

# Repositioning Suburban Corridors: From Souless Strips to Something Better

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# ULI Infrastructure Initiative

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  - Infrastructure Update
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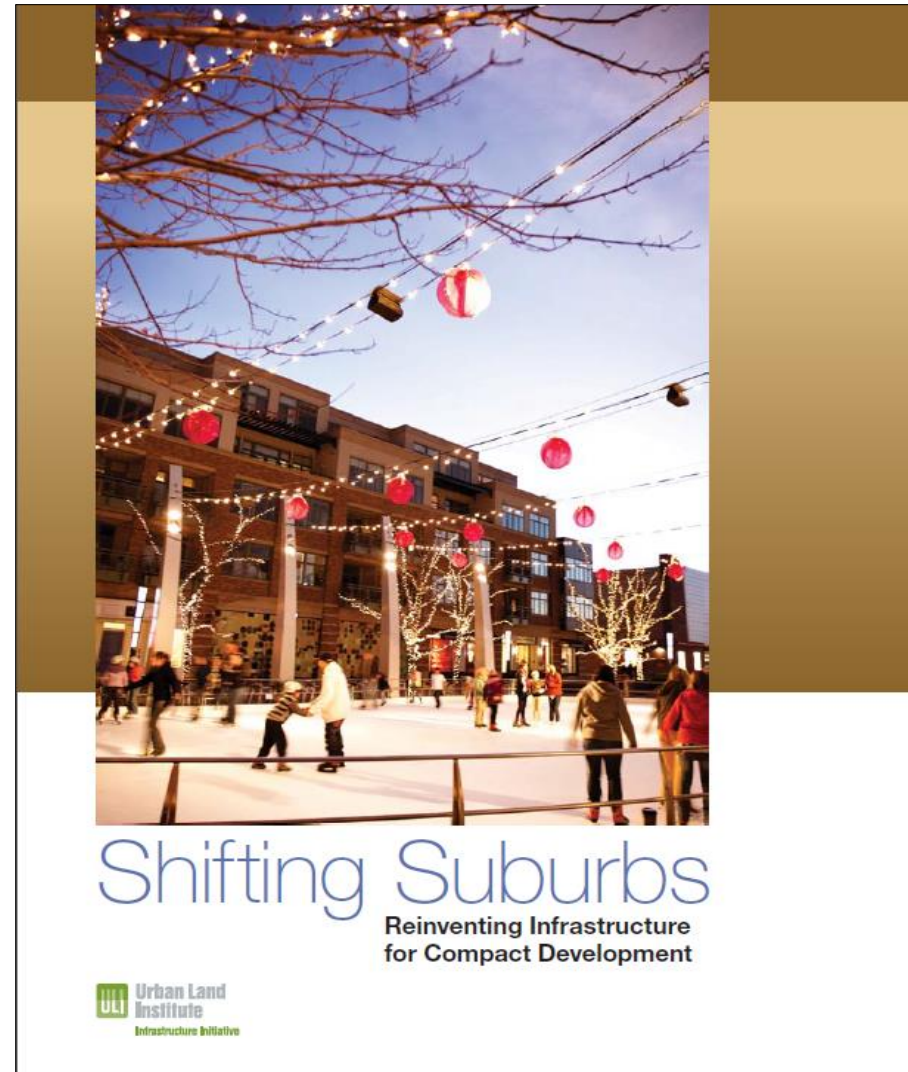
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# Shifting Suburbs: Reinventing Infrastructure for Compact Development

- Released December, 2012
- 8 case studies
- 2 forums
- Rockefeller Foundation funding
- Terminology: “Suburbs” and “suburban”



# Background

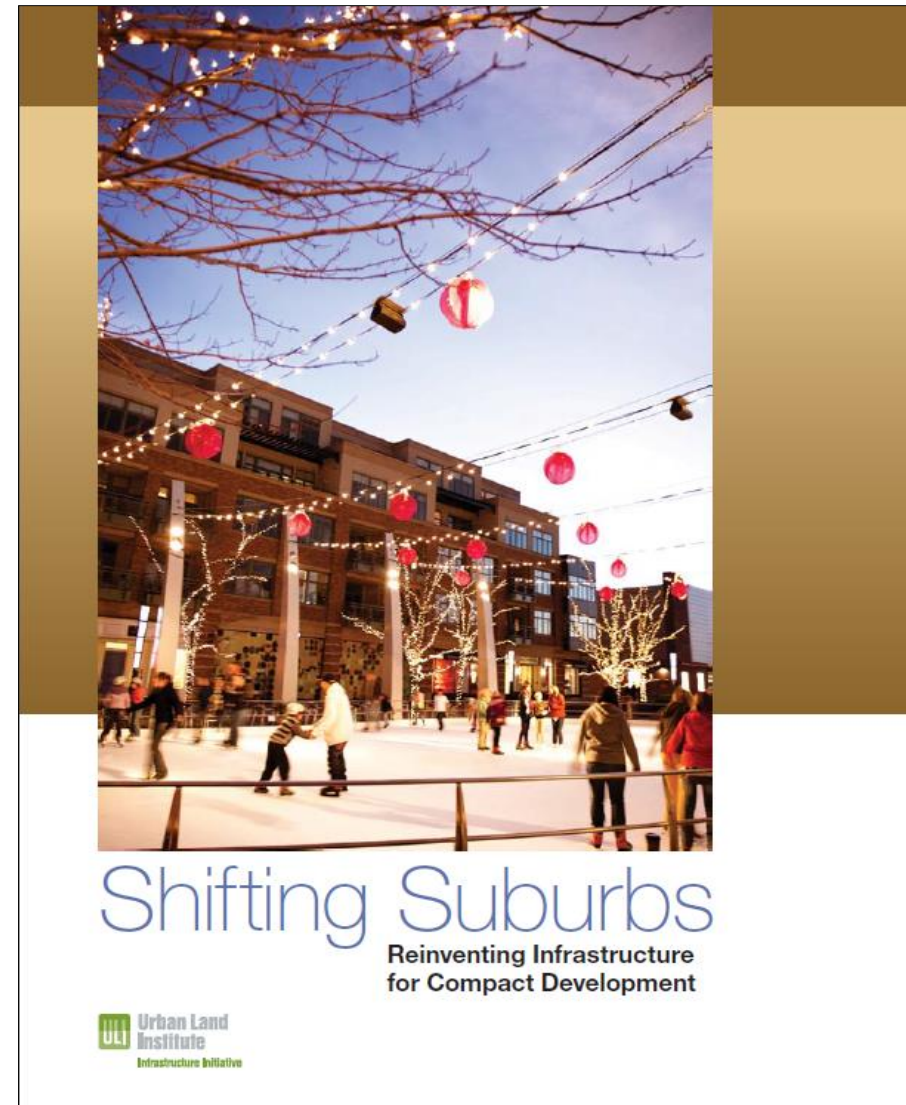
- American suburbs are changing
- Building in more compact ways
  - Higher density development clustered in nodes
  - More options for getting around without a car
- Infrastructure is a key piece of the puzzle
- Developers and municipalities are figuring out how to plan, fund, and finance infrastructure





# Redevelopment Types

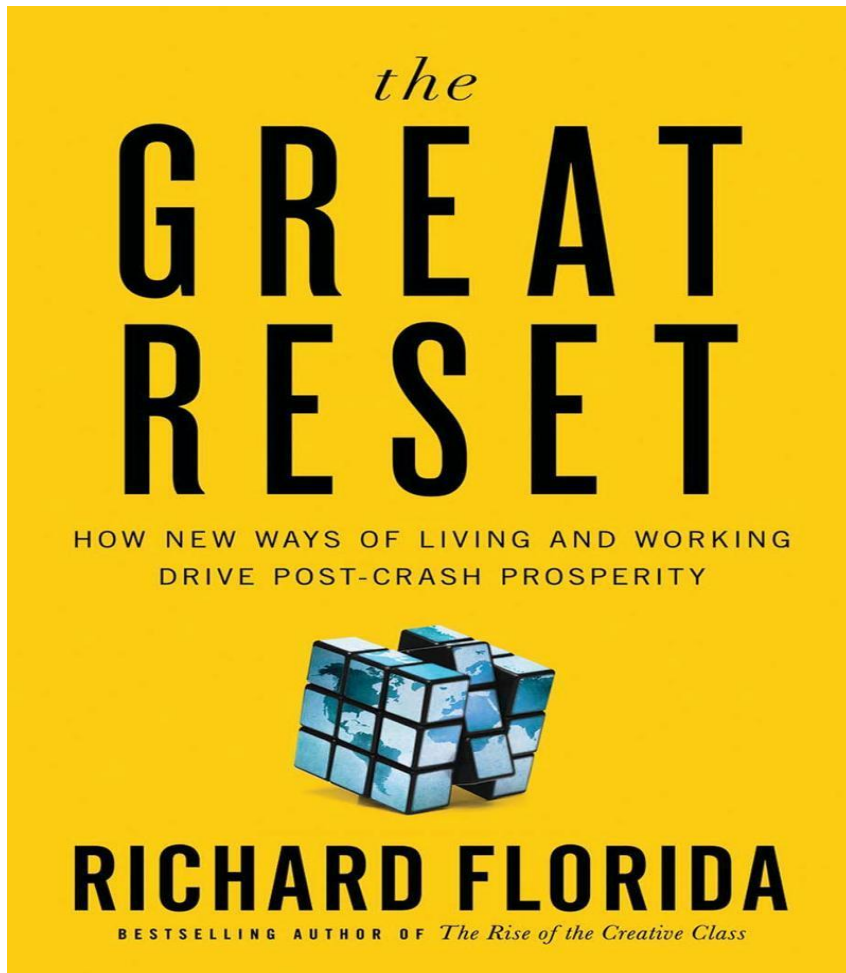
- Suburban mall retrofits
- Suburban TOD
- Wholesale or large-scale suburban transformation
- Suburban arterials or commercial corridors



# Why the suburbs are shifting:

- Demographic changes
- Technology
- National and global economy
- Consumer attitudes & market trends
- Energy prices
- The weather

# How will the Crash Reshape America?



- “How we live, work, shop and get around will change.”
- “Communities that embrace the future will prosper. Those that do not will decline.”

# Economic development is changing

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Model

- Public sector leadership
- Shotgun recruitment strategy
- Low cost positioning
- Cheap labor
- Key infrastructure = roads
- Focus on what you don't have
- Driven by transactions

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century model

- Public/Private Partnerships
- Laser recruitment strategy
- High value positioning
- Highly trained talent
- Key infrastructure = education
- Focus on what you do have
- Driven by an overall vision



# Economic Development is About Choices



Should we invest  
downtown?



Should we invest on  
the strip?



# Demographics is changing where we live and shop.



Mississippi Ave, Portland, OR



Barracks Row, Washington, DC

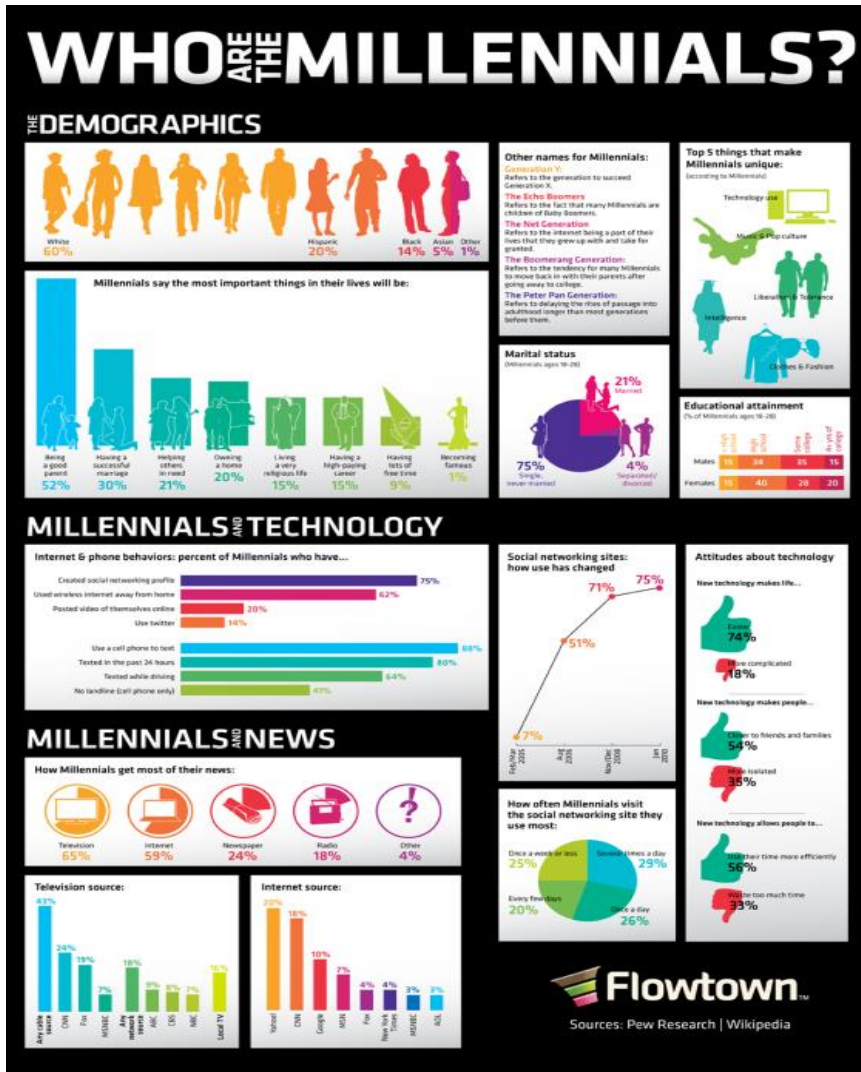


Manayunk, Philadelphia, PA



Capitol Hill, Seattle, WA

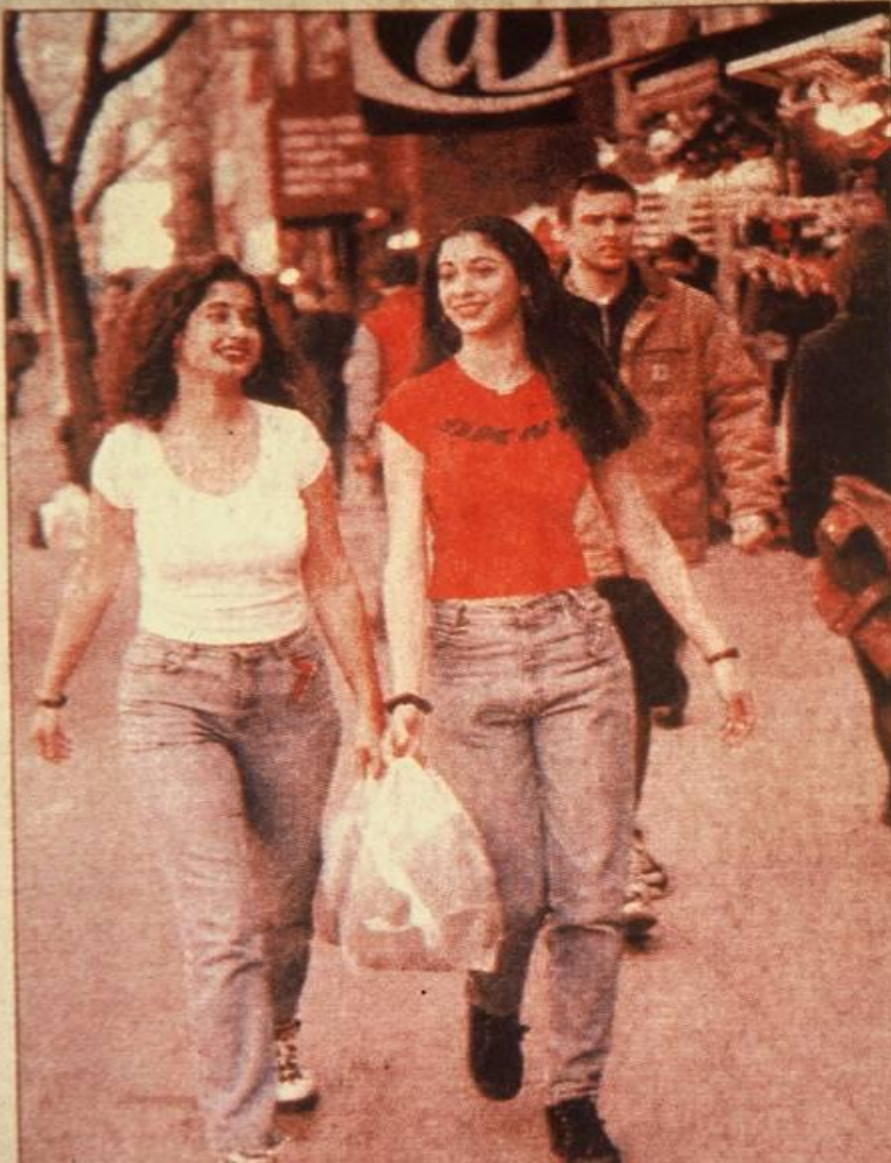
# Young People



- Are getting married later or not at all
- Are postponing home ownership
- Own fewer cars and drive less
- Are concentrating in major metropolitan areas
- Favor walkable neighborhoods
- Are adept with technology and social networking
- Are more tolerant



# Consumer attitudes are changing



## COVER STORY

# Malls are like, totally uncool, say hip teens

The bigger question for retailers is, will parents follow their offspring?

By Bruce Horovitz  
USA TODAY

The future of retailing in America may all come down to where Jessica Pfeifer shops. There's one place it's not: the mall.

Anyplace *but* the mall.

For this 18-year-old high school senior and her 15-year-old sister, Andrea, the mall has become entirely uncool.

Most malls are filled with cubicles that all sell similar stuff. And many teens get the heebie-jeebies being followed around by walkie-talkie wielding security guards and suspicious store clerks who keep flashing them evil eyes.

The Pfeifer sisters live in Manhattan and used to take the train to regional malls. Now they and their friends who live

# Market trends are changing

- “It is becoming clear that homebuilders old one-size fits all marketing and product approach will not work for buyer groups whose interests & borrowing requirements differ widely, not only from buyers of the recent past, but also from each other.”
- Source: Builder Magazine, July 2009





# Retailers are changing



Mixed use projects



Smaller Footprints



Multi-story buildings



Parking underground or on the roof

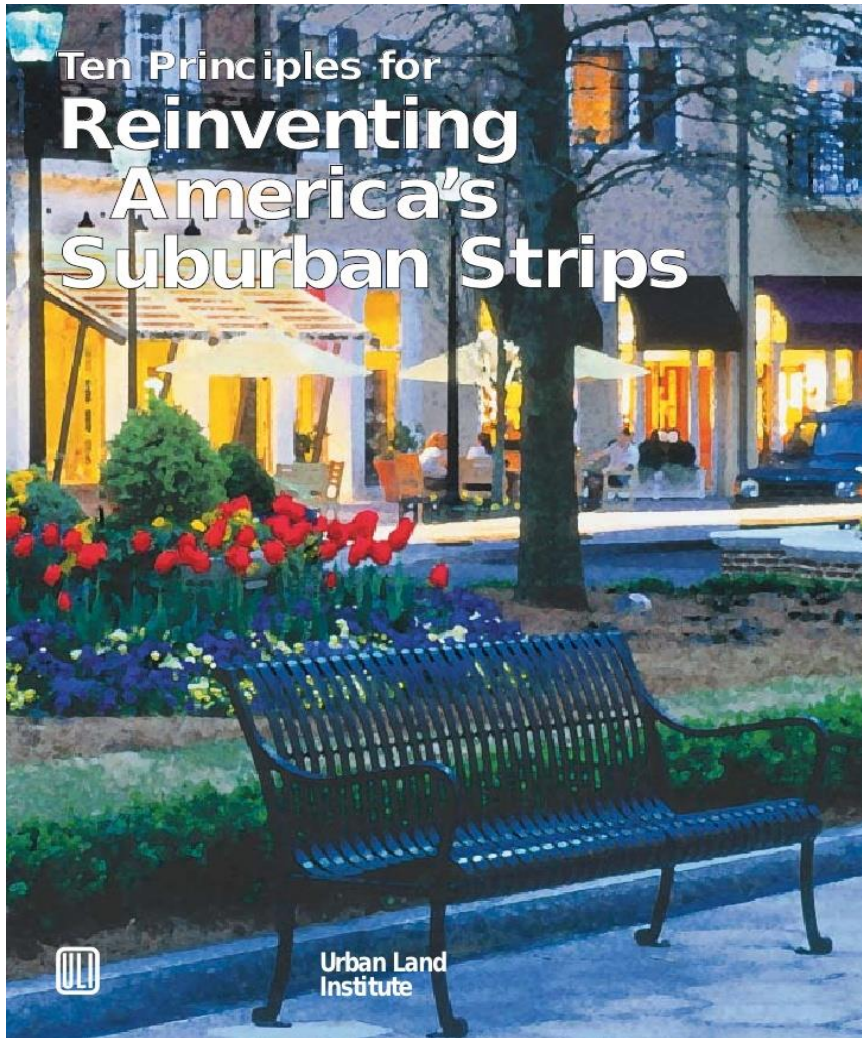


# Characteristics of Suburban Corridors



- Spread out
- Low density
- Single-use
- Auto-oriented
- Lots of signs
- Big parking lots
- Little or no public transportation
- Frequent congestion

# Suburban Corridors



- “The distinguishing characteristic of suburban strips is their undisguised ugliness, although traffic congestion runs a close second.”
- This ugliness must be eradicated if suburban retail is to remain competitive and successful in the future.”
- Source: ULI. Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips, 2004

# We're Overbuilt on the Strip



- Ten fold increase in retail space from 1960-2000.
- From 4 to 38 square feet per person.
- US has more than double the retail space per person as Europe.
- There is now more than 1 billion square feet of vacant retail space (mostly in empty big box stores)



# Retail space grew 5X faster than retail sales



# Department Store vs. Big Box



- Downtown
  - Multi-story
  - Accessible by Transit
  - Footprint – about 1 acre
- 



- Outside of town
- Single story
- Accessible by car
- Footprint –about 12 acres



# Development Pattern Reinforced Driving





# Underperforming Commercial Corridors: Opportunity and Challenge



# Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use

- 7 of 14 cities selected a corridor as the focus of their fellowship year.



- Independence Blvd – Charlotte
- Livernois Ave. – Detroit
- Albany Avenue – Hartford
- 4th Street – Louisville
- 4th & 8<sup>th</sup> Ave's – Nashville
- Broadway Avenue – Oakland
- North Broad St. – Philadelphia
- Martin Luther King Ave-  
Tacoma, WA





# From Soulless Strips to Community Corridors

- Arterials: one of the last redevelopment frontiers
- Infrastructure, housing, communities, leadership



# Existing Conditions





# Infrastructure Improvements





# Private Investments





# More Vibrant Community



# Presenters

- Takis Karatonis – Arlington County, VA
- Marja Winters – Detroit, MI
- Mike Hollibaugh – Carmel, IN