

Suburbanization (PLS 202, Dluhy)

Federal/State Policies that have facilitated suburbanization since WWII:

- Mortgage Interest Deduction on federal income tax, Billions of \$ in lost revenue. The major middle class tax break in the U.S.
- VA loans with no down payment, FHA loans with 10% down payments, FNMAC, in past loans “redlined” many older parts of central cities as off limits for mortgages (now illegal).
- 90% of all federal and state transportation money goes for highways (10% for mass transit)—only 11% of Americans use public transit. Highway construction more than anything else has allowed suburbia to grow.
- Federal and State governments have heavily subsidized the water and sewer construction and extensions.
- Federal foreign policy for decades has stressed low cost oil and breaking the middle east oil cartel. Since late 1970s America has tried to become more energy independent and has subsidized oil exploration in the U.S.

Implications of Suburbanization—the social and economic costs of sprawl:

- Low density development with uses separated geographically(not mixed) wastes land, and costs more to provide infra-structure like schools, highways, water and sewer, etc. Compact, high density development is more cost effective when it comes to infra-structure. Can not build infra-structure fast enough.
- Leap-frogging and low density development has resulted in government trying to charge controversial “Impact Fees” and in 23 states this past election statewide growth initiatives calling for growth boundaries approved by voters (i.e., Colorado and Arizona).
- Exclusionary zoning, flexible incorporation laws, inflexible annexation laws (concurrent majorities), segregation by social class, wealth, ethnicity, race, etc.
- Wasted and costly competition for sports franchises, convention centers, tourism, Fortune 500 companies. Communities, especially suburbs are forced to subsidize this type of growth.

Decision Making Models:

- All politics is local. Suburbs are the “hot bed” of exclusion and segregation not the “commons” or a sense of community. New Urbanism?
- Combination of pragmatic/incremental and emotional ideological. Rational decision making is very rare.

