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Our Cities and The City: Incompatible Classics?

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Our Cities and The City: Incompatible Classics?

Abstract:

At the end of the 1930s, Americans interested in the fates and futures of their cities had the opportunity to consider two new efforts to summarize urban problems and propose solutions. The first was Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy, published in 1937 under the auspices of the National Resources Board. The second was The City, a film sponsored by the American Institute of Planners for showing at the New York world's fair in 1939. The report and the film arose out of different analytical traditions, the first from the approach that embedded urban planning within a larger field of social science and policy making and the second from the physical planning and design tradition that had marked planning practice in the first third of the twentieth century. This article considers the origins of the two texts, compares their topical coverage and prescriptions for change, and argues that their differences encapsulated a deep tension that has continued to be manifest within urban planning in the United States into the present century.

Keywords: Lewis Mumford, Charles Merriam, Louis Wirth, New Deal, regional planning, urban problems, National Resources Committee

Our Cities and The City: Incompatible Classics?

Lewis Mumford was a man who knew his own mind . . . and knew what was right and wrong about cities. In 1938 he penned a review of Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy, the recent report issued by the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Committee. Writing in the American Journal of Sociology, Mumford found much to praise. ‘No serious student will be anything but grateful for the immense amount of research that the authors have succinctly summarized,’ he wrote, pointing to the report’s abundant comparative statistics and its reflection of ‘contemporary political and sociological thought in relation to the city.’ He found himself in ‘hearty agreement’ with many of its recommendations about employment, public services, and government.

But Mumford also had serious reservations, finding that the report was too narrowly framed, lacking both an historical sense and an interest in cities as physical constructs. In effect, he argued, the report was a study in social science—perhaps not a problem for readers of the American Journal of Sociology but certainly one for Mumford and his compatriots who had worked to promote a vision of decentralized urban development through the Regional Planning Association of America. ‘There is no attempt to show either verbally or graphically the wide range of morphological variations in the structure of cities,’ he complained. ‘The ‘city’ dealt with, accordingly, is the

administrator's city—a statistical abstraction—not the four dimensional reality in which the regional and historical backgrounds present important modifications of contemporary fact.'¹

Our Cities was widely reviewed and widely disseminated but it has had impact and less explicit staying power than another contemporaneous analysis of urban problems in which Mumford had a direct hand.² That 'document' was the film The City, made under the auspices of the American Institute of Planners and opening with a proclamation: 'The age of rebuilding is here. We must remold our cities'. It was shown with great success at the New York World's Fair in 1939. It received a rave review in the New York Post, an article on the New York Times Magazine, and a two-page spread in the June 5, 1939 issue of LIFE.³ Here it shared a fascinating issue on 'America's Future' with articles on a new wonder material called nylon, Boulder and Grand Coulee dams, aluminum cookware, the first televised sports event, John Steinbeck's new novel The Grapes of Wrath, the General Motors Futurama, an essay by Walter Lippman on 'The American Destiny,' and a letter from Buckminster Fuller. Since then the film has kept the company of generations of students in many a planning class and now can be viewed on anyone's computer screen as streaming video.⁴

The two texts—the densely packed report and the fast-moving film—appeared at the same historical moment. Their synchronicity makes them appropriate cases for probing American planning thought and practice in a time of rapid economic and political change. They drew on, illustrated, and embodied separate intellectual traditions that had been developing since the 1910s and prefigured the continued divisions between urban

planning and urban policy in the second half of the twentieth century. The juxtaposition of the two documents constitutes what we might call a ‘teachable instance’. Both were important documents whose production involved impressive lineups of intellectual firepower. They WERE skillfully crafted within their respective contexts of social science research and documentary film. Each elicited respectful and sometimes enthusiastic comments from contemporaries, who recognized that they represented clear sets of ideas about the future of the nation’s metropolitan regions. In effect, the film and the report are chronologically juxtaposed signposts that help us see and understand a fundamental tension in American urban planning.

Making The City

Behind The City was the American Institute of Planners, newly renamed and reconstituted from the American City Planning Institute and looking for ways to define the scope of city planning in the rapidly evolving institutional landscape of the New Deal. This was a small group, with a mimeographed Planners’ Journal and roughly 150 members in the regular, associate, and junior categories. However, many members had large ambitions, as indicated by the controversial name change that widened its scope beyond the confines of ‘cities’⁵

Clarence Stein was the deal-maker for the film project. He obtained a \$50,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation and organized Civic Films as the movie-making arm of the AIP. With Stein, Frederick Ackerman, and Tracy Augur as board members, Civic

Films drew heavily on ideas and people associated with the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). That loosely organized group of urbanist and environmentalist intellectuals came together in 1923 and summarized their ideas for a special regional planning issue of the progressive magazine Survey Graphic in 1925. Stuart Chase argued for dispersed industry close to natural resources rather than overgrown concentration of factories. Clarence Stein indicted the inefficiencies and cost overhead of 'dinosaur cities' like New York. Lewis Mumford argued that the regional approach added human arts and science to the hard economics and engineering that had built America's flawed industrial cities. Each of these points would appear in small or large in the movie.⁶ More direct relevant to the background of the film was the work of Catherine Bauer, particularly her 1934 book Modern Housing.⁷ A protégé of RPAA member Lewis Mumford, Bauer described European innovations in working class housing, particularly large projects built on open land at the city's edge where the site and the housing could be designed together. In the mid-1930s, Bauer worked actively to shape U.S. public housing policy, arguing for what in essence would be public housing suburbs.

The legislation that emerged from Congress followed an alternative that emphasized slum clearance rather than greenfield development, but the ideal of decentralization remained part of the city planning discourse through the 1930s. It found expression not only in written manifestos but also in experiments on the ground, particularly Radburn, New Jersey and the three Greenbelt communities built by the Resettlement Administration. As extensively documented by a number of historians, the

greenbelt towns offered potential models for responding to the legacy of overcrowded industrial cities, but the program ended in 1936.⁸

In this context of real but limited success for the new town approach, Civic Films engaged the services of directors Willard Van Dyke and Ralph Steiner, two of the leading lights in documentary film, to oversee the project Pare Lorentz, now remembered as an even bigger name for The Plow That Broke the Plains (1936) and The River (1938), worked on the scenario and shooting script. As the project progressed in the course of 1938, Aaron Copland was brought in for the musical score and Lewis Mumford to write the narrative commentary, which was voiced by actor Morris Carnovsky from the left-leaning Group Theater. From start to finish, it was essentially a New York project that drew on that city's great pool of often leftish artists and intellectuals.⁹

The resulting film has five sections that trace a trajectory of declension and renewal. It begins with the ideal small town of the previous century—literally a golden age in the bright sunshine. The village nestles among rolling hills. White picket fences punctuate the townscape. The village blacksmith, a la Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, wields his hammer in the town center. Then follows a triptych of urban decline. The age of steel supplants the golden age of rural America as the blacksmith's forge fades into Pittsburgh's fiery furnaces and smoke-shrouded slums. Manhattan turns human beings into frenzied denizens of an urban anthill, but there is no escape from New York on jammed highways that turn into weekend parking lots with the shoulder of the road the only available spot for a family picnic. Salvation comes at the end in the form of good

planning, carefully explained and depicted in images of the new planned communities of Greenbelt and Radburn, where the summer sun again shines.

The City is skilled film-making by leaders in the evolution of documentary cinema. Pare Lorentz very deliberately wove the trope of children's play through most of the scenes—a child happily running along the village street, urchins scrabbling in the polluted dirt on a barren Pittsburgh hillside, kids trapped in the backseat of an overheated car, the children of new suburbia happily biking on clean, safe streets. The trope of children's play is further detailed by repeated images of swimming—in the village mill pond, off a New York pier, in a pond near the idealized suburb. Another trope is the metaphorical juxtaposition of sun and of cloud. Cinematic tricks anticipate future films. A ticking taxi meter, music that buzzes like a swarm of bees, and the frantic movement of the film's Manhattan workers foreshadowed similar scenes and techniques in Koyaanisqatsi (1982). The highway scene is a precursor of the famous seven-minute panning shot of stalled cars filled with urban refugees in Jean-Luc Godard's Week End (1968).

At the same time, The City is adamantly didactic. The film professionals worked hard to insert humor and irony and cringed at some of the sometimes sententious prose that Mumford overlaid on their work. The Civic Films Committee vetoed a proposal that the final sequence involve a debate in which a 'slick realtor,' a city tough, and a demagogue would be countered by the voice of planning reason. Instead, the original ending sequence (a whopping 17 minutes of the initially 43-minute film) hammered home the argument in favor of good planning in the form of moderate-density suburban

communities. Given the composition of the board of Civic Films, it is no surprise that the message embodied the garden city idea that the Regional Planning Association of America advocated.¹⁰

Writing Our Cities

If The City came out of a profession on the make, Our Cities emerged from the busy intellectual workshop of the New Deal and the National Resources Committee. The NRC was a small, independent federal agency that reported directly to President Franklin Roosevelt. It had already undergone two changes of name, created as a National Planning Board in 1933 to help coordinate the work of the Public Works Administration, evolving into the National Resources Board in 1934, and changing again to National Resources Committee in 1935. In 1939 it became the National Resources Planning Board, still part of the Executive Office but now needing Congressional appropriations that kept it going until it vanished in wartime politics 1943. The key figures through the changes were Frederick Delano, the President's uncle and a Chicago businessman, Charles Eliot as staff director, and Charles Merriam, a University of Chicago political science professor and the idea man behind the agency and its work

All of these men had substantial experience in the practicalities of city planning. Delano had been involved in Chicago planning both before and after the landmark Plan of Chicago (1909). He also shaped the legislation that created the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for the Washington area in 1926 and served as one of the first

NCPPC commissioners. Eliot received a degree in landscape architecture from Harvard in 1923 and became the staff director for the NCPPC before moving to the new national planning agency. Merriam was an active Republican Party reformer in Chicago in the 1910s, losing a mayoral race by only 17,000 votes.¹¹

Charles Merriam was also a pioneer in the development of applied social research. He created the Local Community Research Committee at the University of Chicago in 1923, an organization that evolved into the Social Science Research Committee over the course of the 1920s and involved Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Edith Abbott, E. Franklin Frazier, and Harold Gosnell among others. Historian Barry Karl has shown how Merriam's intellectual entrepreneurship during these years linked the privately funded Social Science Research Council, which he also helped to establish, President Herbert Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends, and the various permutations of the National Resources Committee.¹²

Through its different manifestations, the agency's central interest was national economic trends and patterns and the possibility of national-scale administrative reorganization--surely the central issue of the Depression decade. Several reports of the national agency or its state/regional affiliates dealt with natural resource development and conservation, as in the NRC's report on Regional Factors in National Planning and Development (it was, after all, the decade of great dams on the Colorado, Tennessee, Missouri, Columbia, and Sacramento rivers).¹³ Other reports dealt with economic recovery, with wartime challenges, and with planning for postwar reconversion to a civilian economy. When the National Resources Committee set up a Research Committee

on Urbanism in 1935, in short, the umbrella organization was already deeply engaged with national issues of macro-regional differences and resource allocation with urbanization a somewhat secondary concern.¹⁴

The second context for the report, and one that was also linked to the busy Professor Merriam, was the set of organizations co-located in Chicago at 1313 E. 60th Street, across the wide boulevarded Midway from the University of Chicago campus. The glue was the Public Administration Clearinghouse directed by Louis Brownlow, one of the key figures in the emerging field of public administration. Brownlow oversaw the establishment of cognate groups in 1934--the National Association of Housing Officials and the American Society of Planning Officials. ASPO's goal was to activate and serve planning commissioners, city managers, and others concerned with applying and administering planning regulations. All of the 1313ers knew plenty about urban problems and about the urban research that had distinguished the University of Chicago, but they came at the urban question from the viewpoint of the old bureaus of municipal research with their Progressive concern for the most efficient and effective provision of services--the name Public Administration Clearinghouse was well and carefully chosen.

In both of these contexts, the NRC's Urbanism Committee was connected to the main organizational interests but also a bit on the periphery. It was external pressure from the U.S. Conference of Mayors that pushed the NRC to develop an urban agenda.¹⁵ The chair of the Urbanism Committee chair was Clarence Dykstra, well-respected from his years as city manager of Cincinnati and soon to practice his managerial skills as president of the University of Wisconsin. Other members were Charles Eliot, Louis Brownlow,

Arthur Comey of the Harvard School of City Planning, and sociologist Louis Wirth from the University of Chicago. From a base in Cincinnati, planner Ladislav Segoe directed the research staff who compiled the statistics that backed many Our Cities generalizations and developed the information for the supplementary reports on urban government and land policies.¹⁶

Louis Wirth was the key figure. A second-generation member of the University of Chicago sociology department, Wirth was both a scholar and a public intellectual in the mold of Merriam who helped to shape national policy into the 1950s. Wirth digested the research into just under a hundred pages of straightforward text. Decades later, other sociologists would remember the document as Wirth's, not the Urbanism Committee's, 'standard work on American urbanism'. Wirth himself saw the report as an opportunity for University of Chicago sociology to be 'projected on a national scale' in a series of publications regarded, if he did say so himself, 'as a model of research by many countries touched by the magic wand of urbanization'.¹⁷

As the membership of city management specialists suggested, the work of the Urbanism Committee centered not on land use and infrastructure planning per se but rather on the economic conditions and 'government tangles' that often frustrated physical planning. Charles Eliot put it this way: 'Is it now time to look at the whole problem . . . to examine more closely, more intensively the social-economic limitations and government procedures and methods which limit and influence the kinds of plans that are both desirable and practicable'. In examining the social and economic functions of cities and

combating the problems of intensive urbanization, wrote Segoe, the group hoped to find ways to help planners treat underlying problems rather than symptoms.¹⁸

The resulting document is very much a ‘Chicago’ product with its attention to social dynamics and institutions.¹⁹ The body of the report has the careful rhetoric of social science research and government publications. The text is thickly argued, supported by statistical picture graphs and statistical and administrative maps. Its attention centers on population growth, economic development, administrative structure, and governance. Although one of its important background documents was a study of planned communities and company towns, the core report essentially viewed cities as arenas for improved political and economic organization.

Our Cities has three main sections of data and analysis, bookended by a Foreword that summarizes problems and challenges and a concluding set of ‘Statements of General Policy and Recommendations’. In between are ‘The Facts about Urban America,’ ‘The Process of Urbanization—Underlying Forces and Emerging Trends,’ and ‘The Problems of Urban America’ (of which it lists and discusses thirty-six). The topical coverage is comprehensive, ranging from transportation to recreation, from economic specialization to public health, from poverty and unemployment to governmental disorganization and lack of municipal cooperation. It concludes with wide-ranging recommendations for federal studies, federal policies, and federal programs to address the needs of cities. Many of these ideas have been implemented in the nearly seventy years since its publication, although with little evidence of direct reference and influence.²⁰

Common problem . . . different solutions

Placed side by side, the film and the report share a broadly similar concern with the burgeoning growth of metropolitan regions. They understand the power of automobiles and electrification to break open the physical constraints of the congested industrial city. The unspoken background is Chicago School sociologist Roderick McKenzie's analysis of metropolitan communities as economic systems. The cinematographers of The City put automotive congestion at the center of New York's problem city but followed by introducing transportation and energy technology with classic New Deal imagery. Within roughly thirty seconds we see Boulder Dam, a soaring airplane, a speeding streamliner, the electric power grid—all as 'science takes flight' in the voiceover and just before we see the preferred urban future in the form of new towns.²¹

The underlying economic and technological dynamics may be the same, but the definition of the problem clearly differs. For Merriam and Wirth and their colleagues, cities grew according to a powerful, internal economic and social logic, the challenge was to understand and channel those forces to make metropolitan regions **manageable**.²² For Stein and Mumford it was how to make them **livable** by building communities according to an externally developed ideal. Starting from this fault line, we can contrast the reports on a variety of dimensions that add up to distinct approaches to city planning and the improvement of urban life. The differences spanned both the appropriate content of plans and the processes by which these plans might be developed and implemented.

[Table 1 about here}

1) The scope of city planning

The City highlighted the physical functionality—and dysfunctionality—of the modern city. It diagnosed the problems of physical scale such as crowded housing, overburdened downtowns, lack of open space, and congested traffic, and it offered a solution based on physical design which helps ‘new cities take form, green cities’ which are ‘organized to make cooperation possible between machine and man and nature’. In part, of course, emphasis on the physical is a natural consequence of the medium, since films are designed to show physical things in motion. Cinema critics then and now have examined the ways in which the film used still and moving cameras to different effect, choices of physical perspective in different scenes, and the contrasts of scale—people are foregrounded in the ‘good’ village and planned suburb but dwarfed by large, looming cityscapes in the ‘bad’ industrial city and metropolis.

It is certainly natural to expect an argument in film to focus on different issues than an argument in prose. However, the converse is equally significant. Individuals interested in physical planning **chose** to make a cinematic argument that highlighted their interests as a way to supplement and drive home the message. In contrast, the authors of Our Cities had been involved in designing and creating actual functioning institutions. The

medium may have shaped the message, but the choice of medium was itself part of the message.

Presented in the context of the New York Fair, The City also invited comparisons with the General Motors Futurama exhibit. Both the film and the exhibit put cities in motion—the Futurama by physically moving visitors through the exhibit and the film by use of camera and actors. Each *showed* what the future might be like rather than writing about it and, by so doing, inevitably emphasized the physical aspects of metropolitan areas.

The central concern of Our Cities is the problem of economic viability and efficiency: efficiency of production, economic rationality in land uses, affordability of housing, effectiveness of taxation systems. The underlying concern was the New Deal challenge of restoring long-term viability to the national economy. Mumford's review was on target in commenting that the approach to this problem was through cartographic and statistical analysis. Recommendations looked toward expanded social welfare, improved education, and crime prevention-- topics outside the normal ambit of city planning.

In other words, the report was a product of social science that lay in directly in the tradition of urban sociology and also that stretched back through Paul Kellogg's Pittsburgh Survey to pioneering work in urban social science like Hull House Maps and Papers and W. E. B. DuBois's The Philadelphia Negro.²³ As reviewers noted at the time, the authors made effective use of pictographs and maps showing urban growth and decline over time, the role of railroads in metropolitan growth, and migration patterns.²⁴ Our Cities offered data where The City highlighted design.

2) Parts or systems

At least in part out of cinematic necessity, The City offers a series of street-level views. We see downtown Manhattan streets from sidewalk level and, at the most, a second- or third-story view. It's the same for Pittsburgh slums, seen at street level or from a smoke-shrouded hillside. The new suburb gets a slightly different introduction, with several brief three-second to seven-second aerial views before the camera touches down on lawns and sidewalks. This is the city as we experience it day-to-day, a sequence of pieces that we fit together as best we can. In effect, the cinematography offers viewers a particular mental map, but one in which the viewer has to use imagination to interpolate the transitional spaces.

Our Cities take advantage of cartography. The report is filled with powerful foldout maps of the forty-eight states showing the distribution of cities at different points in time, the relationship between transportation systems and city growth, the spatial distribution of city planning boards and metropolitan planning agencies, urban-rural migration, and other demographic data. It anticipates Jean Gottman with a map of the 'Urbanization in the Boston-New York-Philadelphia Region' showing incorporated places, metropolitan district boundaries, and built-up areas. An intriguing addition to its synoptic view is a drawing of a 'lateral view of the city' that illustrates the idea of a metropolitan density gradient.

3) Consumers and producers

The City implicitly sidelines the world of work. The problem city is defined by the twin poles of the industrial economy—smoke-belching factories and downtown office buildings filled with paper and paper-pushers. In the short transitional fourth sequence, efforts to find weekend respite from the hard-working metropolis end in overheated radiators. In contrast, the ‘good’ city is a place of carefully segregated industry. The final section takes less than half a minute to show smokeless ‘sunlit factories and laboratories’ that anticipate postwar industrial parks, raise the possibility that workers might even walk home for lunch through a wooded greenbelt, and then use that possibility to transition to a world of leisure. Kids are home after school, dad is home after work, mom gets to stay at home with her up-to-date kitchen. Leisure is individual (children on bicycles) and communal (picnicking in the park, joining or cheering a ball game). Encapsulated and foreshadowed in the film is the transition from a world of work to what historian Lizabeth Cohen calls the ‘consumer’s republic’ in which citizens are understood not as workers but as consumers, and citizenship as the opportunity and right to consume goods and services.²⁵

The very title of the Urbanism Committee report—Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy—set a different agenda. The opening list of fourteen emerging problems begins with ‘drastic inequalities of income and wealth’ and the ‘lack of articulation among the various industries within our urban communities’. The entire middle section offers the classic economic-historical explanation for the growth of

large cities as increased agricultural production makes possible spatial specialization in industrial production and service. Maps trace urban growth and decline, rural-urban migration, transportation as a factor in population concentration, and industrial trends.

4) The importance of racial difference

The 1930s were an era in which many Americans were more worried about the integration of European immigrants into a single national community than about racial segregation and inequality. Ethnic isolation and separatism had been prominent concerns even in the relatively prosperous decade after World War I with the Red Scare of 1919, the murder convictions of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in 1921, the efflorescence of the anti-immigrant Ku Klux Klan in the early 1920s, and Al Smith's controversial presidential candidacy in 1928. Ethnic assimilation remained a central concern in the 1930s, cross-connecting with the tensions created by a rising labor movement even as a shared culture began to erode differences.²⁶ For context, both documents appeared several years before two landmark studies of African Americans-- Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake's study of Chicago as a Black Metropolis and Gunnar Myrdal's magisterial dissection of race relations in An American Dilemma—brought black-white relations into the center of scholarly debate.²⁷

Race played no role in The City and ethnicity was muted. We might assume that some of the Pittsburgh steel families are eastern European immigrants, but national origins

are not discussed. As for African Americans, the pastoral past is all white, neighborhoods are all white, crowds are all white, and the future is all white. The happy families in the well planned suburban alternative look just like Greenbelt families of the late 1930s, meaning all white (given that all three federally-built greenbelt communities were initially segregated to reduce attack points for critics).²⁸ Like the greenbelt towns themselves, The City placed its emphasis on getting the design and planning of the urban container done right, with the implication that someone other than planners can worry about inequalities among the people who will inhabit those containers.

Our Cities took at least first steps in acknowledging the American racial dilemma.. They recognized ‘racial and ethnic differences’ as one of ‘The Facts about Urban America’ and ‘racial heterogeneity’ as one of ‘The Problems of Urban America’.²⁹ In a bit more detail, they predicted that ‘the migration of the Negro from southern rural areas to the large cities’ had not yet reach ‘full stride’. They concluded from this trend and from the great variety of other immigrant groups that the American city was ‘a mosaic of little worlds which in part blend with each other, but, in part and for a time, remain segregated or come in conflict with one another’. This phrase was presumably Wirth’s, paraphrased directly from Robert Park’s famous characterization of the modern city as a ‘mosaic of little worlds that touch but do not interpenetrate’.³⁰

5) Decentralization or regeneration

The City presents congestion as a basic urban problem and planned decentralization as the solution. Both the murky industrial city and the teeming metropolis are, fundamentally, places where too much activity is concentrated in too small a compass. The alternative is squarely within a mainstream of reform and planning thought that stretched from Frederick Law Olmsted and Ebenezer Howard through social reformers like Harlan Paul Douglas, who commented in 1925 that ‘a crowded world must be either suburban or savage,’ and the design visionaries of the RPAA.³¹

Our Cities, in contrast, anticipated much of the urban policy discourse of the 1950s and 1960s by viewing decentralization as a triple challenge. Suburbanization fragments the governance of the metropolis and undermines administrative capacity. It often involves inefficient and fragmented land development with attendant costs for the provision of public services. Finally, the dispersal of population and activity undermine the downtown and core neighborhoods. On all of these analytical dimensions, the report highlighted the problems of central cities—increasing poverty, declining tax base, obsolete infrastructure, and substandard housing.

In response, the report’s authors argued against wholesale decentralization and abandonment of core areas. They asserted that ‘wholesale decentralization, which is being advocated by some, does not seem to be compatible with the effective performance of the economic and cultural role of the urban community in the life of the Nation’. The many defects of cities ‘are but blemishes or infections which an otherwise healthy organism can check,’ in this case through ‘judicious reshaping of the urban community and region by systematic development and redevelopment in accordance with forward-looking and

intelligent plans'.³² Their specific solutions included the rationalization of social welfare systems, slum clearance, a national housing program, the expansion of municipal authority, and something very like urban renewal:

6) Planning as product or process

The City is a normative statement about end states and desired results. The film committee explicitly rejected efforts to build in analysis of how cities found themselves in dire straits, opting to show the content of good planning rather than the planning process. In the context of the late 1930s, it is especially striking that the film avoided direct confrontation with the central contradictions of capitalism. Critic Richard Griffith noted the problem at the time. The film's conclusion, he commented, placed the choice of chaotic metropolis or summery suburb squarely on the viewer. Who could actually make the choice, he wondered. 'The City proceeds as though everyone could, as though it had only to convince us of the *value* of the future town. But people do not live in slums by choice. They need to be shown not only what they ought to have but how they can get it. And this the film does not mention.'³³

Our Cities, in contrast, is about ways to rationalize the institutional location of decisions and improve the process of decision-making. Its authors wanted to tackle the metropolitan governance question by making administrative and legislative functions match up with social and economic realities. They worried about municipal taxing capacity, about the professionalization of public service, and about the legal authority of

city and regional governments. The first of the hefty supplementary volumes was devoted entirely to urban government and administration. The second volume sandwiched fifty pages of dense statistics on 'Urban Living Conditions' compiled by Louis Wirth and Edward Shills between Arthur C. Comey and Max S. Wehrly's physically-oriented description of 'Planned Communities' and Harold Bottenheim's discussion of 'Urban Land Policies' with its attention to issues like tax foreclosures, land titling, subdivision controls, tax assessment, and property taxation.³⁴

7) Outsiders or insiders

The leadership of the American Institute of Planners offered a telling bit of self-analysis in the inaugural May-June 1935 issue of the Planners' Journal. They—AIP members—were 'professional planners' in contrast to 'administrative planning officials'. The formulation packed several overlapping meanings. Planning as a field of practice had evolved in part from engineering, architecture, and landscape design, all fields where individuals with specialized skills and knowledge worked project by project for a succession of clients. Out of this context, many AIP members had developed their careers in the 1910s and 1920s as freelance consultants. Others, like the RPAA group, were idea people who commented and advised about urban growth as critics and outsiders. There was an assumption of priority in the Planners' Journal formulation: professionals were the experts who told the administrative planning officials what to do.

In contrast, Our Cities was written for policy-makers and officials—in effect for ASPO--fitting squarely within Charles Merriam’s agenda of making social science research an indispensable staff function for elected officials and bureaucrats. Both Merriam, as the research entrepreneur behind the National Resources Committee, and Louis Wirth, as the social scientist most closely engaged with the Urbanism Committee, moved easily between government advisory roles and the academy. Our Cities thus treated city planning as one element among many that made for effective, efficient, and progressive government. This is the same intellectual environment in which political scientist Robert Walker, one of Merriam’s students, argued that planning should acknowledge or even embrace its essentially political character and that it would function best as a staff function of central city administrations.³⁵ A few years later, John Gaus, one of the pioneers of American public administration and political science, found himself a professor of city planning at Harvard University. His summary of the subject matter ranged over ‘administrative planning’ and ‘social research’ as well as ‘city planning’ and ‘regional planning,’ making figures as different as Woodrow Wilson and Robert Lynd into ancestors of the planning tradition.³⁶

Implications and influences

These two texts were climax products of the first generation of formal city planning and systematic urban social science. The City followed exactly three decades after the Plan of Chicago and the first National Conference on City Planning and the

Problem of Congestion. Our Cities came three decades after the massive Pittsburgh Survey directed by Paul Kellogg in 1907-08, followed by the intervening development of Chicago sociology.

More immediately, the texts originated in the contrast between the American Society of Planning Officials and the American Institute of Planners. As John Gaus commented in 1943, ‘the existence of these two organizations reflects the difference in emphasis between physical design in city planning . . . and that on legal, administrative and social analysis and staff work generally. . . . I think that the American Institute of Planners might properly be viewed as the physical design section within the planning personnel of the country’.³⁷ The makers of the film, of course, might well have inverted the emphasis, placing physical form as the central issue for city planning and seeing legal and administrative tools as the subsidiary means for implementing a broad urban vision.

In the decades since, The City has enjoyed a long life as an important text for planners and planning history. The film is highly accessible to students and casual viewers—entertaining, fast-moving, consistently on message. Even if the automobiles that it shows are now outdated and the Pittsburgh blast furnaces long gone cold, it is easy for viewers to feel themselves in the scene.

An irony for makers of The City is that a new opportunity to try their ideas came too soon and too suddenly. As the United States mobilized for World War II, the federal treasury financed hundreds of thousands of new housing units. Given the need to respond quickly to the needs of migrating war workers, many of them were on the sorts of greenfield sites that Catherine Bauer had advocated in 1934. Repeating the experience of

World War I, a number of them were carefully designed. Many of the largest developments, however, even though built as substantially self-sufficient communities, were intended to be temporary. Vanport, Oregon, for example, earned a reputation for innovative community services, but there was never an intention that it long survive the war.³⁸ New federal communities built for the Manhattan Project also included elements from the RPAA repertoire, but neither Richland, Washington, nor Oak Ridge, Tennessee, nor Los Alamos, New Mexico, had any significant connection to metropolitan planning. Deliberated isolated, they were a transition type between the greenbelt model and post-war suburbs of the sort that Lewis Mumford would soon denounce³⁹.

[Table 2 about here]

Our Cities assimilated more easily into the lineage of urban policy and urban studies than into urban planning. The review in The Planners' Journal, by housing expert James Ford, called it a 'document in public policy' that might be a valuable first step toward a federal programs.⁴⁰ In 1940 the NRPB set up an Urban Section and asked Wirth to elaborate on his earlier work. His interest in comprehensive community building led to wartime demonstration projects in Tacoma, Corpus Christi, and Salt Lake City as well as NRPB assistance to regional inventory and planning work by affiliated state planning boards. Out of this effort came Action for Cities: A Guide for Community Planning published by the Public Administration Clearinghouse in 1943 with the sponsorship of the American Municipal Association, American Society of Planning Officials, and International City Managers' Association. The guide gave economic development strategies and social services equal attention and standing with 'the ground plan of the

community,' making it as much a blueprint for city policy in general rather than land use planning in specific⁴¹

Beyond this wartime initiative, scholarly opinion has commonly judged that Our Cities had little direct impact on federal policy.⁴² However, it provided an intellectual foundation on which postwar policies might be built, even though it was seldom cited in postwar policy discussion.⁴³ As Jennifer Light has pointed out, for example, the theme of conservation of urban resources that runs through Our Cities, and thus links it contemporaneous federal efforts toward natural resource conservation, was also its connection to other policy efforts. As it prioritized neighborhoods for reinvestment, for example, the Home Owners Loan Corporation argued the need for 'urban conservation' to prevent cities from wasting away.

At the end, the juxtaposition of these documents offers an opportunity to think about the dimensions of city planning and the differing assumptions that have guided efforts to deal with metropolitan growth not only in the 1930s but through the twentieth century. The City and Our Cities certainly had common concerns and overlaps, but they also pointed in different directions—long-range reform versus economic recovery in the immediate New Deal context, radical rethinking versus measured restructuring of cities in the longer intellectual context. On one dimension, they reflected and reinforced the split between those planners who centered their attention on urban form, land use, and architecture on the one hand and those with close connections to the social service wing of urban reform on the other hand. In a second distinction there are striking differences between a goal of improving the lived experiences of metropolitan residents as found in

The City and a desire to better manage metropolitan growth as found in Our Cities. In a third dichotomy, the two documents fall on different points on the criterion of ‘intensity’ that Emily Talen uses to differentiate between planning efforts that focus on the urbanization of undeveloped landscapes and those that aim to rebuild and restructure the existing urban fabric.⁴⁴ These documents are starting points for thinking about enduring tensions in city and regional planning. Whether taken singly or together, they are not the last word, but they offer a rich assortment of ways to enter the conversation about planning history in the United States.

Table 1: The City and Our Cities: Points of Comparison

The City	Our Cities
Cities as physical artifacts	Cities as social and political systems
Cities as set of districts	Cities as regional/national system
Cities as residential environments	Cities as centers of production
Cities depicted as racially homogeneous	Racial heterogeneity as urban problem
Decentralization as solution	Dispersal and fragmentation as problem
The products of planning	The process of planning
Planners as 'outside' experts	Planners as governmental 'insiders'

Table 2: Emerging Problems According to Our Cities

(as summarized in Walker, The Planning Function in Urban Government, p. 43)

1. Basic inequalities of income and wealth within the urban community.
2. Lack of articulation among various industries within the community
3. Rapid obsolescence of physical plan and plant.
4. Disruption of the national urban pattern brought about by competing forms of transportation.
5. Uncontrolled subdivision and real estate speculation.
6. Burdensome proportion of substandard housing.
7. Endangered public health, particularly in blighted areas and among low-income groups.
8. Disorganizing effects of ethnic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity.
9. Inadequacy of adult, vocational, and higher educational programs.
10. Prevalence of juvenile delinquency, organized crime, and commercial rackets.
11. Inadequacy and irrationality of existing systems of urban public finance.
12. Adjustment of the legal position and powers of the city.
13. Difficulties arising from the overlapping of independent governmental units.
14. Persistence in some cities of graft and corruption.

Notes

1. Lewis Mumford, review of Our Cities, American Journal of Sociology 44 (July 1938): 149

2. Louis Wirth quoted in Howard Odum, American Sociology: The Story of Sociology in the United States through 1950 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1951), 231.

3. 'Movies: The City: Fine New Documentary Film Shows Evolution of U.S. Urban Living', LIFE 6 (June 5, 1939): 64-65.

4. <http://www.archive.org/details/CityTheP1939> and

http://www.archive.org/details/CityTheP1939_2.

- 5 Harold Bottenheim, 'Does the Planner's Field Have a Boundary', The Planners' Journal 6 (1940): 17.

- 6 . Roy Lubove, Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963);
Kermit C. Parsons, 'Collaborative Genius, The Regional Planning Association of America', Journal of the American Planning Association 60 (Fall 1994): 462-482.

7. Catherine Bauer, Modern Housing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934).

8. Daniel Schaffer, Garden Cities for America: The Radburn Experience (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Paul Conkin, Tomorrow a New World; The New Deal Community Program (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959); Joseph Arnold, The New Deal in the Suburbs: A History of the Greenbelt Towns Program, 1935-1954 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971); Stanley Buder, Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Cathy Knepper, Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); K. C. Parsons, 'Clarence Stein and the Greenbelt Towns: Settling for Less', Journal of the American Institute of Planners 46 (Spring 1990): 161-83.

9. Insightful and detailed studies of The City that draw directly on archives and interviews with the film makers are Howard Gillette, Jr., 'Film as Artifact: The City (1939)', American Studies 18 (Fall 1977): 71-85 and William Alexander, Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). The film also receives useful commentary in Robert Wojtowicz, Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Eutopian Theories for Architecture and Urban Planning (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) but gets little mention

in other studies of Mumford's life and thought by Casey Blake, Donald Miller, and Mark Luccarelli.

10. Critics in 1939 noted that the ending sequence appeared 'flat and lifeless' in comparison with the energy of the earlier sections. 'A World's Fair Film,' review of The City, Architectural Review⁸⁶ (August 1939): 93-94, quoted in Wojtowicz, Lewis Mumford, 143. Also see Howard Gillette's characterization of the film as a 'propaganda piece for the garden city idea' in 'Film as Artifact,' 73. A commonly distributed version of the film cut the ending substantially.

11. Patrick D. Reagan, Designing a New America: The Origins of New Deal Planning, 1890-1943 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts press, 1999) has detailed intellectual biographies of Delano and Merriam, as well as Wesley Clair Mitchell, Beardsley Ruml, and Henry S. Dennison. Delano's role in Washington, DC planning is discussed in Howard Gillette, Jr., Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 124-29.

12. Barry D. Karl, Charles Merriam and the Study of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Mel Scott, American City Planning since 1890 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 274; Reagan, Designing a New America. The formidable volumes on Recent Social Trends emerged from Hoover's Committee on Recent Economic Changes, led by Columbia University economist Wesley C. Mitchell,

which reported in February 1929. In September of that year Hoover convened a Committee on Recent Social Change consisting of Mitchell, Merriam, William F. Ogburn, Howard Odum, Alice Hamilton, Shelby Harrison, all people who knew each other through the National Research Council and the recent privately organized Joint Committee on Bases of Sound Land Policy. Ogburn, another University of Chicago sociologist, became director of research and mobilized two dozen experts ‘to examine and to report upon recent social trends in the United States with a view to providing such a review as might supply the basis for the formulation of large national policies looking to the next phase of the nation’s development’. President’s Research Committee on Social Trends, Recent Social Trends in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), xi.

13. National Resources Committee, Regional Factors in National Planning and Development (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935).

14. The anticipation and limitations of national planning is the main lens through which the organization is viewed in key historical studies by Alan Brinkley, The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War (New York: Random House, 1995) and Otis L. Graham, Jr., Toward a Planned Society: From Roosevelt to Nixon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Also see Harold Ickes, ‘City Planning Merges into National Planning’, The American City (Nov. 1933): 65, cited in Alan Brinkley,

‘The National Resources Planning Board and the Reconstruction of Planning,’ in The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy, ed. Robert Fishman (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 173-92. Andrew M. Shanken, 194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 19, argues that ‘Merriam, Mitchell, and Delano sought to bring city planning together with ‘sociological planning’ and regional and national planning’. However, the Final Report of the National Resources Board (1934) offered only cursory mention of cities, as Jennifer Light points out in The Nature of Cities: Ecological Visions and the American Urban Professions, 1920-1960 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 48.

15. Light, Nature of Cities, 48.

16. Urban Government: Volume I of the Supplementary Report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee Urban Planning (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939) and Land Policies: Volume II of the Supplementary Report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939).

17. Louis Wirth, ‘The Urban Society and Civilization’, American Journal of Sociology 45 (March 1940): 749; Roger A. Salerno, Louis Wirth: A Bio-Bibliography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 34, 41; Hans H. Gerth, ‘The Development of Social

Thought in the United States and Germany: Critical Observations on the Occasion of the Publication of C. Wright Mills' White Collar', International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 7 (Spring 1994): 525-568;. Gerth's 1994 essay was a previously unpublished manuscript dating from 1951.

18. Charles W. Eliot, II, 'New Approaches to City Planning', Planning for the Future of American Cities (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1935), 111 and Ladislas Segoe, 'City Planning and the Urbanism Study', Planning for City, State, Region, and Nation: Proceedings of the Joint Conference on Planning (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1936), 7, 12, both quoted in Scott, American City Planning since 1890, 310-311

19 For example, see the review by Richard Ratcliff, Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics 14 (May 1938): 231, which described it as 'a comprehensive summary of the static and dynamic aspects of urban society in this country'.

20. In this reading, Our Cities lies squarely within the tradition of progressive reform that seeks government interventions to fix failures of open markets without challenging the basic distribution of economic power. For an alternative reading that sees the report as a call for radical restructuring see John D. Fairfield, The Mysteries of the Great City: The Politics of Urban Design, 1877-1937 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993).

21. Both documents thus dealt with the same fundamental issue as the Regional Plan of New York and Environs (1931), which was about the spatial arrangement of urban activities and population. Even though Lewis Mumford strongly disliked the New York plan for accepting the power of centralization, this was an argument among people who shared some of the same assumptions about the essential challenge for urban planning and policy. See Mark Luccarelli, Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region: The Politics of Planning (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 167-80. The Pittsburgh Survey thirty years before had also struggled with framing its analysis in metropolitan terms. Edward K. Muller, 'The Pittsburgh Survey and 'Greater Pittsburgh': A Muddled Metropolitan Geography, in Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century, ed. Maurine W. Greenwald and Margo Anderson (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 68-87.

22. Speaking to a national city planning meeting in 1917, Merriam referred to the 'tendency of our city to organize its own growth—to plan its own development. Not theory alone but grim necessity drives the city builders of our day to that painstaking study of facts and forces, that careful coordination and systematization of diverse factors we call planning. The sanitary survey and plan, the financial survey and plan, the governmental survey and plan, the social survey and plan, and the physical survey and plan, loom large in the present day municipality'. In effect, this is a comprehensive claim for city planning as a social science. Charles Merriam, 'City Planning in Chicago', manuscript of address to City Planning Conference, Kansas City, May 9, 1917, quoted

in Reagan, Designing a New America, 64.

21. W. E. B. DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899); Hull-House Maps and Papers, a Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, together with Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1895). The Pittsburgh Survey also used visual evidence in the form of Lewis Hine's photographs and Joseph Stella's portraits of working class Pittsburghers.

24. William Anderson, review of Our Cities, American Political Science Review, 32 (April 1938): 355-56.

25. Lizabeth Cohen, A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Knopf, 2003).

26. Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (New York: Harper, 1952); Lizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

27. Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945); Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York: Harper and Bros., 1944).

28. Arnold, New Deal in the Suburbs.

29 Our Cities, ix, 9, 56.

30. Our Cities, 9-10; Robert Park, 'The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment', in The City, ed. Robert Park and W. W. Burgess (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 40. Awareness of racial difference, unfortunately, did not translate directly into equitable action. In the decade after World War II, Wirth and other University of Chicago colleagues played important roles in the development of Chicago's urban renewal and public housing programs, in which the initial goal of careful conservation of the urban fabric evolved into large-scale clearance and displacement. See Arnold Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Bradford Hunt, Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Light, Ecological Visions.

31. Harlan Paul Douglas, The Suburban Trend (New York: Century, 1925), p. 327.

The City bears comparison to the 1930 film Die Stadt Von Morgen. Made by Maximilian von Goldbeck of Nurnberg and Erich Kotzer of Berlin, the silent film that used drawings as well as photography to depict the sequence by which a landscape of small cities and countryside turned into the overcrowded industrial metropolis and then

how to separate industry from residential districts and reintroduce the natural environment into urban areas through coordinated regional thinking. The filmmakers saw their work as a spur to rethinking urban planning and practice, again similarly to The City. In his periodical Städtebau, the well-known urbanist and architect Werner Hegemann praised the film as something that he had been hoping to see for many years, and he showed it during his speaking and consulting tour of Argentina in 1931, reading Spanish translations of the subtitles. I am indebted to Christiane Collins for calling the film to my attention. See Christiane Crasemann Collins, 'Urban Interchange in the Southern Cone: Le Corbursier (1929) and Werner Hegemann (1931) in Argentina', Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 4 (June 1995): 208-227 and Maximilian v. Goldbeck und Erick Kotzer, 'Die Stadt Von Morgen: Ein Film Vom Städtebau', Städtebau 25 (1930): 257-59.

32. Our Cities, 84.

33. Richard Griffith, 'Films at the Fair,' Films (Nov. 1939): 63-64, quoted in Alexander, Film on the Left, 255.

34 . Urban Government: Volume I of the Supplementary Report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee Urban Planning (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939) and Land Policies: Volume II of the Supplementary Report of the Urbanism Committee to the National Resources Committee (Washington:

Government Printing Office, 1939).

35. Robert A. Walker, The Planning Function in Urban Government (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

36. John M. Gaus, The Education of Planners, with Special Reference to the Graduate School of Design of Harvard University (Cambridge, MA: Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, 1943).

37. Gaus, The Education of Planners, 24.

38. Dolores Hayden, Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life (New York: Norton, 1984); Carl Abbott, Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in the Twentieth Century City (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

39. Charles W. Johnson and Charles O. Jackson, City behind a Fence; Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 1942-1946 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981); Jon Hunner, Inventing Los Alamos: The Growth of an Atomic Community (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); Carl Abbott, 'Building the Atomic Cities: Richland, Los Alamos, and the American Planning Language', in The Atomic West, ed. Bruce Hevly and John Findlay (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 90-118.

40 James Ford, review of Our Cities, The Planners' Journal, 4 (1938): 23-24.

41 Action for Cities: A Guide for Community Planning (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1943); Phillip J. Funigiello, 'City Planning in World War II: The Experience of the National resources Planning Board', Social Science Quarterly 53 (June 1972): 91-104 and The Challenge to Urban Liberalism: Federal-City Relations during World War II (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 173-76; U.S. National Resources Planning Board, National Resources Development Report for 1943, Part 2, Wartime Planning for War and Post-War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943).

42. Mark Gelfand, A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 96-98 and Jon Peterson, The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 323 both note the limited impact.

43. It is interesting that Gus Newport, mayor of Berkeley, California in the 1970s and later executive director of the Dudley Street Initiative credits Our Cities with inspiring a sense of public service. 'When I was mayor of Berkeley, California,' he writes, 'I spent time with a group of older thinkers who played major roles in the development of public policy during the 1930s. . . . One member shared a report with me called 'Our Cities'. . . . One passage from this extraordinary document moved me. . . . 'The manner of life of

our people, the problems they face, and the hopes and desires they cherish for improvement in their existence and the advance of their civilization should be the supreme concern of government'. The essence of these words moved me on a spiritual, ethical, and intellectual basis'. Gus Newport, 'Why Are We Replacing Furniture When Half the Neighborhood Is Missing', The Nonprofit Quarterly 12 (Winter 2005), at www.nonprofitquarterly.org/content/view/30/28/ accessed Feb. 3, 2008..

44. Emily Talen, New Urbanism and American Planning: The Conflict of Cultures (New York: Routledge, 2005). In her terminology, high intensity denotes both incremental and comprehensive efforts to remake and improve existing urban areas; low intensity denotes the planning of new communities and region-wide planning.