieth century. Both of these

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[2] "Complete Communities" are walkable, mix-use developments that promote informal social interaction as well as a mix of socioeconomic groups and housing styles.

design models initiated movements which had far reaching effects on urban planning and development practices during the height of the movements and continue into the present.

The City Beautiful Movement was an attempt to elevate American city design to the grandeur of the great European cities and "was characterized by the construction of civic centers, tree-lined boulevards, and public spaces; by the imposition of order on chaotic industrial cities; and by including nature in the city (Daniels 181)." The movement was initiated by Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, which was designed by Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. During the six months the Fair was open, it had 27.5 million recorded visits at a time when the total population of the United States was 65 million (Larson 5). The 1893 Chicago World's Fair effectively captured the imagination of the American public, and many cities including Washington D.C., Chicago, Fort Worth, San Francisco, and St. Louis, consequently had city plans designed by Burnham using the principles of the City Beautiful (Daniels 181).

The effects of Modernism on American urban planning were discussed at length in Chapter two. This movement influenced city leaders to adopt and mandate single use zoning and low density development. These became urban planning tools that would lead to the creation of modern suburbia and the ever expanding outward growth of cities. Like the City Beautiful Movement, development patterns based on Modernist principles caught the imagination of American society. Popular media outlets and advertising of the post World War II era produced messages supporting a new consumerism-based society that would advance continual economic growth and secure American dominance on the world stage.

While both of these movements were started by designers - architects, landscape architects, and urban planners - they became important parts of American culture not only because they were an effective means of solving the urban problems of their time, but also because they had popular support. The design ideas that fueled the changes were the catalyst,

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but the support of government, industry, media, and public interest made them into the long

lasting urban planning movements that continue to influence our cities and culture today.

If contemporary designers continue to subscribe to the "if you build it they will come"

approach to promoting new design solutions it is unlikely that these ideas will affect mainstream

American culture. Douglas Farr, in his book Sustainable Urbanism, argues that:

> ...the sustainable neighborhood is a convenient truth and an easier sell than the
>
> energy-efficient light bulb. [It] supports a compelling quality of life with economic,
>
> health, and environmental benefits tangible to individuals and families[, and]
>
> promotes a way of life that people are choosing voluntarily out of self-interest
>
> (58).

However, he does not take into account the cultural importance of The American Dream of

home ownership, and how deeply ingrained it is. The reality remains that the large scale

suburban development changes that are called for by Farr and New Urbanism, Smart Growth,

and LEED ND, among others must expand this commonly held and historically rooted

perceptions.

American society demands its creature comforts, is change resistant, and asks 'how will

this affect me,' and 'what's in it for me' before subscribing to a new formula (Farr 20).

Americans like their current lifestyle and they are able to disconnect it from the environmental,

social health, and international relations problems caused by it. This is largely due to the

dominant companies that protect their territorial interests by using lobbies, media outlets,

advertising, and public relations to their advantage. They ensure that the changes suggested

by designers, planners, and environmentalists are not put in place. To counteract their

economic and political strength, the design professions must come together to reinforce existing

relationships and collaborate on common concerns and issues.

Landscape Architecture as a Meeting Point

Landscape architects are suited to be the catalyst for a new focus of collaboration between themselves, planners, and architects. In recent years landscape architecture has become more widely recognized within the design community and among the general public. There are a number of prominent commissions being won by landscape architect-led design teams. Recent examples would be the redevelopment of Seattle's waterfront by Field Operations, and the Gateway Arch project in St. Louis by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. While architects tend to be more building-object focused in their designs (Mehaffy), landscape architects are trained to analyze and solve design problems. They do this by looking at the urban experiences that could be created - considering not only the surrounding structural architecture but also the ecology, human systems, and context of a site (Webber).

Landscape architects are trained to design at both small and large scale. The American Society of Landscape Architecture's (ASLA) website lists the many project types included in the field of landscape architecture (Figure 5.1), showing that they work on projects as small as designing private gardens and as large as metropolitan transportation corridors. Landscape architecture stands as a bridge between the building-object-oriented profession of architecture and the region-oriented urban planning profession. Historically this has made it difficult for the profession to establish its own identity. However, it is precisely because of this fact that landscape architecture is now able to win prominent commissions and gain wider recognition.

Many cities are revitalizing derelict and abandoned areas not with iconic buildings but through green initiatives (Gendall). Iconic buildings are intended to revitalize an area of the entire city by creating a central focus that would serve to ground and center redevelopment. An example of this practice can be seen in Bilbao's Guggenheim, and can prove to be beneficial for economic growth. But that is not enough. Many modern cities have crumbling infrastructure and a degraded environment as well as a need for economic growth. These issues are often

Landscape Architecture Project Types

Academic campuses, Conservation, Corporate and commercial, Gardens and arboreta, Historic preservation and restoration, Hospitality and resorts, Institutional, Interior landscapes, Land planning, Landscape art and earth sculpture,	Monuments, Parks and recreation, Reclamation, Residential, Security design, Streetscapes and public spaces, Therapeutic gardens, Transportation corridors and facilities, Urban design, Water resources

Figure 5.1: Landscape Architecture Project Types

Adapted from: "Job Opportunities", Washington D.C. American Society of Landscape Architecture, 3 May 2011. <http://www.asla.org/ ContentDetail.aspx?id=14884>.

compounded by the municipality's need to revitalize large swaths of old industrial sites often located in choice locations along industrialized waterfronts or within close proximity to the urban core.

Many cities are finding that the best, most cost efficient, and unified remedy to these problems is through plans that combine urban design with the landscape (Gendall). In short, the urbanism of the twenty-first century "...is setting itself up—quite necessarily so—to be remembered as the sustainable city, anchored by landscapes rather than grids (Gendall)." This gives landscape architecture an opportunity to redefine itself, moving from a position of consulting to position of defining. It can then, work across professional lines - to connect with like-minded architects and planners - and create stronger ties to promote shared issues and goals.

The American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA), the American Institute of Architects (APA), and the American Planning Association (APA) are already allied through professional partnerships with each other and with groups such as the CNU, Smart Growth Network, and LEED ("About Us"). These existing partnerships demonstrate that we share a mutual desire to help our national community move into the 21st century and beyond through

education and professional support. Our shared goals and concerns are shown through the mission statements of each group. While worded differently, and with different emphasis, each group wants to help its members and society as a whole. While we share these and other overarching goals and concerns, historically, between the groups there has been a need for self-validation. This has lead to territorialism and an inability to agree on a larger agenda.

The mission statement of each organization rightly focuses on its profession. But when compared side-by-side, it is clear that the mission of the ASLA is the best suited to take the leadership role required to bring the design professions together to change suburban development patterns for the better. The mission statement for the APA emphasizes its role as an advocate for good planning and citizen empowerment. The AIA looks more internally, focusing on the benefits its members can bring to society. The ASLA looks both internally and at its role in society - prompting its members to be leaders in education and design of our natural environments and culture (Figure 5.2). This is a much broader goal than indicated by either the AIA or APA in their mission statements.

To achieve the goals set by its mission statement, the ASLA actively promotes its concerns through Federal advocacy in six priority categories: Economic Recovery, Sustainable Design, Transportation, Livable Communities, Water and Stormwater, and Historic Landscapes. Within each of these areas it is working on several different programs to forward the general goals of that category. For example, one of the programs under the Transportation heading is to promote Complete Streets legislation. This will require states and metropolitan planning agencies, during the planning process, to take steps to design and create safe transportation corridors not only for cars but also pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation ("Advocacy: Transportation").

Many of the advocacy issues that the ASLA is currently promoting, if adopted, could help enact laws that would stimulate and support a nationwide change in suburban development
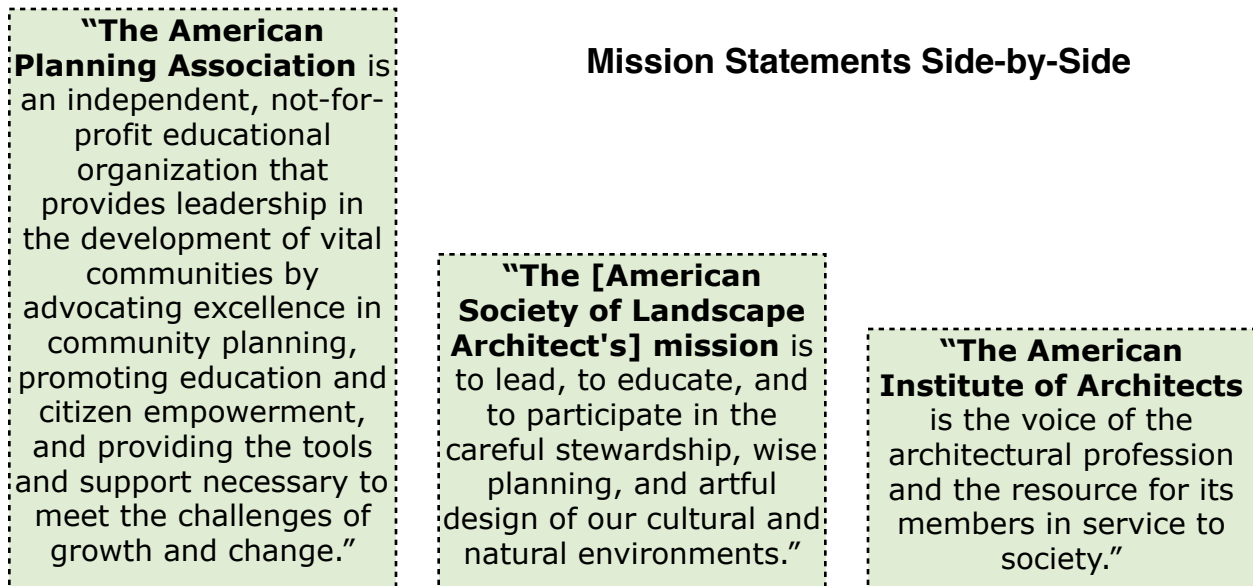
"The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for–profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change."

Mission Statements Side-by-Side

"The [American Society of Landscape Architect's] mission is to lead, to educate, and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning, and artful design of our cultural and natural environments."

"The American Institute of Architects is the voice of the architectural profession and the resource for its members in service to society."

Figure 5.2: Mission Statements Side-by-Side

Compiled from: "AP. Mission and Vision", American Planning Association, 25 Apr. 2011. http://www.planning.org/apaataglance/mission.htm; "Mission", Washington, D.C., American Society of Landscape Architects. 25 Apr. 2011. http://www.asla.org/MissionStatement.aspx; "About A.I.A. M.N.: Mission Statement", AIA Minnesota 25 Apr. 2011, http://www.aia-mn.org/ext_about/mission.cfm.

patterns to a more complete and healthy model - as put forward by CNU, SGN,or LEED ND.

These include initiatives that support green building practices, the creation of livable

communities, promotion of green infrastructure and stormwater management, and the

preservation of historic landscapes. Many of these projects are supported not only by the

ASLA, but are encouraged by other groups with similar goals ("Advocacy")[3]. Interestingly, while

many of these efforts support changes that are necessary to create new development patterns,

few are jointly supported by the ASLA, APA, or AIA, and even fewer list either the USGBC or

LEED, and none are jointly supported by the CNU ("Advocacy").

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[3] The ASLA lists its current advocacy initiatives on six subpages (Economic Recovery, Transportation, Sustainable Design, Livable Communities, Water & Stormwater, and Historic Landscapes) each of these pages includes a list of partner organizations working with the ASLA to achieve change in the given category.

What is most surprising is that while these groups do not appear to work together on many specific advocacy issues they do share many similar advocacy goals, as clearly shown on the advocacy pages of each group's website. Moreover, each of the groups listed above is calling for some level of change to suburban development meaning that there are larger issues that these six groups can, in theory, agree upon. These include a need for regional planning, and a need to promote higher-density and mixed socioeconomic developments. As discussed in the last chapter these ideas are points of contention throughout American society making it difficult for legislation based on these concepts to gain traction and be adopted.

One of the difficulties in getting these initiatives enacted into law is getting support from the law makers who are being lobbied by their constituencies.   They want to protect their idea of the American Dream, property values and independence. Moreover, groups such as the NAR (National Association of Realtors) are working against suburban development changes in whatever way possible. To counteract these obstacles the design community must rally around the larger goals that we share and promote a consistent and unified message - not only to law makers but to the American public. LEED ND and other new development styles call for partnerships across professional lines, with engineers, local activists, and local law makers engaged in the goal of instigating top down development policy changes one municipality at a time. However, none have yet called for marketing the ideals and reasons behind livable walkable communities to the general public with the goal of gaining support and creating change from the bottom up.

Creating New Perceptions, Changing Behavior

In her book "Building Suburbia" Delores Hayden explains: "[The] vast American suburbs of the post-World War II era were shaped by legislative processes reflecting the power of the real estate, banking, and construction sectors, and the relative weakness of the planning and

design professions." (*Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 151).

The strength of these groups continues to drive urban planning and silence forward thinking

design professionals. Often the pro-development groups, such as the National Association of

Realtors (NAR) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) show growth on their

terms as promoting jobs, spurring the economy, and generally in the good of the public interest.

These groups composed of developers, realtors, bankers, and private businessmen who profit

from land speculation and suburban growth. They work in conjunction with the government to

propose the best ways that government can help private interests and big business (Hayden

Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 122). These partnerships have

been in place since at least the early twentieth century. They have promoted that any

opposition is based on Socialism and is anti-private market. Their success speaks for itself.

Similar arguments were used in the late 1940s when the Senate held hearings to

determine whether public or private groups should be in charge of designing and building the

needed housing stock. The housing hearings were dominated by a young Senator Joseph

McCarthy who "attacked proponents of public housing and planned towns as socialists and

communists" (Hayden *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* 130), At

this same time, industries and the government were concerned about contracting economic

growth as war time production ebbed. To prevent an economic downturn the 1946 Employment

Act named 'purchasing power' as something that the government should endeavor to promote -

in essence making consumerism public policy (Strand).

Today consumerism is an understood and essential part of American culture. However,

coming out of The Great Depression and World War II this was not the case. Americans had to

be taught to be consumers. The corporations, lobbies and professional organizations rushed to

help educate them through advertising, public relations campaigns, and mass media (Green

31). Companies like the Ad Council, whose mission is: "...to identify a select number of

significant public issues and stimulate action on those issues through communications programs

that make a measurable difference in our society ("Mission")," were originally founded in the

1940s to mitigate the antibusiness aspects of the New Deal. During World War II, the Ad

Council used its skill at advertising to create war time propaganda such as the "Loose Lips Sink

Ships" and "Rosie the Riveter" campaigns. After the War they and many other ad agencies, with

the backing of government and business interests, began eagerly promoting America's new

policy of consumerism (Strand).

    Martin Green explains:

> Consuming was a new experience for most people of modest means. But the
>
> buying of products suffused with newness was both a prime symbol of
>
> transformation and a mark of modernity. The producers of advertising had to
>
> develop appeals that would convert a traditional society into one based on new
>
> principles (31).

Their appeals were based on the concept that the endless consumption of goods and

the pursuit of plenty were the patriotic duty of all Americans. Furthermore, these actions would

make you and your family happy, and owning these new appliances and goods would make

your life easier and better (*Rhetoric and Ideology in Advertising : A Content Analytical Study of

American Advertising* 114-19). They promoted endless economic growth and consumption as

the tell tale sign that American capitalism was a stronger system than socialism or communism.

These ideas dovetail with the government's belief in a Nation of Home Owners because new

home owners need to purchase goods to maintain of their houses.

    Some examples of the American Dream of Home Ownership and consumerism being

sold together can be seen in the Saturday Evening Post cover from August 15, 1959 (Figure

5.3) and General Electric's "Dream House" (Figure 5.4) ad from 1948. Both of these images

show the house itself to be a dream. In the Saturday Even Post cover the house is literally a

dream as is the lifestyle and material goods associated with it that the young couple are imagining. In General Electric's advertisement they tell you that the house **is** a dream, not just anybody's dream but yours, and it is achievable with GE appliances. The caption tells you "it's designed for work saving, step saving and time saving." In short, it is designed to make life easier for the busy housewife. Both of these images have tied consumerism to the American Dream of home ownership by equating it with happiness.
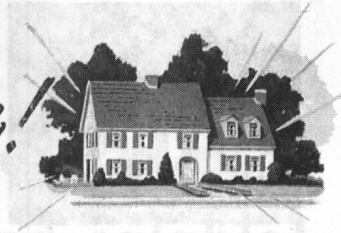
These advertising campaigns, aided by government policies and popular media outlets such as radio and movies, taught Americans how and what to consume (Archer 272-88). In the name of national strength and stability, developers and industrialists pushed public opinion to the side of suburbia. They drowned out the voices of the designers and social activists who wished that the new housing would be designed with "men and women of many diverse racial and economic groups (Hayden *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life*)" in mind. By casting the opinions of these people in the cloak of communism and socialism, government and business groups were assured that the public would become their accomplice in fighting against complete developments and new towns.

To work well, advertising must exist and communicate on several different levels - visual, textual and audio - and with diverse groups of people. Occurring within the realm of popular culture, it communicates broadly held cultural norms and values. Robert L. Root defines popular cultural artifacts as items that:

> ...will exemplify a society's interest in amusing itself, in providing goods and
> services for itself, and informing itself about its activities, including events which
> are of interest and significance to its community and also ideas about itself and
> its members' relationships with other cultures and one another (11).

While advertisements can be understood as popular culture artifacts, it is important to recognize the confusing reality that they are also drivers of popular culture itself. Adverts exist

Figure 5.3: "General Electric has made your Dream House come true!"

John Archer, *Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690--2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 279. Print.

Figure 5.4: The Saturday Evening Post, 15 August 1959

John Archer, Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690--2000 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 277. Print.

"...in that part of mass culture which is conservative in its effects, since it never asserts attitudes which are not already accepted (*Rhetoric and Ideology in Advertising : A Content Analytical Study of American Advertising* 113-14)." In other words, it can be seen as a mirror, simply reflecting societal opinions. On the other hand, it has also been argued that "...in its omnipresent public words and images, [advertising] plays a determining role in creating [American culture] ("Introduction" xi)." The truth lies more in the combination of the two arguments, because in order for an advertisement to succeed, it must meaningfully connect with its audience.

To accomplish that connection, copywriters rely on the audience to decode and understand their visual and textual messages. They cannot be too complicated or outside the norm. If they are, they will not be easily understood by a wide audience. Advertisements must be easily and quickly understood - so they pull cultural references, symbols and values from their audience. While many advertising campaigns target one specific cultural group - women over 40, teenage boys, young families - most people living within the overall culture should be able to understand the advertisement even if it does not effectively persuade them.

Simply put, every advertisement is a piece of popular discourse. As such, they are based on the principles of discourse, argumentation, and rhetoric. Edward P.J. Corbett defines "Rhetoric [as] the art or the discipline that deals with the use of discourse whether spoken or written, to inform or persuade or move an audience, whether that audience is made up of a single person or a group of persons (Root 13)." Advertising fits hand-in-glove within this definition. Thus, it makes sense that advertisements would employ rhetorical devices to create persuasive and far reaching messages.

Some of the most basic principles of rhetoric were written down by Aristotle in the fifth century B.C.E. Of particular importance are the three types of argument - ethical (ethos), emotional (pathos), and logical (logos) which are ways that a speaker can persuade an

audience to his opinion. **Ethos** is defined as "...ethical proof, the convincing character of the

speaker (Root 16)" and recognizes that people trust the opinions and values of a speaker with

which they identify. While ideally, ethos would be embedded within the piece of discourse, more

often than not it is based on the speaker. **Pathos** "...is an appeal to the emotions of the

audience (Root 17)." People make different decisions when emotional. They will agree or

disagree based on who they believe the speaker identifies with and addresses. This is the

easiest way of persuading an audience and can be easily abused. Finally, **logos** "...is logical

proof, or argument, the kind of proof that appeals to reason (Root 18)." Used in an argument,

logos is more reliable and legitimate in terms of truthfulness than the other two. However, it is

also the most difficult to employ effectively.

How each of these elements are used will vary by type of discourse; a political speech

will not use ethos, logos or pathos in the same way as a television show or an advertisement.

In each case there are different actors, reactors and realties.   The interaction between these

three components can be seen as a communication triangle (Figure 5.5). In its most basic form

the three corners of the triangle, encoder (actor), decoder (reactor), and reality, are each

involved with understanding the central signal or message. In the case of an advert, the corners

of the triangle are advertiser, consumer, and product, and the central message is the

advertisement.

According to Root, "... all advertising falls on a continuum between direct persuasion, in

which the rhetorical elements are expressed chiefly through language, and indirect persuasion,

in which the rhetorical elements are less overt and expressed chiefly through actions and

images (39)." Within this continuum advertisers are working to persuade consumers to buy their

products by giving them enough information to make "...a well-founded decision of [their] own

about whether [to] buy a particular product...(*Rhetoric and Ideology in Advertising : A Content

Analytical Study of American Advertising* 58)."

Basic Communication Triangle

encoder

Signal

decoder

reality

Advertising Communication Triangle

advertiser

Advert

consumer

product/ service
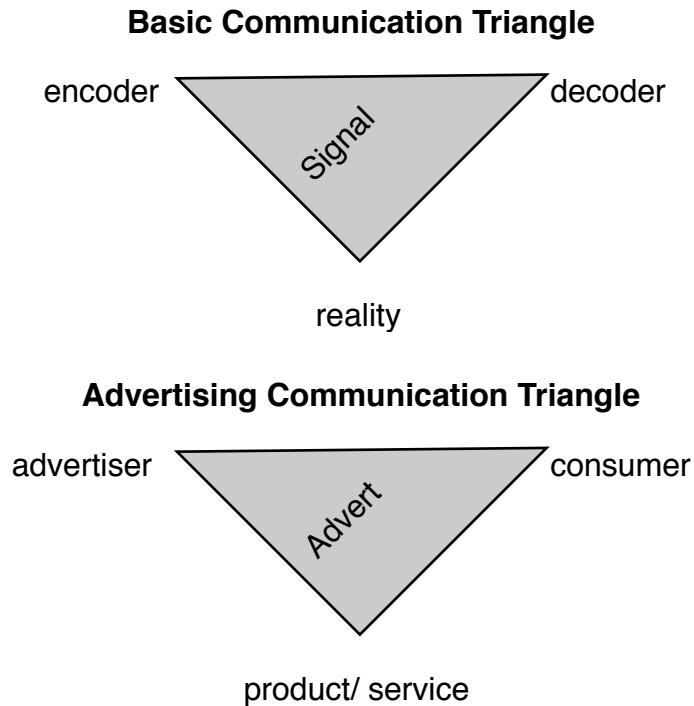
Figure 5.5. Communication Triangles.

Adapted from: Robert L. Root, The Rhetorics of Popular Culture: Advertising, Advocacy, and Entertainment, Contributions to the Study of Popular Culture (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987). 17. Print.

This thin line between direct and indirect rhetoric can be seen in a recent television commercial by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) calling for "responsible housing finance reform." Because of the bursting housing bubble and its effect on the national economy, the Federal Government is working to reform how and from where homebuyers can obtain housing loans (Quinones). The changes that have been recommended include, among other things, requiring a larger down payment and transitioning loan funding into the private sector. These changes concern the NAR because they have the potential to make housing more difficult for people to afford - so, they are lobbying the government and steering public opinion toward the status quo.

The commercial "Housing First," (Figure 5.6) released earlier this year, is designed for

public consumption. The commercial uses both direct persuasion through the scripted voice

over, and indirect persuasion, as shown in the images, people, and activities shown. While the

aim of the commercial is to persuade the American public to support the NARs call for

"responsible housing finance reform," the commercial actually begins and ends with the

sentence "America needs jobs, and housing creates them (Realtors)." Throughout the length of

the commercial, the on screen text and the voice-over refer to how the housing industry

positively effects our national economy and creates jobs for Americans. By reading the small

print, the viewer discovers that the statistics cited to back up these claims - "for every two

homes sold one job is created" - are from documents and surveys produced by the NAR itself.

While this fact does not make the information false, it does imply that it may have a strong bias

toward the goals of the real estate industry. While the true message is that housing finance

reform should be made in a responsible way, that point is only mentioned once in the entire 33

seconds of the commercial. Instead of making the commercial an argument for limited positive

changes to a system that has had serious economic effects on our national economy, the NAR

is arguing to protect America and the American economy by protecting housing, and through it,

allegedly, American jobs.

Behind the text and supporting the script, the visual images tell the story of happy

families and couples buying homes, and working Americans who are employed because of

them. The home buyers - two families, two groups of children playing, three young couples, and

one single women - all appear to be distinctly middle class, as do the surroundings in which

their new home is set. Each house shown is an existing single family detached house with

mature trees and landscaping. However, all of the professions shown - landscaper, builder/

architect, architect, and a warehouse worker - are integral in the building of new homes. These

images reinforce the advertisement's actual message (to protect America and the American

Figure 5.6: Housing First

National Association of Realtors. "N.A.R. Housing First Campaign.Mp4,"
YouTube Video. utahREpro 2011.

economy by protecting housing, and through it American jobs). This is done by showing that

Americans are happy when they have a house and that there are many industries that support

and create housing that could be negatively affected if home purchases are reduced.

This commercial exemplifies how to use advertising and marketing to further an agenda.

While the desired call to action (supporting "responsible housing finance reform") is only

mentioned once, the NAR is able to garner public support for its cause by framing the argument

in a way that is more appealing to the general American public. By doing so, they build support

at the base, who vote or write to their senator. This will help NARs larger mission of limiting

housing reforms through effective lobbying and public policy.

General Suburban Advertising Themes

Framing an argument for housing in the light of the strength and vitality of America's economy is familiar to most Americans. It is seen on television news reports, in news paper articles, and in many other forms of popular media. It is a common method of reinforcing the idea of home ownership in contemporary society. It shares the same reasoning used to market homes as good long term personal investments - a prevalent marketing theme of home ownership. This is one of several enduring themes of suburban advertising which are important to understand in order to effectively repackage The American Dream of home ownership.

Generally speaking, advertisements promoting suburban homes and communities are most often created by developers, builders and real estate agents. Historically, many of these advertisements could be found in magazines sold by the trolley and commuter train companies that serviced the suburbs of major metropolitan areas. More recent outlets for real estate advertising include newspapers, local home magazines, websites, and free Real Estate Books that can be picked up at local grocery and convenient stores. Ruben Ellis's article on real estate advertising magazines points out that:

> Such selling remarks as: 'relaxation is for sale at a very reasonable price,'
> 'opportunity for large income return,' 'country hideaway,' 'perfect for giving your
> kids the chance to grow up close to nature,' 'get rich gradually,' 'executive home,
> massive entry,' 'great starter home,' 'solar pre-heated hot water' and, of course,
> the always popular 'close to schools and shopping' all suggest the aspiration
> toward or realization of personal and class-specific identity values in the
> purchase of a property (123).

While these specific statements are characteristic of the rhetoric found in real estate magazines, all real estate advertisements allude to these same aspirations, and focus on similar basic

elements and themes to sell suburban lifestyle and values. Four themes are particularly popular

and effective and should be looked at in more depth.

1.) Proximity to Nature and Suburbia as a Healthy Retreat -
These two themes go hand in hand, showing suburbia as an idyllic blend of town and

country where residents can maintain a connection to the cultural amenities of the city while

enjoying the healthful benefits of living in a rural setting. In these advertisements suburbia is

shown as a green, peaceful, and quiet escape from stressful city life. The implication is that

moving to suburbia offers a more healthy lifestyle close to nature.

2.) A Place to Grow -
Suburbia is often portrayed as a good place to start a family. Parents feel that children

are safe to run and play in the private yard, an amenity not offered in the crowded cities.

Moreover, because subdivisions are generally built for houses to sell within a certain price

range, parents can feel secure that there are no undesirable people lurking within the

neighborhood (Gold 169-71).

3.) Environment and Status: a Suburb Amongst Suburbs -
Moving to suburbia is often seen as a move up in social status. Builders and developers

use this perception in advertisements. Private community amenities such as a club houses,

tennis courts, golf courses and planned social events are mentioned to show that by moving to

the community your family will be able to meet the 'right' kind of people. This type of advertising

was especially popular in early upper class subdivisions and is still used for modern gated

communities. Another important aspect of advertisements within this grouping is that the word

subdivision is almost never used. Instead, the developments are called something similar to

communities, garden villages and estates (Gold 173-75).

4.) Modernity -

 Most suburban housing advertisements do not feature modernity as a major selling point of a community. This is because it is contradictory to the overarching desire for a community to reflect the nostalgic pastoral ideal. While most ads do not address the modernity of a community specifically and especially not graphically, it remains an important ingredient. Modernity is primarily shown on the inside of suburban homes - in new technologies such as televisions, air conditioners, washing machines and refrigerators (Gold 176).

 Often some or all of these themes are used in a combination as can be seen in this advertisement for Rancho Viejo (Figure 5.7), a suburb of Santa Fe. This ad combines the themes of 'proximity to nature,' 'suburb amongst suburbs,' and 'modernity' to sell not only the development, but the lifestyle that its occupants can expect to enjoy. Rancho Viejo is not just any suburb it is "A place where you live" - neighbors come by for casual dinners, coffee shops are near-by, and nature is all around. By looking at the image you can see that the development is not only close to nature but situated within it - the buildings appear to be a part of the picturesque landscape. In one of the text bubbles an occupant is talking about the wonderful walking and hiking trails within the community. In addition, Rancho Viejo is a 'green' suburb. The text under the picture tells the reader that the community has been built using "[t]he latest in green technology and engineering."

 While Rancho Viejo is a new suburb - and clearly built with new urbanist ideals - it is marketed by using the same traditional suburban marketing themes that sold Levittown and other post-World War II style suburbs. These advertising themes are recognized and accepted by the American public. But, when used in the manner seen in the Rancho Viejo ad, they do not in fact promote a new and more healthy development style, even when that is what they appear to be selling. This is because, like many other new subdivisions, Rancho Veijo is constructed nearly seven and and half miles outside of the Santa Fe, New Mexico in an area that appears to
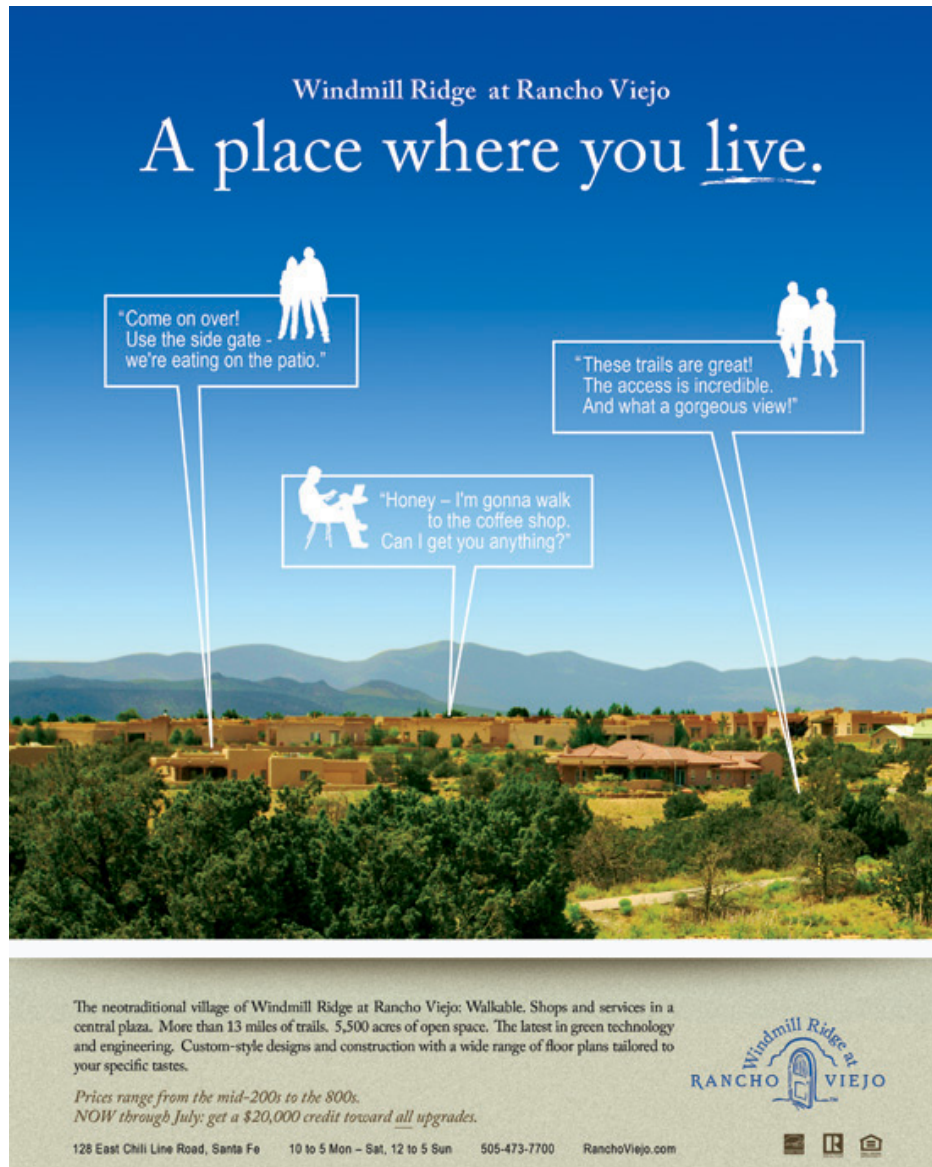
Figure 5.7: "Rancho Viejo, A place where you live."

"Racho Veijo, a place where you live," 2006 Sum Agency, 28 Feb 2011. <www.sumagency.com>.

be growing but that was open desert prior to 1996. While the community itself appears to be

based on CNU principles the planning and placement of the community were not. This

advertisement is selling CNU and sustainable design aspects of this development, but it is also

promoting traditional suburban development patterns.

If the design professions are to change how The American Dream of home ownership is perceived, we must learn from the large companies and lobbies to successfully promote livable, walkable, diverse, communities in a way the public can recognize and accept. Following models such as the NAR's "Housing First" commercial and exploiting general themes of suburban advertising in a manner that supports new development styles, design professionals will have the ability to educate the American public about the problems of conventional development styles and the benefits of newer models. By promoting new suburban development styles in this manner, design professionals can refine The American Dream of home ownership for future generations.

Summary

Politicians and businessmen understand the power of marketing and public relations and how these tools can be used to create public support. Each of these groups uses marketing and public relations as a matter of course and relies on these tools in a way that design professionals are not accustomed. As seen in previous chapters and in the Realtor's advertisements politicians, businessmen, and professional organizations have in the past and continue to create partnerships to protect their vested interests. They are able to steer American perceptions and ideals of home ownership and development through their marketing and public relations. For landscape architects and other design professionals to become catalysts for large-scale change in American development, they must learn from this course of action and begin to actively promote healthier complete development styles in the same manner.

To do this effectively landscape architects, architects and planners need to create a stronger, more unified partnership, under one umbrella, to combat the public and private interest groups that are working to protect long-standing building and development practices.

Landscape architecture is becoming a leader among design professions; even Andres Duany

has been quoted as saying "It's not cool to be an architect. It's cool to be a landscape architect.

That's the next cool thing (Webber)." In addition to landscape architecture's growing

prominence is the fact that the mission of the ASLA - when compared to those of the AIA and

APA - is the best suited to assume such a leadership position. This mission focuses not just

internally on the profession but externally on American society, calling for its members "...to

lead, to educate, and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning, and artful design

of our cultural and natural environments."

The ASLA, in conjunction with a newly strengthened and unified partnership of architects

and planners, can be positioned to be the catalyst for a new era of design driven planning. This

cooperation was in the City Beautiful Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century and

the modernist planning of the mid-twentieth century. What has been done, can be done again.

Chapter VI -

Going Forward

The American Dream of home ownership has been integral in defining the look and

pattern of suburban development in the United States from its inception during the colonial

period up to modern times (Archer 176; Teaford 1; Cullen 140). Created as much to support a

national dream of independence as to create political stability among the citizens of the young

American republic, over the centuries this dream has been molded by politicians, businessmen

and the American public, and used as a bellwether of national prosperity and strength (Cullen

140; "Home Ownership Matters"; Kiviat).

The American Dream of home ownership, as we know it today, comes from the post

World War II development boom and the 1920's concept of the dream house. Prior to World

War II, private property and home ownership were goals for most Americans but were not

considered birthrights. New forms of transportation, building practices and social health

concerns prompted many working class Americans to move from the city centers to new, more

affordable, streetcar suburbs. These communities allowed a larger portion of the American

public to own homes.

During and immediately after World War II, the government, businesses and lobbyists,

through advertisements, films, radio shows, and federal policies, promoted the idea of home

ownership as both a patriotic duty and a right of every American (Archer 260).   A combination of

modernist design principles, businesses focused on profit, and the American Dream, created the

post World War II suburb development model which soon became, and continues to be, the

most common development pattern in the United States. These developments generally consist

of detached single family houses surrounded by a private yard and connected by wide roads; often they do not include connectivity to neighboring suburban developments, sidewalks or proximity to grocery stores, pharmacies, or restaurants.

The post-World War II suburban development patterns are now the status quo throughout the United States ("Defending You Freedom, Mobility and Affordable Homeownership"). However, this pattern has been shown to be a cause of many health, societal, and environmental problems throughout America. In addition to these large scale issues, American society has changed as more Americans desire to live in walkable mixed-use communities (Hester 227; Florida; Nelson 396).

Traditional suburban development was designed largely for the nuclear family (Florida). Contemporary society includes many other types of homeowners; singles, retirees, and young couples - many of whom want to live in areas that include groceries and cafes within an easy walk of their home (Florida). New development models such as New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and LEED ND offer suburban designs that are more compact and have a mix of building types and uses, creating the neighborhood style development that many Americans are showing a proclivity toward (Florida; Hester 227; Nelson 396). The future will be determined in the landscape of the entrenched government and business interests opposing these new ideals.

Much of the current American Dream of home ownership was defined during the post-World War II era not by the American public but by business and government interests through well organized and planned public relations and marketing campaigns (Archer 278; Strand). These groups worked side-by-side to teach Americans how to consume homes and other goods to boost our economy and their profits; on many levels this was a national policy (Strand). Advertising and public relations messages related to home ownership stressed the idea that owning a home was the right of every American, especially returning soldiers and their families.

New Messages

Suburban homes were advertised using various methods. There are four general themes that appear in them, as defined in Margaret and John Gold's article in *Place Images and Media*: 1.) proximity to nature as a healthy retreat, 2.) a place for a family to grow, 3.) better environment and status, and 4.) modernity. These themes, and the public relations campaigns of the government and businesses, defined how Americans believed the suburban environment should look and function. From these, Americans were taught to expect and desire detached homes, set back from the road on well manicured lawns, surrounded by similar demographic groups.

New suburban development patterns must overcome the perception that they oppose The American Dream on three main fronts: 1.) density, 2.) mixing socioeconomic groups, 3.) regional planning. Each of these ideas are central to the design theories behind New Urbanism, Smart Growth and LEED ND. But they are contentious issues throughout American society. For new suburban models to become an accepted suburban development pattern, these ideas must be understood by Americans as not circumventing the ideals of The American Dream of home ownership.

To accomplish this goal, new suburban public relations and marketing messages must disseminate into mainstream American culture - in much the same way that consumerism and home ownership did in the post-World War II era. At that time, these messages were inserted into popular media outlets such as radio and film (Archer 278). Today similar methods could be employed by placing new suburban marketing material in media outlets such as television, films and on the internet. This model is already being employed by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) to promote their "Home Ownership Matters Campaign," which spawned the commercial discussed in the previous chapter. The campaign's webpage (http://

www.realtor.org/topics/homeownership/materials_you_can_use), found on the NAR website,

allows anyone visiting to download brochures, fliers, videos, webinars, t.v. and radio spots, and

to buy buttons and an iPhone application - all supporting traditional home ownership and

development. In addition, the NAR has Facebook and LinkedIn pages, a Twitter feed and a

YouTube channel, allowing its members and the general public easy access to their public

relations materials and messages.

This model could easily be assimilated to promote new suburban development styles.

The four historic suburban marketing themes discussed in the previous chapter, (Proximity to

Nature and Suburbia as a Healthy Retreat, A Place to Grow, Environment and Status, and

Modernity) are already well understood and accepted within American society and can be

reformatted to support changes in suburban form and function. They should be readily

incorporated into new advertising and public relations strategies that promote the ideas of

density, diversity and regional planning and made easily accessible to the general public in

much the same way as the NAR materials. If the American consumer can be persuaded to

understand and support these concepts, changing local and federal development regulations

will become easier. There will be a larger base of support not only from a minority of public

offices, designers and activists but from the American people in general.

To do this, new marketing materials should continue to use the four general themes of

suburban advertising as the main organizing component. Where old messages focused on

images of detached houses and pastoral serenity, materials made to promote new suburban

development styles should show desirable scenes encouraging the principles of density,

diversity, and regional planning - the three main barriers to suburban development changes.

Some of the original themes will be redefined for the new era and the new development

practices. For example, "Proximity to Nature and Suburbia as Healthy Retreat" should be

modified to focus on the idea of a 'Healthy Retreat,' giving visual or audible cues indicating an

array of healthy amenities such as, exercise facilities, restaurants, community gardens, and parks. The print advertising example below (Fig. 6.1) shows how all these elements could come together to sell and redefine The American Dream of home ownership.

This advertisement uses themes and visual cues found in early and mid-twentieth century suburban promotional materials. The original adverts both focus on the idea of a home in the suburbs as 'A Place to Grow.' The Saturday Evening Post (Fig 6.2) shows a young couple dreaming of the life and home they will have in the future, specifically of owning a detached home, starting a family, and buying modern consumer goods. The Woolwich Equitable Building Society advert (Fig. 6.3) simply shows a happy mother and child spending a

Figure 6.1: Shared Dreams, Common Ground, Sustainable Design

90

happy moment together in front of a Tudor style detached home, allowing the man of the family

to feel secure that his family is safe and content while he is away at work.

Like the other two adverts, Figure 6.1 focuses on the idea of a young couple dreaming of

owning a home where they can raise their child and grow their family in both size and wealth.

This ad, like the others, focuses on the idea of ownership[4] but frames it in the context of a
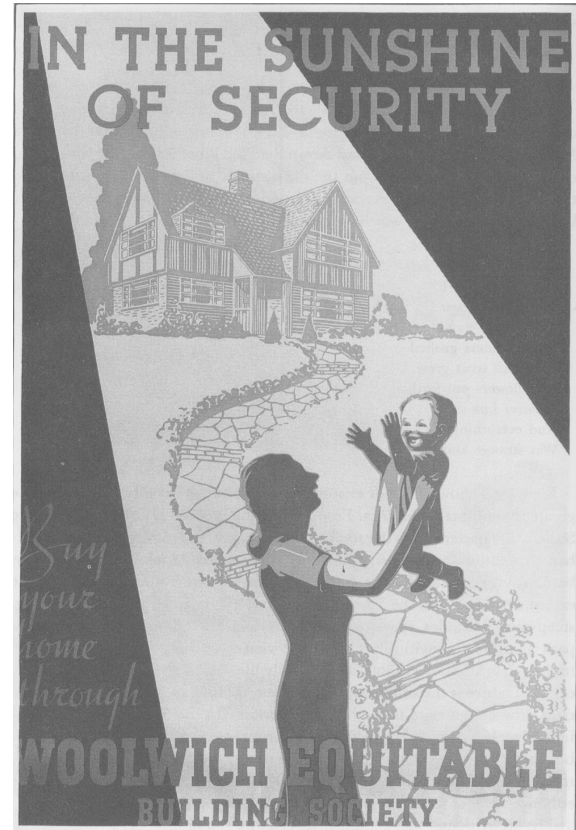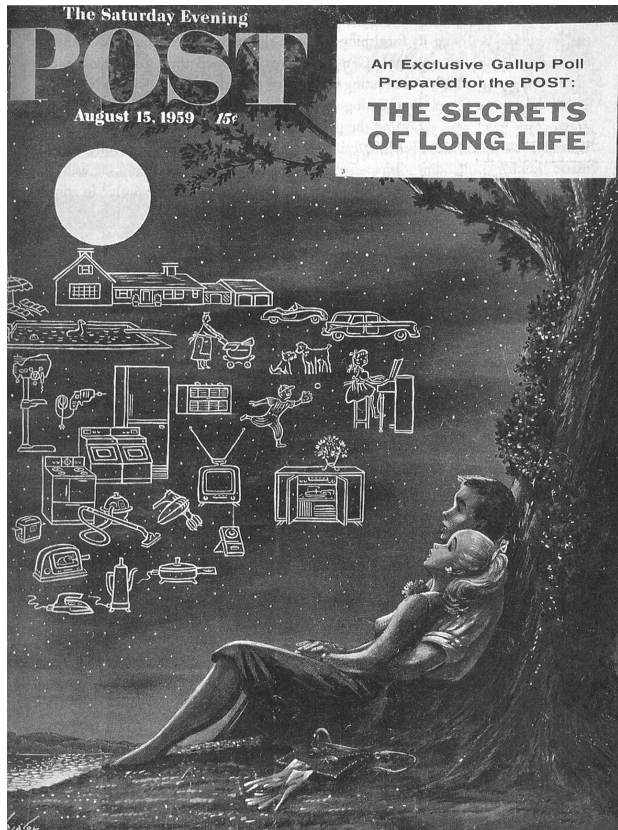
Left - Figure 6.2: The Saturday Evening Post, 15 August 1959

John Archer, Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690--2000 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 277. Print.

Right - Figure 6.3: In the Sunshine of Security

John R. Gold, Margaret M. Gold, "A Place of Delightful Prospects": Promotional Imagry and the Selling of Suburbia." Place Images in Media : Portrayal, Experience, and Meaning. Ed. Zonn, Leo. Rowman & Littlefield: Savage, MD, 1990. Print.

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4 It is important to make sure that materials promoting new development styles are not seen to attack the idea of home ownership in and of itself, instead they should focus on trying to broaden it to include condominiums, town homes, and zero lot line dwellings.

Figure 6.4: Cookie-Cutter / Self-Defined

Left - "Cookie Cutter Houses," http://us.123rf.com/400wm/400/400/bobelias/ bobelias0610/bobelias061000004/555525-cookie-cutter-houses-on-a-suburban- street.jpg. 16 July 2011.

Right - "New Urban Communities," http://www.masterplannedcommunityjobs.com/ images/towncenter.jpg. 16 July 2011.

'complete community' where they can safely raise a child while living in a walkable community, close to everyday necessities such as a grocery store, gym facilities, restaurants, and shops near the urban center.

Another example can be seen in Figure 6.4, this print advertisement takes a different more forceful approach than seen in Figure 6.1. Using the "suburb amongst suburbs" suburban advertising theme and the idea of individuality, this example compares traditional cookie-cutter suburbs to newer walkable mixed-use development models. The image of the traditional suburb is devoid of people and social activity while, the mixed use development shows people interacting and enjoying their environment. These images, when seen side-by-side, show new developments to be lively, interesting and welcoming places to live. Meanwhile, the copy questions the viewers individuality. Typical suburbia is shown to strip away a persons individuality, the sameness of the environment making it impossible for a person to define their personality and tastes. However, mixed-use developments allow a person to make more
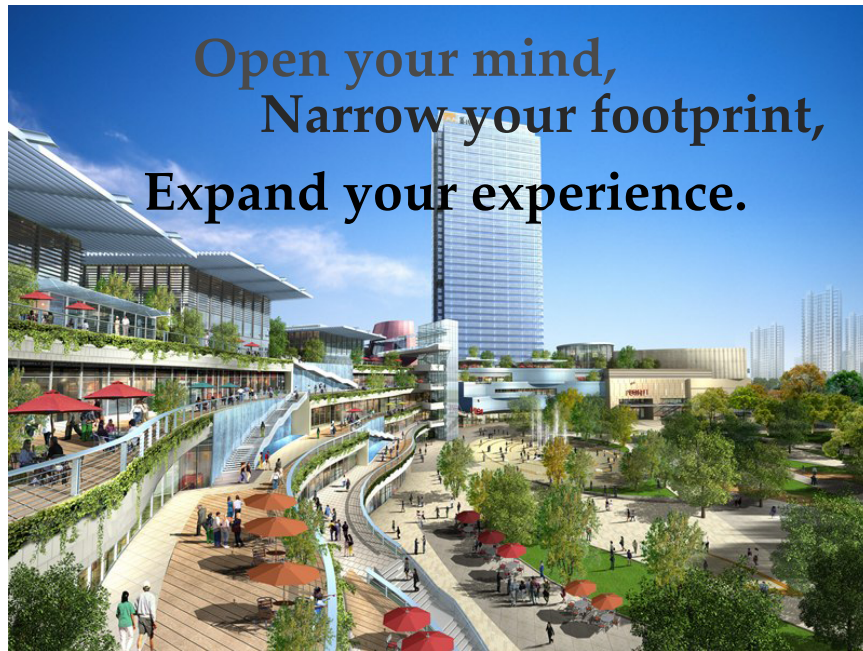
Figure 6.5: Open Your Mind, Narrow Your Footprint, Expand Your Experience.

"Callison Selected to Design Mixed-Use Complex for New Urban Community in Chengdu, China: 24 City to Focus on Green Public Spaces," 2008, Callison. 17 July 2011. <http://www.callison.com/news/index.cfm?display=article&NewsIndex=233&t=1>.

decisions in their everyday lives, from the housing type they choose to buy to which coffee shop they frequent, the advertisement implies that people living here are better able to create their own persona.

A final example, "Open your mind, Narrow your footprint, Expand your experience" (Figure 6.4), combines the idea of modernity with the advertising theme of 'Proximity to Nature.' Here again is a vibrant street scene set within a dense, walkable, mixed use community. People are pictured shopping, dining, and socializing however they are doing all this along wide sidewalks that are planted with trees and feature waterfalls and other fountains. Additionally these areas seem to melt into a park space, combining streetscape and park space into one. The implication is that by living in a modern development like this one all of your everyday activities can be conducted in close proximity to nature. The copy of the advertisement then ties it even more closely to nature and modernity by promoting a 'green'

message. Not only is a person living in this style of community surrounded by nature, they are also helping the environment by living in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

These ads expand traditional representations of The American Dream of home ownership (yard, car, detached house) and combine them with images that positively refer to new ideas such as density (condominiums and town homes), mixing of socioeconomic groups (not just the typical images of white middle class families), and regional planning (proximity to the urban core). The themes and ideas used in each of the above examples could easily be translated into television and radio spots, brochures, buttons, and booklets - creating a PR campaign similar to that of the NAR.

Coming Together

Messages such as these require a broad base of unified support. The public relations and advertising campaigns that worked to create our current understanding of the American Dream of home ownership had the support of big businesses and government officials who worked together to mold the perception of home ownership to their common interests (Archer 278). These interests, as seen in the NAR "Home Ownership Matters Campaign," remain a unified authoritative voice supporting traditional suburban development models through advertising, lobbying, and political actions, to name only a few. If new suburban development practices and the new messages discussed above are to gain traction within American culture they must assemble a group that is similarly authoritative and unified.

Currently the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the American Planning Association (APA), and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) are all advocating similar goals to those of CNU, SGN, and LEED ND. These six groups, however, are not uniformly working together to advocate for change. In the past they have focused largely on self-promotion. This has fostered an insular view of these problems and kept these groups from working in a larger

	Proximity to Nature	A Place to Grow	Environment and Status	Modernity
Density	• **Education** - show how density allows for land conservation • **Design** - bring nature into the city by creating connected corridors/ greenways	• **Education** - show pro's to growing up/ living in a walkable community • **Design** - secure public open spaces for residents (i.e. the fenced neighborhood parks of London)	• **Education** - show links between new design practices and sustainability and modernity • **Design** - create plans that do not feel cramped, look institutional or feel to 'Disney' • **Review** - offer design review/ consultation	• **Design** - developments should be built with modern features (green building, good infrastructure, connectivity) but have a nostalgic aspect (main street/ small town)
Diversity	• **Design** - bring nature into the city by creating connected corridors/ greenways • **Education** - promote the use of native species and using a diversity of species	• **Design** - secure public open spaces for residents (i.e. the fenced neighborhood parks of London)	• **Design** - homes closer to the road • **Design** - where needed create a variety of yard plans using diverse plants • **Review** - offer design review/ consultation	• **Design** - developments with a variety of housing options and price points • **Review** - work with city planners and developers to find ways that prevent large scale gentrification while promoting safety and development
Regional Planning	• **Design** - bring nature into the city by creating connected corridors/ greenways • **Design** - plan new development areas to link with existing and create green corridors connecting neighborhoods and districts • **Review** - offer design review/ consultation to ensure that new developments link to existing, abandoned areas are being infilled and green corridors are being created. • **Education** - promote cross professional partnerships and team work so that landscape, architecture and infrastructure are taken into account in planning • **Education** - teach clients and municipalities about benefits of greenways, proximity to nature and, complete neighborhoods	• **Design** - bring nature into the city by creating connected corridors/ greenways • **Review** - offer design review/ consultation	• **Design** - connect neighborhoods and suburban areas with well kept parks and greenways to support economic development • **Education** - show links between planned neighborhood development and regional planning with desirability and high property values	• **Design** - add transportation corridors to new designs to promote alternative forms of transportation • **Education** - link new development models with modernity, sustainability, economic savings • **Education** - promote the idea that buying a home or condo in a walkable community is 'modern,' desirable and, good for your entire family

Figure 6.6: Suggestion Matrix : how landscape architects can begin to promote new development patterns

cooperative manner (Farr 29). For new development patterns to become common practices,

these groups must come together around their shared goals and create an authoritative counter

message. Of the six groups listed above - ASLA, APA, AIA, CNU, SGN, and LEED ND - the

best entity able[5] to unify and synthesize the differing agendas is the ASLA.

While the profession of landscape architecture is currently in a position to redefine itself

and lead a movement toward large scale change in suburban development, there are internal

conflicts and barriers to consider. The profession encompasses many different project types

and, hence, its members do not all share the same view points and beliefs. Some hold to

traditional development practices, others believe that change to the development style, as

suggested in this thesis, are necessary. Such sentiments do not contribute to open discussion

and compromise. These issues and factions must be acknowledged and faced within the

profession of landscape architecture if the ASLA will be able to successfully redefine itself for

the new era.

While the goal of this thesis is to discuss how the ASLA as a whole can begin to take a

lead role in promoting changes to current development patterns by working to create consensus

and unity between itself, the AIA and APA. There are methods that individual landscape

architects, firms, planning departments and regional ASLA chapters can begin to use to promote

changes in development patterns. As with the advertising messages, these suggestions were

created by through a matrix (Figure 6.6) of the four main suburban advertising themes with the

main barriers to suburban development change, with the intention of not only promoting density,

diversity and regional planning but expanding the American Dream to include them. There are

three overall categories of suggestions, 1.) **Education,** which can be as informal as a one-on-

one conversation or as formal as large scale presentation promoting new development methods

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[5] This distinction is based on the mission statements of the listed groups as well as current professional
trends which are further explained in Chapter 5.

to other designs, builders and the public, 2.) **Design** lists ideas, strategies and goals to keep in mind when designing new residential areas, and 3.) **Review**, shows ways that Landscape architects can help municipalities by offering design review and consultations. Ultimately these suggestions will fold into the large scale agenda of an ASLA led organization to promote suburban development through a joint venture between the ASLA, AIA and APA.

As discussed in the previous chapter, each of the organizations already has active lobbying and educational programs in respect to the concerns of their given profession. By looking at the advocacy goals of ASLA, AIA, and APA, it is clear that these groups already share common concerns and goals. Each supports bills and policies that put in place different components important to the construction of 'Complete Communities' in the vein of New Urbanism, LEED ND, and Smart Growth. Their lobbying activities have the potential to be complementary - each of the groups lists economic recovery, transportation, livable communities, and sustainable design as legislative priorities for this year ("Advocacy"; "Issues and Advocacy: Federal"; "Apa Legislative Priorities for the 112th Congress"). While the organizations share concerns, they do not often jointly lobby, as discussed in Chapter 4. If these groups worked together and had well organized and unified support, as seen in organizations such the NAR, they would be able to more effectively sway political policy and promote change. However, someone must be the leader that brings these groups together to achieve these goals. This is the role that the ASLA is situated to fulfill due to their mission statement and the profession's growing reputation among the design professions.

To make this idea actionable, there are several items that would need to be researched and refined. Among these is a quite new and different business model that would be a method to permit the ASLA, AIA and APA to create a unified front while still maintaining their independence.   While this thesis has promoted the idea that this endeavor would be lead by the ASLA, the business model selected should be based on the common interests of the

associations and allow for an equitable partnership. Considering the historically self-centered

relationship between these professional organizations, creating a wholly separate organization

would seem necessary as an offering of joint acceptance of the issues and as proof of

compromise. The business model should ideally allow the group to: 1.) create an association

with alliances and partnerships, 2.) promote and effectively lobby, 3.) receive funding from a

wide array of sources including corporations and enterprises that stand to gain from the

Complete Communities initiative; and to solicit and receive donations, grants, and other forms of

government support.

In general, each organization would continue to operate normally but lobbying activities

associated with their collective goals would be organized under the umbrella of the new

organization (which for the purpose of this thesis has been dubbed 'Complete Communities').

Complete Communities would be the visible brand of the partnership, building public support for

the legislative goals, developing a marketing and PR campaign to redefine The American

Dream of home ownership, and generally educating the American public to the problems of

current suburban patterns and the variety of other options available to them. As members of

this organization the ASLA, AIA and APA would also be asked to publicly support and promote

the aspects of Complete Communities that are proprietary to their profession. For example, the

ASLA would actively support and publicly discuss the societal and ecological benefits of urban

parks, roof gardens, and ecologically sensitive development; the AIA would do the same for

green building techniques and material selection; and the APA would focus its messages on

regional planning, empowering rural communities, and developing healthy communities. In so

doing, each organization would be able to prove their value and expertise to the American public

in the creation of new development practices.

In addition to researching an appropriate business model and funding sources, other

groups, organizations and individuals that could be strong participants for this venture should be

identified and brought on board. To effectively change American perceptions of suburbia and suburban development will take a great deal of cooperation and funding - as seen through the government and business interests that continue to promote traditional suburban development and growth. To identify strong potential partners it would be wise to look at groups and people that have historically supported changes in environmental and social policies - preferably with a trusted and well recognized name.   In addition to the Congress for New Urbanism, the Smart Growth Network, and LEED ND, possible examples include:

1. **Ted Turner**, a well known philanthropist and proponent of environmental initiatives. His Foundation (The Turner Foundation) was founded on the principles of "preventing damage to the natural systems - water, air, and land - on which all life depends ("About the Foundation")" and awards grants based on four major components: safeguarding habitat, growing the movement, creating solutions for sustainable living, and healthy planet, healthy communities - all important pieces of the message Complete Communities will promote.

2. **Al Gore**, a former Senator and Vice President and the author of *An Inconvenient Truth*, the book, and 2007 documentary, which brought the discussion of climate change to the forefront. His long history of confronting climate change issues and to "protect the environment in a way that also strengthens the economy ("Al's Bio")" make him an ideal partner for Complete Communities.

3. **Michelle Obama**, the current First Lady has launched the Let's Move! campaign to confront the challenge of childhood obesity. This effort brings together parents, teachers, doctors, nurses and community activists to work to help make kids more active and make healthy food affordable across the country ("First Lady Michelle Obama"). Complete Communities would help to further this initiative through the promotion of urban agriculture and community gardens - an idea that the First Lady has already supported by planting her own vegetable garden on the White House lawn.

4. **Bette Midler**, known for her acting and singing she is also the founder of a non-profit organization in New York City that is "dedicated to improving the urban environment by reclaiming and restoring parks, community gardens and public space in underserved neighborhoods throughout New York City's five boroughs ("I Repair")." In repairing these urban spaces her organization has educated many families and youth on environmental issues and worked as a partner with one of the largest urban reforestation projects in the country.   Her star power and dedication to improving urban environments make her an ideal partner.

5. **Richard M. Daley**, the former mayor of Chicago has been recognized by organizations such as the Urban Land Institute and the U.S. Green Building Council for his leadership in putting in place green initiatives to improve Chicago's urban environment. During his tenure 88 Chicago buildings gained LEED Certification, a 20,300 square foot roof garden was build atop City Hall, another 600 roof gardens were build across the city, 1,300 acres of new open space was built, over 600,000 trees were planted, and over 85 miles of landscaped medians were constructed (Crotty). His natural leadership capabilities and status as an urban environmental steward make him a natural partner for Complete Communities.

6. **Douglas Farr**, is the founding principle of Farr Associates an architecture and planning firm with the mission to "design sustainable human environments ("Board")." He is also the author of *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*, a book that brings together the design philosophies of New Urbanism, Smart Growth and LEED, creating Sustainable Urbanism - typified by walkable, diverse environments with high performance infrastructure and buildings. His experience as a board member for both the CNU and USGBC's LEED ND make him another good addition to the Complete Communities team.

A board with personages such as these would give Complete Communities the visibility, star power, authority and connections necessary to confront the entrenched business and political interests in the development debate. It would also give the organization the clout to more easily secure funding through charitable donations and grants, and to influence public debate on suburban development and The American Dream. Such public debate and recognition of the health, societal and environmental issues associated with traditional suburban development patterns will be necessary to begin the process of redefining and recreating suburban development.

Other potential supporters can be found by determining those businesses and organizations that stand to profit from new development patterns. Some of these include: The Alliance for Climate Protection, Bikes Belong, National Complete Streets Coalition, Slow Food USA, and the Center for Neighborhood Technology. A final challenge, that could greatly benefit the propagation and solidification of the idea of changing suburban development patterns would be to forge a partnership with the National Association of Realtors. The membership of the NAR is composed of real estate brokers, salespeople, property managers, appraisers, and counselors. Ultimately these are people interested in selling real estate. If they can be persuaded that the changes in suburban development and The American Dream of home ownership suggested by Complete Communities do not infringe upon their ability to sell residences - be they condominiums, townhouses or detached houses - then NAR could become a partner as opposed to a formidable opponent.

In closing, the time has come for changes to suburban development patterns to be seriously debated and implemented. Not only are our current practices recognized as damaging to our environment, health, and social well-being, but a growing portion of American society is shown to desire livable, walkable neighborhoods as opposed to sprawling suburban developments. While the time has come for changes to take place, there are many vested

interests aligned against these changes and a war is on the horizon. The profession of

landscape architecture is in a good position to be a leader in this battle by uniting the design

professions around their shared goals. In so doing it could create a unified voice strong enough

to challenge the business and government interests which created and protect the current

interpretation of The American Dream of home ownership.

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