

## **Thriving as a City in Year 2020: A Model for Urban Vitality**

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### **Abstract**

*The prognosis for American cities has been prophetically bleak since 1950, when we began taking the first steps to debase and dismantle our urban landscape. Yet no one could have guessed just how complete, or how irreversible, would be the ultimate end to city life in America. At a time when we were investing in the reconstruction of destroyed cities in Europe, we were investing in the destruction of cities in our own country. Today fewer than ten cities remain as potentially viable cosmopolitan centers as we look to the year 2020 – from a field of over 300 in 1950. And even those ten are but a shadow of what they could have been, and remain vulnerable to the myopic leadership that left most American states without a single urban center. As we approach 2020, what are the decisions and actions that will insure survival for those few remaining American cities? Are there remedial actions that could resuscitate some landscapes that were once cities? What is the likelihood that leaders will launch a renaissance of urban life in America? These are the questions that are addressed in this discussion, and that will determine whether vibrant urban centers will survive the next decade.*

**Keywords:** cities, urban vitality, demography, urban Renaissance, urban planning, urban commerce

### **PREMISES**

The reader may be confused by the sweeping assertions implicit in the abstract to this discussion. Are there really fewer than ten cities remaining in America? What happened to the other 300 cities? That confusion stems from semantics. Our premise is that a city is a population center with a commercial core – a geographic nucleus where people live, work, and play. The larger the city, the more space it occupies – but without sacrificing the population density that distinguishes it from rural and suburban landscapes. Population density is fundamental to this definition, as is the presence of a commercial center offering both employment opportunities and access to purchasing the necessities (food, clothing, sundries, etc.) and accessories (furnishings, transportation, entertainment, recreation, etc.) of modern life.

In the spirit of honoring George Orwell's admonition against the abuse of language (Orwell, 1946) and adoption of *Newspeak* and *Doublethink* (Orwell, 1949), we respectfully delete from our designation as cities those landscapes where population density is below 12,000 people per square mile. Hence land areas like Los Angeles barely make half the required level of population density. Paris, at over 52,000 residents per square mile, has over four times the density of our minimum threshold (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). In Orwell's *Newspeak*, black is white -- and perhaps Los Angeles would still be a city. We prefer a language of more clarity and integrity. Areas of sparsely-populated urban sprawl are not cities in our nomenclature.

Implicit, also, in our threshold for population density, is an assumption that density is greatest around the inner core of the city, and that the density dissipates gradually with distance from the city center, without ever reaching a distance where the average overall density falls below 12,000 per square mile. Hence the area within a three-mile radius of the city core may enjoy considerably greater population density – take the example of Paris – while the area beyond a three mile radius may be under the 12,000 person threshold. In summary, our city is a population center as well as a commercial and industrial center, with a ready and efficient means for moving people into, out of, and within the central core. Hence our city is a centralized mix of housing, businesses, public transportation, and public spaces. Metaphorically, our city has a nucleus (a densely populated commercial and housing core), a protoplasm (housing and commercial neighborhoods around the core's periphery), and a cell wall (a definable and observable end to the city that looks like something other than suburban sprawl).

## **THE ANATOMY OF A CITY IN 2020**

In the previous section we began to convey what our vision of a vibrant city in 2020 will look like, as we defined our threshold standards for labeling a population concentration a “city.” In the sections to follow, we will give more definition to the elements that comprise this vision, and offer a blueprint for the kind of urban construction and remodeling that will be necessary to meet the substantial energy and environment challenges that are imminent in year 2007 – those challenges that we have been pretending are not real. Even without the real and accelerating rate of global warming, which renders our present housing and transportation patterns untenable, the remaining stock of fossil fuels is problematic to meet expanding energy needs even into the next decade.

Given this spectacle of unsustainable housing and transportation patterns, urbanization will become not so much a lifestyle choice as a collective survival mode. Waiting for the canaries to fall will only exacerbate the cataclysm we will soon be facing. Returning to a model of urbanism, proactively, will avoid much of the upheaval and human suffering that comes with chaotic change.

The components of a vibrant, sustainable city are outlined and described below. They include: high-density housing, effective mass transportation, urban beautification, urban amenities, modernized street grids, removal of structures and obstacles to urban vitality (for example, throughways and above-ground parking lots), and investment in sustainable infrastructure. Finally, we follow this framework with a discussion of the genesis of the modern European city, and the political obstacles that need to be surmounted in order to move forward with the necessary changes to restore America’s urban life.

### **POPULATION DENSITY: THE KEY TO URBAN VITALITY**

Sicinius: *What is the city but the people?*

Citizens: *True, The people are the city.* (Shakespeare, 1609)

This truth, from the second to last of Shakespeare’s great tragedies, has survived the ages. Without the people, there is no city. In the developed world, the most economically vibrant cities are those most densely populated. Period. No exceptions. What are left today of American urban centers are sparsely, not densely, populated. Our first goal must be to populate our inner cores -- and not merely with a few thousand more apartments and condominiums -- but rather with hundreds of thousands of additional dwelling units nested within a 3-mile radius of our city centers.

Take Pioneer Square in Seattle as one downtown neighborhood that has suffered – and will suffer indefinitely – by forgetting the preeminent role of people in urban health. A few years ago Seattle residents were debating, and voting on, whether to build new stadiums adjacent to Pioneer Square. Proponents of building stadiums argued, with fantastical forecasts, that the stadiums would bring economic windfalls to the Square. There was no discussion of alternatives – for example, more housing – that might be even stronger agents of economic growth and stability for Pioneer Square merchants, then and into the distant future. Choosing between another new stadium (or two new stadiums, as it turned out), and another hundred thousand residences, would have – at least should have – been a no-brainer. New residences would have brought day-in and day-out commercial vitality to the Square neighborhood, with a hundred thousand new residents spending both their time, and their money, in Pioneer Square – and not just on the occasional game day – on every day.

Instead, Seattle creatively forecast what sports stadiums would add to the Pioneer Square spending flow, and concluded that the stadiums would have a positive economic impact. But compared to what? Compared to doing nothing? What was never talked about were the opportunity costs of choosing stadiums over housing units, and those opportunity costs are staggering. Seattle literally forfeited a \$10 billion additional annual spending stream for Pioneer Square merchants in exchange for a couple stadiums that, in most optimistic forecasts, yield a few tens of millions of additional annual dollars to the merchants of the Square. Put simply, there is no comparison between the economic benefits of residential units versus stadiums. But, of course, we rarely attempt that comparison. Instead, we choose to look at false choices – in this case the choice between doing nothing and building stadiums.

Urban voters are routinely sold on special purpose public projects – convention centers, stadiums, freeways, sports arenas – by offering rosy estimates of spending streams forthcoming from those projects. Yet these projects are never the golden geese we are promised. To see a true gander of golden geese, one can look from a hill in Central Park at the apartment and cooperative residences that surround it.

***PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: RAPID, RELIABLE, REASONABLE***

For moving people into, out of, and within a vibrant city, there is no substitute for reliable, rapid transit. Great cities move their residents with comprehensive public transportation systems. The foundation for a mass transit system is high-speed rail; the auxiliary layers include light rail and buses (Weis, 2006). And with population density around the periphery of the city core, walking becomes a significant option for moving people within the core of the city. That places a premium on urban beauty, including urban parklands, to offer pedestrians a pleasant environment to walk among the various destinations that are part of their daily and weekly work, shopping, and recreational milieu.

Comprehensive public transportation systems were regarded in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as accessory to, rather than fundamental to, the urban landscape. Systems that once moved people into, out of, and within cities like Los Angeles were substantially dismantled and discarded by 1960. In the 1920s, Los Angeles enjoyed the most elaborate rail system in the country, with nearly 1,500 miles of track connecting the eastern desert with the Pacific Coast. By 1960 every train was gone. Now the city is struggling to recapture remnants of its once great transit past, and is being heralded as being “on the road to fashioning one of the best public transit systems in the nation” (Pomfret, 2006). That is faint praise for a city where only 6.6 percent of the commuters use public transit.

The great cities of year 2020 should be targeting a 70 to 80 percent rate of commuters who either use public transportation, or who walk or bike to and from work. That’s a far cry from the 6.6 percent that “one of the best public transit systems in the nation” delivers. Our collective perspective on transportation desperately, and urgently, needs a paradigm shift. We are caught in a “chicken and egg” dilemma. Myopic transportation planners look at “capacity” in terms of sustaining the number of automobiles and trucks that currently flow through formerly vibrant downtowns. That misplaced emphasis on “traffic capacity” must be replaced with “people movement” capacity -- and has to occur in anticipation of reducing that demand for capacity with mass transit systems and multiplied housing density at the city cores. In this case, the “egg” of reducing traffic capacity may need to precede the “chicken” of transit and housing.

Then there is the problem of politics and major public projects. It can’t take 30 years or more to go from “talking about” transit to rolling out the first train. Strong, visionary leadership is essential if we are to take the critical steps before it’s too late. Munich (see later section) showed us that action can be both quick and effective.

***STREET GRIDS FROM 1890: A CASE OF TOO MANY LIGHTS***

Our current pattern of street grids and traffic lights is a century old – and a half-century obsolete. There is simply no contemporary justification for our city centers still being patchwork grids of crisscrossing streets with traffic lights. This century-old pattern does not move traffic efficiently, it impedes pedestrian movement, and it certainly does not add to the urban atmosphere. Replacing this relic with modern street ovals for through traffic, circling inner cores of pedestrian commercial zones, is a step that is at least four decades overdue. Parking, discussed in the next section, should be accessible from these traffic ovals and placed underground toward the commercial pedestrian zones that the traffic oval surrounds.

Let’s begin with the proposition that 80 percent of the street lights in service in most American city centers can be and should be eliminated. The central commercial core of a city should be a pedestrian zone, thereby eliminating all of the traffic lights previously in use in this multi-block zone – probably ranging from between 10 and 20 city blocks in most urban centers. A 20-square-block pedestrian zone would obviate the need for 30 traffic lights.

The street “oval” referred to above is a one-way through street circumnavigating the pedestrian zone, configured to move vehicular traffic around the outer perimeter of the pedestrian zone, and into parking spaces that serve this commercial zone, ideally underground lots that feed vehicle occupants directly into the pedestrian zone above. For example, if the street oval were moving traffic clockwise around the pedestrian zone, the parking lot entrances and exits would logically be on the right side of the street, adjacent to the pedestrian zone. The street oval would be a thoroughfare, without traffic lights to impede the continuous flow of traffic into and out of the central parking areas. Fanning away from the central oval would a contiguous system of one-way through streets, thereby limiting the need for, and use of, most traffic lights to control the flow of vehicle traffic. Despite this modernized and streamlined design for traffic flow into and out of the city core, most access to the commercial pedestrian zone would be via public transportation systems that flow under the central zone. In a future of energy shortages and global warming, there is no viable substitute for public transit as the primary mode of transportation (Revkin, 2007).

## **PUBLIC PARKING: THE ONLY KIND**

Private parking lots do not belong in the middle of a vibrant urban core. They are never integrated with the traffic ovals that feed into downtown parking, and they encourage “shopping around” for the best parking rates, further exacerbating both traffic congestion and air pollution. Modern cities offer uniform parking availability: all lots marked with the universally recognizable “P,” all charging the same rate and all equipped with uniformly automated parking fare equipment that any driver can navigate, regardless of language skills. This may sound simplistic, but it’s a critical step toward planning and creating the kind of urban center that will thrive in year 2020. Planning for parking in a way that expedites the movement of people into and out of the core is as important as designing the street ovals and connecting spurs to move traffic fluidly. The objective with both streets and parking is to move traffic into and out of the central core quickly and efficiently, avoiding any excess driving time and excess energy wasted in shopping for the best parking deals. It also assures that parking lots are placed underground in locations that feed directly into the commercial pedestrian zones, and that are fed from the traffic oval that surrounds the pedestrian district.

This mandate does not preclude underground parking lots that already are in place to serve office buildings, specifically to serve the occupants and clients of those buildings. It does preclude these existing lots being available for public parking. All public parking spaces are, just that, owned and operated by the city, to provide a fast and uniform parking service to downtown visitors (Glazer and Niskanen, 1992).

Finally, a sure sign of urban decay is the spectacle of above-ground parking. What parking lots remain, after transit systems and housing density obviate most of this demand, should be underground and out of sight. Above-ground development in great cities is infinitely too valuable to waste on parking. It’s not needed, and it’s an eyesore that diminishes the appeal of city life.

## ***URBAN BEAUTIFICATION: NO PLACE TO COMPROMISE***

No one wants to live in a pig pen. Indeed, we want our living environment to be as attractive and as pleasant as we can make it, and that goes for our neighborhood as well as for the insides of our homes. Is it surprising, then, that sparkling apartment and condominium complexes haven’t sprung up around Ford Field in Detroit? Or around Quest Field in Seattle? What could be a more attractive neighborhood than acres of parking spaces surrounding a large stadium?

Attractive public spaces are a precondition for population density – parks, well-maintained sidewalks, abundant shopping and dining options, other attractive street-level amenities. All this takes deliberate planning and visionary zoning that goes beyond merely proscribing incompatible structures and uses. It involves positive incentives to create and maintain the kind of urban environment that attracts and retains residents. It takes a planning vision that continuously asks the question: “What environment, and what special amenities, will make this a residential magnet?”

Above-ground parking lots, maligned in the previous section, are the kinds of structures that impede residential density. Who wants to live next to a 10-story parking garage? But probably the single most carcinogenic agent to population density around our city peripheries is the in-city highway. Living beside a parking garage may seem idyllic compared to living next to a 12-lane freeway. And the space denuded by in-city highways supplants what could have been thousands of acres of close-in housing

## ***INNER-CITY THROUGHWAYS: OPEN URBAN WOUNDS***

Somehow the notion that interstate highways were needed to transport people inter-city carried over to the rather absurd proposition that they were also a desirable mode for intra-city transportation. What we should have observed and learned from the original autobahn system – that it was for inter-city purposes only – got lost in the translation from Germany to America. Instead, we were sold a promise that bringing multi-lane, limited access highways into our cities would somehow keep them commercially vital. We were even told that in-city highways were crucial to our cities’ survival, and would lead to both stability and growth in downtown commerce.

Inner-core throughways never accomplish the latter, although we always pretend that they do. Instead, they clog access to and from the city core with traffic moving *through* the city, rather than *to* and *from* the city. Using Seattle as an example, even during rush hour, most traffic on Interstate 5 and on State Route 99 is passing *through* Seattle, rather than coming to or leaving the city. Why did we choose to run SR-99 and I-5 through the middle of Seattle? There is simply no intelligent justification for such folly.

Indeed, in planning highways to move vehicles up and down or across the state, the one totally illogical place to route such a highway would have been through the middle of a great city. And yet – that’s what we’ve done. In retrospect, we know the Interstate Highway System design was badly flawed on that one decision alone, and that moving on this decision took the lives of dozens of once vibrant urban centers: Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Denver – just to name a handful. And no amount of spending on new stadiums, convention centers, casinos, museums, and concert halls will ever resuscitate these former American cities. They are gone forever. Only the freeways live on – filled with cars going from nowhere to nowhere, and passing through nowhere on the way.

#### ***CASINOS, CONVENTION CENTERS, STADIUMS: SIGNS OF URBAN DEATH***

A city is already in rigor mortis when its leaders suggest that a new convention center, or a new casino, or a new stadium, is the way to revitalize the commerce center. The city – or the place that once was a city – needs people. And it doesn’t need people visiting for a convention or a baseball game or gaming evening – it needs people living and working and spending money, day in and day out, in and around the periphery of the city center. The geography that was once the city of Detroit has tried all of the desperation measures: casinos, convention centers, exhibition halls, and stadiums. Despite rosy predictions about where the former city is headed, it doesn’t take an overly pessimistic visitor to doubt a recent Brookings Institution report concluding that “Downtown Detroit has the right assets to continue its transition into a vibrant place to work, play, and live” (Brookings Institution, 2006). The right assets? The former city may still be a nominal place to work, but it’s far from being a place to live and play. By year 2000 the population density of Detroit had fallen to 3356 persons per square mile (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000), under 30 percent of the 12,000 threshold to be called a city. The total population of the city in 2005 was 886,675, down 52 percent from the 1950 population of 1,849,568 (Metzger, 2005).

Similar to the promises made to Seattle’s Pioneer Square merchants, Detroit hoped to build downtown commercial vitality with new football and baseball stadiums, new gambling casinos, and a new convention and trade center. But the answer to a vibrant commercial district is always housing and population density, not mega-entertainment and convention structures. Indeed, housing density has never cohabitated with casinos and stadiums. Detroit is only one example of numerous former American cities that have tried, and are trying, to resuscitate their downtown corpses with sports, entertainment, and convention facilities. These are last-ditch efforts to recover what has long been lost when cities forgot the importance of people in the landscape of urban life. But if we were to select one former city as both a model for urban decay, as well as an exporter of urban decay, Detroit would get the nod. Detroit once thrived by promoting the preeminence of the automobile in the fabric of American life. Our obsession with the automobile, in particular our eagerness to neglect all other planning considerations for its accommodation, was the death knell of the American city. Downtown and periphery residential space was the first fatality, as we transformed dense housing tracts into parking lots and in-city throughways.

Detroit won that war to transform America into a car-dependent and car-obsessed cesspool of freeways, parking lots, shopping malls and suburban blight. But it would also succumb to the cancer that it seeded, today distinguishable from other former cities only by the utter extremity of its decay.

#### ***THE MUNICH MODEL***

Lest we ascribe the demise of urban life to the inextricable forces of post-war modernity, we must contend with the gleaming exceptions that populate the rest of the developed world. The era of modern urban spaces began in Rome on April 25, 1966, when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) voted to award the Games of the XX Olympiad to Munich, West Germany (International Olympic Committee, 2006). In 1966, Munich was a newly-rebuilt city, having been destroyed at the end of World War II. The sunk costs of having rebuilt Munich were enormous. It might have sounded rational to look at Munich in 1966 and say “we’ve just finished a multi-billion Deutschmark rebuild – let’s give it a rest.” But the city leaders looked at the city infrastructure and decided it would neither accommodate a major international event, nor serve to move Munich into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as one of Europe’s premier cities. And as to the recent investment in rebuilding the city -- like all sunk costs, it was irrelevant. Between the IOC vote on April 25, 1966, and the opening of the Olympic Games on August 26, 1972, Munich dug up its new streets, built a comprehensive inner-city subway system (U-Bahn) and a comprehensive rail system connecting neighboring towns to the Munich inner core (S-Bahn), pedestrianized its entire commercial core, rebuilt and rerouted its light rail network, and excavated for subterranean parking for visitors and residents who still wanted to drive into the city.

Munich accomplished all of this in six short years – a total makeover of a city that had only completed its post-war reconstruction a few years earlier. European visitors to the Games of the XX Olympiad were dazzled by the new Munich, and within another decade most major cities on the continent adopted the Munich design for revitalizing their urban centers. They did so because they had seen the future and determined that cities without comprehensive mass transit and urban beautification schemes were not viable approaching the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. No votes of the citizenry were taken, just as no votes were taken in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries when our once great American cities were designed and built. Cities were simply rebuilt, with the kind of efficient dispatch that we have not seen in America since San Francisco began rebuilding on April 19, 1906 – the day after it was destroyed by the great earthquake and fire (Ellsworth, 1990).

Yes, to be sure, there were pockets of opposition, even outrage, as plans for rebuilding cities were unveiled. In West Germany, executives at Hertie, C & A, and the Kaufhof all forecast that pedestrianization of commercial centers would destroy their department stores. When their same-store sales tripled as each commercial core eliminated traffic, they crossed the isle and became champions of the Munich model.

### **VISION, LEADERSHIP, AND THE HEIDELBERG HAUBTSTRASSE**

Americans in 2007 understand that major public capital projects must survive layer upon layer of public input before the first shovel of ground is broken – and this period of public input ranges from very, very long to infinity. But it wasn't always this way. The subway systems in New York City and Boston were built without a single popular vote cast in either direction (Katz, 2007). No one voted to begin rebuilding San Francisco on April 19, 1906. The street grid in Seattle wasn't the outcome of a contentious political campaign.

There was a time – now long past – when elected city officials simply did what was necessary for a city to be a city. And that included laying out street plans, designing and landscaping parks, and either building public transportation systems or inviting private transit companies to build and operate those early systems. The Munich example must seem incredulous to the American reader – an entire comprehensive mass transit system installed in six years. But the public input expectations in Germany were changing by the late 1970's, as city leaders took the Munich experience and built similar systems in the major urban centers. This transformation wasn't without its detractors, and it was evident to the mayor of Heidelberg in 1976 that there would be well-organized opposition to his dream of turning the mile-long Hauptstrasse (Main Street) into a pedestrian-only zone, especially among the intellectual elite that populated this old university town.

On April 29, 1976, Heidelberg's city council (Gemeinderat) voted to transform the Hauptstrasse into an attractive pedestrian way (Weber, 2007). This would entail not only eliminating cars, but also dismantling the streetcar line that ran the length of this historic street. Vocal opposition to the plan erupted immediately, with critics arguing that closing the street would violate the historical integrity of old Heidelberg. After all, street cars, albeit horse drawn, had plied the Hauptstrasse since before the mythical Student Prince, Karl Heinrich, drank and sang the *Gaudeamus* with his Saxon corpsmen in the 1860's (Meyer-Forster, 1903).

Sensing that this opposition could derail plans for the pedestrian zone, Oberbürgermeister Reinhold Zundel announced a special weekend "Hauptstrasse Festival" – a weekend devoted to partying and celebrating the delights of the town's main street. To do that, he argued, the Hauptstrasse would need to be closed down for the weekend, both to cars and to the street car line that ran its length. On Friday at noon closure signs were put up at each end of the mile-long main street. The party began. During the early hours of Saturday morning two multi-ton slabs of concrete were placed at each end of the street. During the early hours of Sunday morning the street car tracks were filled in with concrete, abruptly and permanently putting an end to the Hauptstrasse street car. On Monday morning the mayor announced joyfully that the Hauptstrasse Festival had been such a smashing success that he decided to keep the street closed "awhile longer." The intellectual elite were up in arms, as it was painfully obvious to them that there would never again be cars and trolleys navigating the narrow width of this ancient street. And – there never were.

There was a lot of screaming and gnawing when the destiny of the Hauptstrasse became obvious. But the merchants along the now-bustling stretch didn't have time to join in the demonstrations – they were too busy taking care of burgeoning sales. Mayor Zundel neither went to jail nor was run out of town. He was quietly regarded by the business and cultural leaders as someone who side-stepped a contentious public debate in order to assure Heidelberg's future as one of Europe's showcase tourist destinations and vibrant commercial centers. Keeping the Hauptstrasse open to vehicles would surely have prevented that, as example after example were proving throughout the country (Stadt Heidelberg, 2006).

Sometimes decisions need to be made, and actions taken, for a city to remain a city. And those decisions need to be made intelligently and expeditiously, bringing to bear the best planning and best forecasting input available. The source of that critical input is often not the collective wisdom of the masses, as democratic as that ideal seems. That was not how decisions were made when our cities were first laid out. Of course, no city plan is perfect; but no city plan – which is what emerges from a protracted, never-ending public debate – is untenable. Many American cities might have been saved if a strong mayor, or a strong governor, had stood up and let the Interstate Highway Commission know that the system would not be slicing through the middle of our great cities. Many American cities would have been saved had strong mayors treated the construction of comprehensive mass transit as necessary – not accessory or discretionary – to the future of their cities. The legacies of Neil Goldschmidt and Tom McCall in Oregon are testimony to the impact that dynamic leaders can have on the urban landscape of one city, Portland – now arguably one of North America’s most vibrant and livable cities (Oregon Historical Society, 2006). And Seattle might have been saved had Burgermeister Zundel, rather than Mayor Nichols, presided over the aftermath of not one, but four consecutive “yes” votes to build a monorail to augment the city’s negligible mass transit capacity. Instead of commencing construction after the first vote, or after the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> votes – the mayor let the fifth vote relieve him of his responsibility for civic leadership (Ritter, 2005).

### SUMMARY

A significant change in the way we see cities and their infrastructure is necessary if we are to preserve what remains of urban America. Only a complete paradigm shift will bring back the hundreds of urban centers that vanished – more precisely, that were destroyed -- over the past half century. The key to urban renaissance is population density, and requisite to urban density are most of the other attributes that comprise a vibrant urban environment: comprehensive mass transit, pedestrian commercial centers, absence of intra-city highways, and attractive public spaces.

Cities will return to life when people choose to live in their centers, and for that to occur our urban cores must offer ample life-style amenities along with an appealing environment. As Shakespeare’s fictional Sicinius was told 400 years ago, a city is its people. People – not stadiums and convention centers – bring sustaining commercial vitality to a city. People – not exhibition halls and casinos – bring cultural and social energy. People – not throughways and parking lots – give a city its soul and its reason for being.

Sicinius: *What is the city but the people?*

Citizens: *True, The people are the city.* (Shakespeare, 1609)

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