This chapter traces American city planning from early colonial times through the nineteenth century and then focuses on subsequent developments grouped into five periods: 1900 to 1920, 1920 to 1940, 1940 to 1960, 1960 to 1980, and since 1980. Decennial census figures are presented as guideposts, and highlights are given in sociology, economics, and technology to support historical generalizations about planning.

Before 1900

The history of American planning in the years before 1900 can be divided into three phases: the colonial era, the period of expansion and westward migration, and the years following the Civil War. In the rest of this section, each of these periods—and its contribution to the development of modern urban America—will be considered in detail.

The colonial tradition

Preplanned community development was the norm for European colonial settlements in the New World beginning in the late 1500s, when the Law of the Indies fixed the form of Spanish municipalities in the Americas.

New Haven, Connecticut, established in the 1630s, was laid out as a grid of nine square blocks. The grid pattern was also used in Philadelphia (1682), Detroit (1701), New Orleans (1718), and Savannah (1733). In Williamsburg (1699) a geometric variation was used in which a main avenue was paralleled by two secondary streets and a mall intersected the main axis, all of which created visual and symbolic linkages between the College of William and Mary, the colonial capitol, and the governor's palace.

These early settlements consisted of residences, streets, open public spaces, and a few specialized structures such as churches, government buildings, and warehouses. Even the largest of the American colonial cities was quite low in density, consisting of one- and two-story structures interspersed with large areas of gardens and arbers. At the time of the American Revolution, New York City, the largest American city, had only 33,000 people, while the village-cities of the frontier were mere hamlets.

American colonial town planning was predicated on a European concept of the powers of municipal government, which was derived in turn from the development of the free town and the charter city during the Middle Ages. Such medieval communities were municipal corporations of considerable authority commonly capable of owning and disposing of all vacant land in the city. They were generally authorized to play a major role in guiding the physical development of the community as well as in setting social and economic policies. Such was commonly the case with American colonial towns.

As a result of the American Revolution and the subsequent adoption of the Constitution, however, American cities became creatures of their respective states. Almost all local authority belonged to state governments, with counties
acting as agents of the states and with cities and towns (usually designated as municipal corporations) functioning under city charters or legislative enactments that gave them only certain designated powers. These powers were few, were strictly controlled by the states, and were concerned primarily with the maintenance of order and the provision of basic services. Cities had no clear authority to control, let alone direct, the development of private property, and the states failed to exercise their authority in this area.

The early republic

The Ordinance of 1785, which established a system of rectangular survey coordinates for virtually all of the country west of the Appalachians, opened the American West to rapid settlement and resulted in rampant land speculation for private gain.

The late eighteenth century also witnessed the evolution of an agrarian ethic which held that a life rooted in agriculture is the most valuable way of life; this outlook was inherently antiurban and supported a nonrestrictive and minimal role for government. Agrarian philosophy—eagerly adopted by American intellectuals and rapidly internalized by political theorists—combined with the decline of municipal government and enormous increases in land speculation to sound the death knell of the American colonial town planning tradition.

The first order of business for the new country, upon attainment of independence, was the establishment of a capital for the new federal government.
In 1790 Congress designated Philadelphia as the temporary seat of the government until 1800, when a new capital city on the Potomac was to be ready for occupancy. With President Washington, the three commissioners appointed to arrive at a plan for the capital commissioned Pierre Charles L’Enfant to design the new city.

L’Enfant’s plan was centered on the Capitol and the “President’s Palace” (now the White House), both situated on rises of ground commanding views of the river and connected by a large diagonal boulevard, Pennsylvania Avenue. From this center, L’Enfant developed a vast radial plan incorporating these and other major public structures and providing large public open spaces and plazas as well as two vast green intersecting malls—one behind the Capitol and the other behind the President’s Palace—on the east bank of the Potomac River. A small-grid street plan was superimposed over this grand composition of radial streets, public structures, plazas, and vast malls.

When one of the commissioners requested changes in his plan, L’Enfant became difficult, and he was ultimately dismissed. The task of laying out the capital city was entrusted to Andrew Ellicott, who replicated L’Enfant’s scheme and provided the necessary adjustments. Almost immediately the city became the focus of speculative attention; it was abundantly evident that the municipal authorities needed to demand compliance with the plan’s requirements were seriously lacking. The presence of a plan—but the absence of the means to enforce it—was a clear indication of the urban future that lay before the country in the century ahead, as land speculation, free of municipal control, became the dominant force in shaping the American city.

Elsewhere in the country, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, large-scale city plans developed along the lines of traditional American colonial towns fared badly, commonly being ignored in favor of land-speculation-based plans. For example, the governor and judges’ plan for Detroit, authorized by Congress in 1806 after a fire leveled the settlement on 11 June 1805, was a vast radial plan of boulevards, parade grounds, and “circuses” intended to cover the burned-out area of the original city and an additional area of more than 1,600 acres of the adjoining wilderness of the Michigan Territory. When disagreements developed between the creator of the plan, Judge Woodward, and the governor and the other judges, the plan was repealed and replaced by a grid system more
amenable to minimal government expenditure and maximum potential for land speculation.

Similarly, the plan by Joseph Mangin (surveyor and architect for the city of New York) for the expansion of New York City—a plan based on public squares, public structures, and wide boulevards—was rejected in favor of a plan that was more in keeping with the new urban realities of minimal governmental responsibility, rampant land speculation, and minimal interference with private property. The approved plan, filed in 1811, was an unbroken grid-street plan extending to the north for over 100 blocks, irrespective of the rough terrain of the island, relieved by just one parade ground, a single public market, and five small parks sited on terrain undesirable for private development. This plan provided for a minimum number of public amenities and activities and a maximum number of identical speculative building lots.

Also in 1811, the Cumberland Road (the National Road), the first major road in the United States constructed with federal funds, was begun at Cumberland, Maryland; it reached Columbus, Ohio, in 1833 and terminated at Vandalia, Illinois, in 1840. Constructed at a cost of approximately $7 million, the National Road became a conduit for immigration from the East Coast to the seemingly limitless farmlands of the interior.

The Erie Canal, begun in 1817 and operational in 1825, complemented the National Road as the way to the American West. For a brief period, settlements vied with each other to be on the main line and feeder lines of canal systems, but the canal was soon to be supplanted by the railroad as a major means of transportation. The railroad corporations, which ultimately became the New York Central, the Pennsylvania, and the Baltimore and Ohio, were formed between 1823 and 1831. Railroad track in the United States increased from 20 miles in 1830 to over 2,500 miles in 1840.

Expansion: Its rapidity and its results

A small grid-plan town was laid out on the site of present-day Chicago in 1830, at which time the first tenement houses were being built in New York City. These tenements would be occupied in the 1840s by the first of the massive waves of European immigrants who swelled the size of American cities. In 1840 only three American cities had populations of more than 100,000. By 1850 there were nine such cities, and over 4.5 million Americans lived in cities and towns.

The three major ports of entry for immigrants were New York City, which had been provided with a grid plan in 1811; Philadelphia, which was founded as a grid city in the 1680s; and the new grid city of Chicago. This form of street planning was generally unfamiliar to the Northern European peasants and to the residents of the European medieval organic towns who began to flock to our shores in midcentury. To many of these immigrants, the plan of these ports of entry become symbolic of their lives in the New World, and they carried this grid plan with them as they moved inland to build the thousands of grid-plan communities west of the Appalachians. This development was reinforced by the rectangular land survey system established by the Ordinance of 1785.

In addition to these frontier agricultural settlements, another form of city was evolving in America in the mid-nineteenth century—the great industrial city. These cities were based on railroad transportation, as the public road system was scarcely developed. Such cities contained center-city factories surrounding power sources; their extent was circumscribed by the efficient transmission of steam power by means of flywheels and belts. Large brick industrial mills, usually three to six stories high, arose near the core of the city. Because the system employed a vast amount of cheap labor, it required a population within easy walking distance of the mill; in consequence large concentrations of tenement flats grew up around factory sites.
Fifty major "firsts" in modern American city planning

1811 First federal interstate highway authorized—U.S. Route 40 from Baltimore through the Northwest Territory, part of a nationally sponsored regional economic development program.
1867 New York State passes the first major tenement house law restricting physical conditions.
1867 San Francisco enacts the first land use zoning restricting the location of obnoxious uses.
1892 A survey of large-city slums is the first federal government recognition of the problems of slums and cities.
1899 A Massachusetts state court is the first to support restriction of building height.
1903 In Cleveland, Daniel H. Burnham, John M. Carrere, and Arnold W. Brunner create the first local "civic center" plan in the country.
1906 In San Francisco, "City Beautiful" principles are applied for the first time to a major American city on the mainland, in a plan by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward Bennett.
1907 Connecticut legislature creates the first official, local, and permanent town planning board, for Hartford.
1907 The Russell Sage Foundation begins the first comprehensive city survey, in Pittsburgh.
1909 In Chicago, Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett develop the first metropolitan regional plan.
1909 Wisconsin passes the first state enabling act for planning.
1909 First national planning conference is held in Washington, D.C.
1909 Los Angeles institutes the first major use of land use zoning to direct future development.
1910 Forest Hills Gardens, on Long Island, is the first American test of the neighborhood unit idea.
1913 First major American textbook on planning: Carrying Out the City Plan, by Flavel Shurtleff.
1913 George B. Ford and Ernest P. Goodrich create The Technical Advisory Corporation in New York City, the first private planning consulting firm.
1913 New Jersey becomes the first state to institute mandatory referral of subdivision plats, the beginning of modern subdivision control.
1914 Newark, New Jersey, hires the first full-time municipally employed planner, Harland Bartholomew.
1915 California becomes the first state to institute extraterritorial mandatory referral of subdivision plans.
1916 Congress passes the Federal-Aid Road Act, the first federal-aid highway act.
1916 New York City adopts the first comprehensive zoning code.
1916 The Miami Conservancy District (Ohio) adopts the first regional functional authority plan.
1917 The American City Planning Institute elects Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., first president of an American professional planning association.
1919 The Ohio State Conference on City Planning (now The Ohio Planning Conference) creates the first statewide citizens' organization in support of planning.
1921 First bi-state functional authority is created: The Port of New York Authority in New York and New Jersey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Los Angeles creates the first county planning board.</td>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>First suburban, auto-oriented shopping center is constructed: Country Club Plaza at Kansas City, Missouri.</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Cincinnati planning commission is first to officially adopt a comprehensive plan for a major American city.</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>In <em>Village of Euclid (Ohio) v. Ambler Realty Company</em>, the Supreme Court supports comprehensive zoning for the first time.</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>New York is the first state to provide a public subsidy for housing.</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>First U.S. National Planning Board is created (abolished, as the National Resources Planning Board, in 1943).</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Ohio passes the first state public housing act.</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>First federally supported public housing for the general population is constructed, via PWA (Cedar-Central in Cleveland, the first to be begun; Clark-Howard-Techwood in Atlanta, the first to be occupied).</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>Alfred Bettman of Cincinnati becomes the first president of the American Society of Planning Officials (parent organization of the American Planning Association).</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>The &quot;greenbelt&quot; towns are begun, the first federally built new towns to be constructed in peacetime.</td>
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<td>1937</td>
<td>The Housing Act of 1937 makes the first major federal legislative commitment to public housing.</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>Pennsylvania passes the first state urban redevelopment act.</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Cincinnati is the first American city to adopt a metropolitan comprehensive plan following World War II.</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>The Housing Act of 1949 creates the first federal urban redevelopment program (clearance).</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>First regional shopping center is built: Town and Country Shopping Center (the &quot;Miracle Mile&quot;), east of Columbus, Ohio.</td>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>The Housing Act of 1954 creates the first federal conservation and rehabilitation program and establishes the first federal 50-50 funding for preparation of general plans.</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>The Housing Act of 1961, section 221(d)(3), creates the first federal housing subsidy program.</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>Robert C. Weaver is appointed first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>First rapid transit built for fast center-to-center service: the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, San Francisco.</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>First federal revenue-sharing program is created.</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>First national land use legislation is introduced (abandoned).</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>First federal block grant system is introduced, replacing the categorical grant system.</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Hawaii introduces the first statewide zoning system.</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Israel Stollman becomes the first Executive Director of the American Planning Association (a merger of AIP and ASPO).</td>
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Source: Adapted from Steven I. Gordon, ed., *The Review Book: American Institute of Certified Planners Written Examination* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University, City and Regional Planning Department, 1985). Reproduced by permission.
In the mid-nineteenth century, workers, in New York City and other large U.S. industrial cities frequently lived in “railroad flats,” long, narrow apartments in which going from one room to another required passage through consecutive spaces, as in a railroad passenger train. These walk-up structures, generally five to seven stories high, were constructed solidly in rows across entire block faces with four apartments on each floor surrounding a central common staircase, with just one room in each apartment provided with a window or two for light and air. The small rear yard contained a multi-seat outhouse and often a well, resulting in deplorable sanitary conditions.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, virtually no governmental actions were initiated to control or redirect private development in order to ameliorate worsening housing and living conditions. As a result of this laissez-faire policy, the weakness of municipal authority in the new state-centered political system, and the antiurban bias of agrarian philosophy, some of the worst housing and living conditions of the modern era were created in America during the next half century.

The rapid growth of New York City in the early 1850s brought to public attention the lack of public open space in the plan of 1811. This deficiency was rectified in 1853 when the New York State legislature authorized purchase of a site for a great “central park.” Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., was appointed superintendent of construction in 1857; in the following year, in association with Calvert Vaux, he won the competition for the design of the park. His “greensward” plan for Central Park consisted of a vast English garden of “natural” terrain and lakes, curved paths, and irregular plantings. The first English garden to be realized in America on so large a scale, Central Park, became the model for all American city parks.

The postwar era to the turn of the century

Under the impetus of war production, American cities of the North grew enormously during the Civil War, intensifying already serious housing problems. Housing reformers denounced the do-nothing attitudes of government and demanded public control of housing conditions. In 1867 the first New York Tenement House Law was enacted, legitimizing the railroad flat with a few improvements and prohibiting by law the construction of anything worse. In the same year, a San Francisco ordinance prohibited development of slaughterhouses, hog storage facilities, and hide curing plants in certain districts of the city. This 1867 ordinance, which was preventive rather than after the fact and restricted land uses by physical areas of the city, set the stage for the further evolution of land use zoning in the United States.

The period between 1860 and 1870 also saw the beginning of suburbanization in the United States, with the creation of small settlements beyond the cities for the residences of owner-managers capable of affording them. Riverside, Illinois, west of Chicago on the Des Plaines River, was planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., and Calvert Vaux in 1869. Here, as in Central Park, Olmsted and Vaux applied the principles of the English garden and produced a system of gently curving tree-lined streets and single-family detached houses with deep setbacks of lawn and shade trees. This suburban, quasi-rural, and exclusively residential pattern of perimeter development became the status symbol of the owner-manager class in the United States. The Riverside pattern has been copied in the suburban development of virtually every major city in the country and still dominates concepts of land subdivision for single-family detached units.

In 1877, in *Munn v. Illinois*, the Supreme Court of the United States made the following ruling:

When, therefore, one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest,
he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has thus created.

This decision paved the way for future governmental intervention in private development. The development controls enacted in the New York Tenement House Law of 1867 were expanded in 1879 to require that new tenements provide a narrow air shaft between adjacent structures with windows opening onto this air shaft from the interior rooms. This law, known as the “Old Law,” also required two toilets on each floor accessible from the common stair hall and a window opening of at least one square yard in each room.

The U.S. census of the following year, 1880, showed that New York had become the first American city of over 1 million population. The massive immigration of the next decade, in which some 5 million people entered the United States, increased urban congestion and led to the rapid construction of tenement houses. In Chicago new business buildings rose to sixteen or more stories in response to the soaring land values of the 1880s, introducing the now-commonplace vertical character of downtown business areas. The first practical electric trolley—soon to become the dominant means of urban transportation in America—moved over the streets of Richmond, Virginia, in 1888.

At the beginning of the 1890s, business and industrial uses were intermixed throughout the core of the American city. On the congested streets of the city—frequently of mud and often strewn with garbage—the contrast between the personal wealth of the few and the abject poverty of the many was startling. Political corruption of the worst sort generated little enthusiasm for increased governmental responsibilities in a system where public meant of poor quality.

The deplorable conditions of tenement house life in New York City were exposed by Jacob Riis in How the Other Half Lives (1890) \(^1\) and The Children of the Poor (1892). \(^2\) These disclosures outraged the public, with the result that in 1892 the U.S. Congress appropriated $20,000 for an investigation of slums in-
cities of over 200,000 population. This study was the first federal recognition of
the problems of slums and urban housing in America.

In 1890, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America,
Congress designated Chicago as the site of a great world’s fair. This fair, the
World’s Columbian Exposition, opened on the first of May, 1893. It was designed
by a team headed by the Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham and including
Charles Follen McKim of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White;
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.; and Augustus St. Gaudens, the sculptor. This team
produced the first example in the United States of a great group of public
buildings and public spaces that were conceived in relation to each other and
that were specifically designed to delight and impress the citizen-visitor and to
fulfill that citizen’s every need. The fair became a model for urban America:
well over 2 million Americans flocked to see this “White City,” and many left
committed to realizing some elements of that citizen-centered good order in
their home communities. Burnham came to be known as the father of city
planning in the United States for his contributions to American city planning
during the first decade of the twentieth century, contributions based on his
experiences at Chicago in 1893.

The recession being experienced by the rest of the nation in 1893 had been
temporarily forestalled in Chicago by the positive effects of the Columbian
Exposition. When the exposition closed, Chicago and its environs became enve-
loped in the same economic pressures that threatened the rest of the country.
In Pullman, Illinois, a “model” industrial city built in 1881 a short distance from
Chicago, a violent confrontation occurred as a result of layoffs and unemployment,
and federal troops were called in. The Pullman Strike of 1894 intensified
social discord in Chicago and effectively halted the creation of model industrial
communities like Pullman for decades.

In the spring of 1897, with the social discord and economic conditions that
had created the Pullman Strike still fresh in mind, Burnham urged that public
works planning be undertaken in Chicago on a massive scale, both to create.
employment and to encourage a socially unifying civic pride. Much to Burnham’s disappointment, the city’s commercial and political leadership failed to act on his suggestions, and the notion of effecting socioeconomic reform through large-scale construction of public facilities was to lie dormant for several years. Burnham’s proposals were based on the ideas developed between 1850 and 1870 by Baron Haussmann for Paris, where two decades of social peace and the greatest period of capital formation in French history resulted from a policy of eliminating unemployment through massive public works projects. Because Paris, “The City Beautiful,” had inspired Burnham’s efforts, such proposals come to be referred to as examples of an American “City Beautiful” movement.

In 1898, Ebenezer Howard, a stenographer to the British Parliament, published To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform (reissued four years later as Garden Cities of To-Morrow). Howard proposed to solve problems of the industrial slums of the Western world by creating small, self-sufficient “garden cities” of finite population surrounded by greenbelts of publicly held land permanently committed to agriculture—thus precluding urban expansion and eliminating speculative land costs. These garden cities were to be built around green open spaces and public buildings. Schools were to be located at the center of subunits separated by major streets, and limited industrial establishments were to be located at the perimeter. Urban growth was to be accommodated through additional static satellite units established around a similarly limited and structured central city providing common services. The concept of the neighborhood unit, the basic building block of the American city following World War II, and the greenbelt towns constructed by the U.S. government during the Depression, evolved from Howard’s concepts.

The American city became increasingly congested and complex at the turn of the century. An elevated railroad wound around the downtown section of Chicago to form the Loop, and the first American electric underground railroad subway system was constructed in Boston in 1897. Tall buildings, rising everywhere in response to rising land values, blocked sunlight and inhibited the free flow of air to the streets below. In 1898 a Massachusetts statute was passed limiting the height of buildings around Boston’s Copley Square to 90 feet. In 1899, in a landmark decision (Attorney General v. Williams), the Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld the statute, establishing the public’s right to protect and preserve light and air by regulating maximum building height.

The year 1899 saw the close of a century of extraordinary national and urban population growth, during which time the population of the United States grew from 5 million to 76 million. In 1900, 40 percent of that population lived in cities, thirty-eight of which had more than 100,000 inhabitants.

From 1900 to 1920

In spite of efforts during the nineteenth century to regulate tenement housing in New York City, conditions in that city’s tenements at the turn of the century were appalling. Lawrence Veiller, the first full-time housing reformer in America and founder of the National Housing Association, led a massive effort to improve these conditions that resulted in a voluminous report on housing conditions in New York City and the passage in 1901 of a “New Law” that Veiller wrote. Unlike earlier tenement laws, the New Law was vigorously enforced. It required permits for construction, alteration, and conversion; inspection upon completion; and penalties for noncompliance. Most significantly, it provided for a permanent tenement house department to administer and enforce the law. Among other conditions, the New Law required wide light and air courts between structures and a toilet and running water in each apartment. The New Law became the model for tenement laws throughout the United States.
A new era of plans

In 1900, an annual meeting of the American Institute of Architects was held in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the centennial of the capital city. This meeting called attention to L'Enfant's plan, to the “White City” of the Columbian Exposition, and to the disorderly condition of both Washington and the American city in general that had resulted from unrestrained free enterprise, land speculation, and public neglect. Senator James McMillan of Michigan, impressed by this meeting, appointed a subcommittee of his Senate Committee on the District of Columbia and charged it with the restoration of L'Enfant's plan. The McMillan Committee, headed by Daniel Burnham, was the same basic team that had designed the World's Columbian Exposition, with substitution of F. L. Olmsted, Jr., for F. L. Olmsted, Sr., who was in ill health at the time. This was the first group in America to be identified as experts on city planning and to be given the status of professional city planning consultants. The McMillan Committee Plan, reported in 1902, focused on restoration of the Mall, the siting of new public buildings, the creation of a regional park system, and the location of monuments. President Theodore Roosevelt's enthusiastic endorsement of the plan established a federal sanction for city planning.

The planning movement that grew out of the McMillan Plan was a reform movement. Burnham considered himself a leader of the American Republican Progressive movement, which was attempting, through public works project siting and design by public policy, to reduce graft in the placement and construction of public buildings, and to improve the quality of the public environment for all to enjoy. The movement also intended to effect a transfer of wealth from the rich to all citizens through investment in public buildings, plazas, and parks that would be available to all, be owned by all, and become objects of a socially unifying civic pride.

In 1902, Tom Johnson, reform mayor of Cleveland, convinced Burnham to head a team charged with preparing a plan for a group of public buildings in downtown Cleveland. Johnson intended this project to eliminate a notorious slum area, to provide necessary public facilities, and to encourage in Cleveland citizens an intense civic pride that would create a feeling of allegiance to the city and its government. The result of this work, the Cleveland Group Plan of 1903, stimulated similar “civic center” plans throughout the United States.

In 1904 a civic association in San Francisco, headed by former mayor James D. Phelan, invited Burnham to prepare a plan for the city. Burnham and his new planning assistant, Edward H. Bennett, produced a plan that was not limited to a grouping of structures in the civic center: it was a plan of radial and concentric highways, a highway outer belt, extensive shoreline parks, and a mass transit subway. Smoke-producing industry was located on the basis of wind-drift patterns, and residential districts were bounded by major streets to reduce through traffic. These aspects of the plan became city planning dogma in America for the next three generations. This plan, published in 1906, was the first application of Burnham's principles to an entire large American city on the mainland.

The first official, local, and permanent town planning board in the United States, the Hartford Commission on a City Plan, was created by the Connecticut legislature in 1907. Similar boards were created in Milwaukee in 1908 and in Chicago, Detroit, and Baltimore in 1909. These early boards were created to sponsor the development of a city plan, to oversee its execution, and to encourage financial support of public construction projects. Because they lacked departmental status, these boards had little direct contact with operating agencies of city government, and the chairmen of the boards lacked equal status with department heads in dealing with the municipal executive officer.

Ebenezer Howard's garden city concept was realized for the first time at Letchworth, England, begun in 1903. Designed as a city for some 35,000 people,
surrounded by an extensive greenbelt. Letchworth was planned in full detail by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin. Shortly thereafter, Unwin was challenged by a wealthy social worker to create an area of London with healthy housing available to residents with a wide range of incomes and provided with a full range of civic activities. Unwin's efforts resulted in the first comprehensive neighborhood design, Hampstead Garden Suburb, built at the northern terminus of the London subway system in 1907. Unwin modified Howard's idea of satellite towns to create small satellite residential districts that would never grow, being bounded by major streets, with segregated industry (in Howard's scheme at the perimeter, in Unwin's in London) and with the entire area centered around major green open spaces and public facilities.

In 1907 the United States experienced its highest level of immigration: 1,285,000 people in one year. Immigrants flooded into the New Law tenements of New York City and into every other major city of America, including the steel city of Pittsburgh, where housing and public health conditions were deplorable. In 1907 the first systematic statistical city survey in America was begun in Pittsburgh. Housing, health, and social conditions were carefully surveyed, compiled, and plotted with respect to geographic location. The subsequent correlations and analyses established the foundation for a kind of data-based city planning that was not to emerge fully in the United States until a generation later.

Burnham spent virtually all of 1907 and 1908 working on a plan of Chicago commissioned by the Commercial Club, a prestigious businessmen's association. This plan, released on 4 July 1909, was the first metropolitan-regional plan in the United States. Burnham's daring proposals covered a vast area, projecting a great outer belt of regional parks and reservations, an intricate web of radial
and concentric highways, and a lakefront park system more than twenty miles in length. The plan also grouped and relocated railroad lines and terminals, created many center-city parks and broad, radial, tree-lined boulevards, straightened the Chicago River, and projected a vast new civic center and a two-level boulevard (now Wacker Drive) parallel to the Chicago River.

The fact that the plans for Chicago (1909), San Francisco (1906), Cleveland (1903), and Washington, D.C. (1902), dealt almost exclusively with public buildings, parks, and streets, proposing no changes to or control over private property, was neither accidental nor solely a function of the nature of Burnham's planning theories. Control of private development by public law lacked clear support from state and federal supreme courts. Publicly owned lands and facilities, on the other hand, were clearly susceptible to public control. Planners based their practical designs on the knowledge that they could be implemented. But in 1909, in *Welch v. Swasey*, the Supreme Court established the first nationwide authority enabling communities to regulate the development of private property by limiting building heights and by varying these heights according to zone.

In 1909 Wisconsin passed the first state enabling act granting municipalities within its borders a clear right to engage in city planning. In the same year the first formal course in city planning was offered at Harvard, followed shortly thereafter by a course at the University of Illinois.

A land use zoning ordinance passed in Los Angeles in 1909 created a multitude of use zones applicable to large areas of undeveloped land. Virtually all previous land use zoning had been established to protect existing patterns of development. This ordinance signaled the beginning of an era in which zoning could be used to shape future development. The year 1909 also saw the first national conference on city planning, held in Washington, D.C.

*Expansion in the second decade*

By 1910 there were almost 92 million Americans, 46 percent of whom were urban, and over fifty cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. There were also 500,000 automobiles registered in the United States. This plaything of the rich was about to flood the streets of cities built for horsecars, trolleys, and foot traffic. These same cities were about to undergo vast pre-World-War-I growth generated by extended railroad access and expanded trolley routes.

In reaction to this growth, the Russell Sage Foundation, impressed by Unwin's neighborhood design at Hampstead Garden Suburb, sponsored the first demonstration of Unwin's concept in the United States. This project, Forest Hills Gardens, located at a site along the Long Island Railroad near New York City, was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Grosvenor Atterbury, with the advisory services of Unwin. Initiated in 1910 and completed in 1913, it served as a model for American suburban land development.

When Daniel Burnham died in 1912, leadership in American city planning passed to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Unlike Burnham, Olmsted believed that the city plan should include all uses of land, private as well as public, and that plans should be continuously updated to ensure that they remained relevant to current urban issues and to the citizens' evolving aspirations. Olmsted's vision of municipal planning and control of private development gained momentum in 1912, when the Supreme Court declared in *Eubank v. City of Richmond* that municipal control of the horizontal location of buildings on private property, via setback legislation, was constitutional.

Eighteen cities in America had planning boards in 1913. Shortly thereafter this number increased markedly, as state after state passed enabling acts permitting municipalities to engage in planning. In 1913 New Jersey required all land subdivision plats to be reviewed by the local planning board. This was the beginning of land subdivision control as a function of city planning in the United
States. In 1913, Massachusetts made planning mandatory for its local governments.

Land use zoning, which was of critical importance to planning for and municipal control of private land development, came to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1915 in Hadacheck v. Sebastian. Until that year, few American communities had enacted land use control ordinances because the Court might have held that restriction of higher future profit uses was an unconstitutional taking of property without just compensation. In Hadacheck, the Court agreed with the California Supreme Court that “regulation was not precluded by the fact ‘that the value of investment made ... prior to any legislative action will be greatly diminished.’” If the Court did not consider reduction in value of real prior investments valid grounds for declaring the ordinance unconstitutional, it was highly improbable that a reduction of potential future value would be held to invalidate an ordinance. Many municipal leaders, interpreting this case to mean that the Supreme Court had granted implicit approval of land use zoning, began to prepare land use control programs.

A New York commission had been created in 1913 to devise a scheme for the effective control of future urban development of the city. Under the leadership of Edward M. Basset, this commission arrived at the concept of a comprehensive zoning code—a single ordinance that would integrate land use controls, controls on building height, and control of building setbacks and yards. With the issuance of the Hadacheck decision in 1915, the Supreme Court had given explicit or implied constitutional approval to all three of these elements (height control by zone in Welch v. Swasey; building setback control in Eubank v. City of Richmond; land use control in Hadacheck v. Sebastian). The New York Zoning Code, the first comprehensive zoning code in the United States, was adopted in 1916. The code was unrelated to a general plan for the fulfillment of community aspirations (in fact, it was a substitute for such a plan), was generally protective of current land interests, and was not based on a forecast of future land use demand. New York’s “comprehensive” zoning ordinance was rapidly adopted by many other large American cities, signaling a major shift in the means of governmental control of urban development. Formerly, local governments used public works projects to direct urban growth and to ensure that development corresponded to a definition of the public interest. “Comprehensive” zoning ordinances shifted the emphasis from public to private construction and instituted highly conservative legal and administrative forms of control.

Another significant event in 1916 was the signing of the Federal-Aid Road Act. At a time when the nation’s intercity road system was barely passable, this act assisted state highway construction, providing two-lane concrete roads in a nationwide interstate system. There were 4.7 million automobiles on the streets of America in 1917, an increase of 4.2 million since 1910.

Approximately two thousand people attended the ninth national planning conference, held at Kansas City, Missouri, in 1917. At this meeting a small group of members decided to create a professional society and established the American City Planning Institute (ACPI), now known as the American Institute of Certified Planners. The fifty-two charter members of the ACPI included architects, landscape architects, engineers, attorneys, and developers. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., served as the institute’s first president.

The United States became an urban nation as it entered the 1920s. The census of 1920 reported that 51 percent of the 106.4 million persons residing in the United States at that time lived in urban areas.

From 1920 to 1940

The twenty years between 1920 and 1940 were decades of contrast. In the twenties, prosperity and rapid increases in automobile ownership made possible
the first massive migration of middle-income residents from the central city to the suburbs. In this period of extensive suburbanization, city planning emphasized development control at the perimeter of the city and the construction and widening of streets to accommodate the automobile. Land use zoning of undeveloped areas, land subdivision controls, and other regulatory devices became the focus of planning efforts, and now engineers, lawyers, and administrators rose to positions of planning leadership, in addition to the architects, landscape architects, and business leaders of the previous decade. Advocates of "The City Efficient" and "The City Administrative" began to supplant the earlier advocates of The City Beautiful. The same years also saw the creation of the first comprehensive plan and of several landmark housing projects.

By the 1930s, the economic hardships of the Depression years shifted emphasis in planning to the creation of massive public works projects. Appalling housing conditions and a slump in housing construction brought large-scale federal intervention through a number of programs, including the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created in 1934; FHA requirements gradually became the basis for housing standards that still dominate the housing industry today.

An era of unprecedented growth

Local governments reacted to rapid residential and commercial expansion in the 1920s by instituting controls on development. The basic legal framework for the control of private development in the United States was created in the 1920s. This framework emphasized control and protection, by ordinance, of the physical character of the new middle-income residential areas constructed at the perimeter
of the city, maintenance of the status quo in the central city, and fulfillment of the interests of business and industry—which took the form of extensive overzoning for commercial and industrial uses.

By 1920 many American cities required planning board approval of land subdivision plats based on the application of standards for width of right-of-way, maximum block length, and conformance with the predetermined location of major streets. These standards and mapped locations were established in ordinances creating an official *major street plan*, also commonly termed an *official map*. These requirements often included necessary dedication of streets to the public by gift from the developer prior to the platting of abutting property. The courts upheld this requirement, holding that there is no "taking of property" in such a required "gift" of street right-of-way, as the giving is just a precondition to platting, which the developer must initiate by request; the "gift" is therefore free of municipal coercion. This logic would be expanded in the 1930s to require the mandatory dedication of parklands through land subdivision control.

With rise in automobile ownership, suburban expansion of American cities in the 1920s outstripped municipal annexation, resulting in development of vast areas beyond municipal boundaries. In addition to fostering extraterritorial controls, this led to the creation of county planning authorities capable of dealing with the areas surrounding the central city. In 1922 Los Angeles County created the first county planning board in the United States.

Explosive suburban expansion led the Russell Sage Foundation to undertake a monumental study of the future of the New York metropolitan area, the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs.* Begun in 1922, this study was not completed until 1929.
A charter member of the ACPI, J.C. Nichols, responded to the new expansion of the American city by creating the world's first automobile-oriented shopping center, Country Club Plaza, at the outskirts of Kansas City, Missouri, in 1922.

The compact retail sales and business areas of the pre-1920 era, clustered at the core of the city and centered around railroad terminals and trolley stops, began to move outward with the spread of the automobile, making every major street a potential commercial district. Thus, the prosperity of the 1920s, combined with the automobile and complemented by commercial zoning of virtually every major street, resulted in extensive lineal strip commercial development. Vastly increased automobile traffic and its resulting street congestion, together with gross commercial overconstruction, decreased access to these strip commercial areas, which was ultimately reflected in extensive areas of vacant or poorly maintained business facilities along major streets—a condition that can still be seen in hundreds of cities.

Although most land use zoning in the early 1920s was based on broad use categories such as residence, business, and industry, many communities were making finer distinctions. Some were creating zones in which the single-family detached residence was the only type of residence permitted. State courts supported such regulations, generally basing their support, as in the Massachusetts case of Brett v. Building Commissioner of Brookline (1924), on protection of public health through reduced danger of fire and increased light and air and on an inability to find that such control bears no conceivable relationship to the protection of the public health, safety, morals and/or welfare. In Miller v. Board of Public Works of the City of Los Angeles (1925), the state court based its decision in support of single-family-only districts on a presumed relationship between inducement of ownership and community stability, interest in public affairs, and good citizenship. The issue of such finely delineated land use zoning categories had not been tested in the U.S. Supreme Court; nor had another issue—that of zoning totally undeveloped land for uses other than those that the free market would dictate. In 1925 the California Supreme Court supported the zoning of undeveloped land areas in Zahn v. Board of Public Works of the City of Los Angeles, stating, "Zoning . . . looks not only backward . . . but forward to aid in the development of new districts according to a comprehensive plan having as its basis the welfare of the city as a whole."

The first such "comprehensive plan having as its basis the welfare of the city as a whole" to be officially adopted by a major American city was adopted in Cincinnati in 1925. Alfred Bettman, a Cincinnati attorney, was heavily involved in the work of the United City Planning Committee of Cincinnati, a citizen group dedicated to integrating urban planning with the ongoing processes of the Cincinnati city government. The pro-planning policies of this citizen committee were adopted as elements of the platform of a reform group, the Charter Committee, that came to power in 1924 and immediately implemented Bettman's program. A key element in this program was official adoption of a statement of the long-term goals and policies of the city with regard to its urban form and structure, including both public and private development; this statement was to be followed by the city council in the creation of control devices, such as zoning and subdivision control ordinances, and in the expenditures, of public funds.

The comprehensive plan as pioneered by Bettman and the city of Cincinnati in 1925 became a cornerstone of American city planning. In this concept, legal control of community development is used as a tool for, and is subservient to, the realization of a set of comprehensive, long-range community goals; this is in distinct contrast to comprehensive zoning as presented in the New York City Zoning Code of 1916, in which controls were established without reference to long-range community development policies and projected land use needs.

Prior to 1926 the land use control component of comprehensive zoning rested on a weak constitutional foundation. The New York City Zoning Code of 1916
had never been tested in the U.S. Supreme Court, and its land use element had been adopted solely on the basis of an implication of constitutionality in
Hadacheck v. Sebastian. In 1926 the U.S. Supreme Court heard Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co., in which the constitutionality of comprehensive zoning and all of its parts was contested. The Court had decided, informally, to respond in favor of Ambler, striking down the comprehensive zoning package, when Alfred Bettman, fulfilling a charge from the Ohio State Conference on City Planning, was permitted to file an amicus curiae brief in support of Euclid and comprehensive zoning. Following Bettman’s presentation, the Court, by a 6 to 3 vote, found in favor of Euclid.

This case established the constitutionality of comprehensive zoning and all of its parts. The Euclid decision became the basic constitutional building block of American city planning. For Bettman, however, this was a hollow victory. City after city, armed with the constitutional pronouncements of Euclid, proceeded to adopt comprehensive zoning ordinances that were unaccompanied by the comprehensive long-range planning he believed essential to the public welfare.

In 1926 the New York Commission on Housing and Regional Planning, created in 1923 and chaired by Clarence S. Stein, published the first state planning report. As a result of this study, in 1926 the state of New York passed an act establishing a state housing board empowered to provide tax exemptions for twenty years to limited-dividend housing corporations willing to provide housing for lower-middle-income people and to abide by a maximum rent schedule. This first public program for housing subsidy in the United States resulted in the construction of 6,000 housing units in fourteen projects.

Clarence Stein, together with Henry C. Wright, realized a model project in 1926 in the construction of Sunnyside Gardens at a site on Long Island near New York City. Sunnyside provided town houses and garden apartments of varying setback on full-block lots, eliminating the narrow side yards and small rear yards of speculative lot-by-lot subdivisions and pooling the land into large common center-of-the-block parks and playgrounds. These units, models for many future “garden apartment” projects, were two rooms deep and were sited parallel to the street.

The peak year for housing production in the United States during the 1920s was 1927. During that year 810,000 dwelling units were built. During this boom, the City Housing Corporation, sponsors of Sunnyside, undertook another model project by Stein and Wright, Radburn, at Fairlawn, New Jersey, which was constructed in 1928. Radburn consisted of large superblocks containing center-of-the-block parks bounded by two-story single-family houses. Pedestrian paths led from the houses through the center-of-the-block parks to the local school and to a nearby shopping center, thus separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This project, an evolution of the neighborhood idea explored at Hampstead in London and at Forest Hills Gardens on Long Island, became the prototype for most of the “advanced” American land development planning for the next fifty years.

In 1928 the U.S. Department of Commerce, under Secretary Herbert Hoover, published a new Standard City Planning Enabling Act and recommended its adoption by state legislatures. Although this act was useful in that it promoted city planning, it also confused the comprehensive plan with the zoning plan, leading communities to prepare zoning proposals without reference to long-range, comprehensive public policy issues. By recommending separate adoption of pieces of the plan, the act denied the importance of the comprehensive plan as an integrated statement of public policies. By suggesting that the planning commission, a semi-independent agency, receive and adopt the comprehensive plan and oversee the planning staff (rather than leave these tasks to the municipal legislative body), the act weakened the emerging role of planning as an integral element of government. Many states acted on this suggested enabling act; its
provisions are still the common basis for municipal planning in many states today.

The *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*, prepared by the Russell Sage Foundation and published in 1929, analyzed regional economic, demographic, and governmental problems by combining a vast mass of information on current conditions with projections of the future. This reliance on data, critical to Bettman's concept of a comprehensive plan, became the norm in the years to come as other cities modeled their plan-making processes after this monumental undertaking. In one section of this monumental regional plan for New York City, Clarence A. Perry, a resident of Forest Hills Gardens, codified Unwin's neighborhood ideas and propounded the "neighborhood unit" as the basic building block of the city. The neighborhood unit would have an elementary school at its center and would be bounded by arterial streets at the perimeter. The distance from school to perimeter would be based on a comfortable walking distance for a school-age child; there would be no through traffic or industrial or commercial uses inside the unit. Perry's concept of the neighborhood unit reinforced a local school-centered pattern, with segregation of uses, that was to become the cornerstone of American suburban development after World War II.

The depression years

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pledging a New Deal to the American people, was elected President in 1932. With 13 million people out of work, New Deal programs focused mainly on unemployment. The New Deal supported planning for the future by means of detailed studies and projections, as well as careful budgeting of resources, bringing economists, statisticians, and sociologists into the planning profession. In many ways the New Deal programs resembled application on a national scale of Burnham's program to restore civic pride and confidence through great public projects designed to provide employment, help ensure social peace, and redistribute wealth to those in need.

The president's uncle, Frederic Adrian Delano, who had been a major supporter of Burnham's 1909 plan for Chicago and had been the chairman of the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*, now came to Washington to chair America's first national planning board.

The National Planning Board, founded in 1933, encouraged state and municipal governments to plan for development over long periods of time and encouraged formulation of twenty-year comprehensive plans founded upon statistical pro-
jections of future conditions. The board also stimulated the creation of state planning boards.

The year 1933 also saw the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority, an independent, multifunctional government agency created for the regional planning and development of the Tennessee River valley. Its extensive programs ranged from flood protection and water management to recreational development and power generation.

In 1933 housing development in the United States was at its lowest point in a century. The new administration, focusing on employment in the construction trades and on the condition of slum housing, undertook to construct new dwellings and to rebuild deteriorated central city areas. To do this, the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), were created in 1934.
Initially, and for a short time, PWA was authorized to lend up to 85 percent of the cost of housing projects to public and private limited-dividend corporations. Only seven housing projects were produced under this program, which was replaced in 1934 by a new and radically restructured PWA Housing Division with authority to make grants and low-interest loans to limited-dividend housing authorities, usually local housing authorities. The most radical parts of the program were the federal government’s power of eminent domain to acquire housing sites and its power to engage directly in the construction of these projects. This program produced fifty projects before it was terminated in 1937.

The FHA was established to expand construction jobs for the unskilled by attracting private funds to residential construction. It did so by providing government insurance of private home loans, removing the financial risk in such investments. To assure nondefault on these loans, the FHA established minimum standards for housing financed under this program. Designed to meet the housing desires, in purchase and resale, of the upper-middle-income group—those least likely to default—these FHA standards were the first federal minimum housing “standards” adopted in the United States. Because they were rapidly reflected in local zoning codes, in building codes, and in private loan manuals as the minimum standards for all housing construction in the country, housing that the middle- and lower-income groups could afford quickly became a priori “substandard” and undesirable and thus was “zoned out” of most American cities, severely restricting the amount of housing available to middle- and lower-income groups. The FHA’s focus on labor-intensive construction of owner-occupied, single-family detached units stimulated an enormous suburban expansion as a by-product, especially in the decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

The American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) was created in 1934 to bring planning commissioners, city managers, and other officials more actively into the planning movement, to serve as a clearinghouse for information, and to increase communication among planners. (In 1978 ASPO consolidated with the American Institute of Planners to become the American Planning Association [APA].) Alfred Bettman of Cincinnati served as ASPO’s first president.

In 1935 the Resettlement Administration, within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, undertook to design and construct four communities collectively referred to as the “greenbelt towns.” Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; Greendale, Wisconsin; and Greenbrook, New Jersey. The new towns were to assist in local employment and to create model communities to guide future development. The greenbelt towns, modified neighborhood units in the countryside surrounded by extensive greenbelts of public land and serving as dormitory suburbs for nearby metropolises, were built and operated by the federal government. Greenbrook was never built, because in 1936 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, in Township of Franklin v. Tugwell, ruled that the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act on which the program was based was invalid and that the federal government had no constitutional authority to use its power of eminent domain in states for housing purposes.

The entire PWA Housing Division system was abandoned in 1937, as by that time it was clear that the finding in Tugwell applied equally to the PWA programs. Local housing authorities also resented federal dominance, and the radical “pump priming” for jobs that was needed in 1934 seemed not so necessary with the emerging economic recovery of 1937. The PWA Housing Division was replaced in the Housing Act of 1937 by the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA). This 1937 act became the foundation for most future federal public housing programs. Under USHA, local housing authorities used their state-granted power of eminent domain to acquire housing sites. About 168,000 dwelling units were constructed by local housing authorities under this program between 1937 and the outbreak of World War II. Given that New York City alone had over 800,000 Old Law tenements (1897–1901) and railroad flats (pre–1879), it is clear that
Figure 2–10  Aerial and street-level views of Greenbelt, Maryland.
these New Deal programs were capable of revealing the depth of the housing problem but could do little to solve it.

A decade after proposing the concept of the neighborhood unit in the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs*, Clarence Perry elaborated on it in his book, *Housing for the Machine Age*. Perry held that the neighborhood structure, if it is to create true community, must bring together people of identical background and interest. He also held that the problems of juvenile delinquency could be coped with only by the provision of single-family detached residences with individual backyard playgrounds. He therefore recommended that the basic building block of the city, earlier suggested by Perry and others as a fairly high-density apartment-based unit, be an area of owner-occupied, single-family detached homes. This modified version of the neighborhood unit was to become the basic structuring unit for post–World War II development.

On 1 January 1939 the American City Planning Institute (ACPI) was renamed the American Institute of Planners (AIP). At this time the United States was recovering from the Depression, and there was much agitation for the elimination of government involvement in housing and other aspects of American life. As the prospect of a European war appeared with increasing clarity, interest in housing and urban development issues subsided.

**From 1940 to 1960**

Planning for anything but the war effort was largely neglected for the first half of the 1940s, which left the country unprepared for the rapid growth that was to occur in the second half of the decade. Most of that postwar growth took place in suburban areas, and by the onset of the fifties, population decline and physical deterioration had arisen as problems in central cities. Particularly with the advent of the Housing Act of 1954, which provided the first federal funds earmarked for community planning, planning activities expanded, as efforts were made both to preserve urban centers and to manage the development of communities at the perimeter.

**The war and after**

The United States census of 1940, the first decennial census to include data on housing quality, reported that one out of every eight urban dwellings had no indoor bathing or toilet facilities and that one out of every seven had no running water or plumbing of any kind. Rapid uncontrolled construction of urban housing units, the pride of the nineteenth century, had become the housing crisis of the twentieth century.

Threat of war resulted in the creation in June 1940 of the Office of the Housing Coordinator, established to coordinate all federal housing programs and to determine housing needs relative to critical defense industries. The USHA low-rent public housing program was abolished, and 100-percent loans were made available to local housing authorities for the construction of defense housing. In this brief period between the depths of the Depression and the onslaught of World War II, the International City Managers’ Association published *Local Planning Administration*, by Ladislas Segoe, a distinguished planning consultant who had played a major role in preparing the Cincinnati plan of 1925. This book codified planning methods, processes, and standards that had developed since the early 1920s and became both the primary text for students in planning programs at American universities and the basic municipal reference work that guided community development during the postwar era.

From 1942 to 1945 war planning replaced rather than complemented city planning. The national commitment to planning for the war effort and for the war effort alone was at its most harmful in 1943, when the National Planning
Figure 2-11 A neighborhood in Levittown, New York, a large postwar suburban development.

Figure 2-12 The Point Park, Pittsburgh, in the mid-1970s.
Board was abolished and its functions were distributed among committees of Congress. This absence of concern for the urban future left the country and its cities totally unprepared for the urban problems that would arise at the end of the war.

In February 1942 all federal housing agencies were consolidated in the National Housing Agency (NHA). In contrast to the World War I era, when federal government corporations were empowered to build defense industry housing, the approach taken during World War II was to build on the successful 1934 FHA model, stimulating construction of war housing by private enterprise. To ensure the success of this program, the Housing Act of 1937 was amended to provide FHA mortgage insurance of 90-percent loans (10 percent down) of twenty-five-year duration. Over 1,850,000 dwelling units for war workers were constructed through this wartime mortgage insurance program. At the end of World War II the nation faced a shortage of over 7 million urban housing units. To meet these needs, especially for returning service personnel, the liberal and highly effective 90-percent-twenty-five-year mortgage insurance terms of the war housing program were extended to FHA and Veterans Administration (VA) housing programs. This action was a major factor in the housing boom of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Because there had been little advance planning for peacetime, the rapid metropolitan growth of the postwar period generally took place without benefit of comprehensive plan guidelines other than remnants of long-range plans executed in the 1930s and earlier. A vast expansion of the suburban fringes of American cities occurred after 1945; this expansion was heavily influenced by federal and state highway construction programs, national prosperity (which fostered extensive automobile and home ownership), and the FHA and VA housing programs. Mass transit companies, which operated fleets of gasoline-powered, rubber-tired motorbuses that had replaced the electric trolleys in the 1920s and 1930s, began to find it difficult to serve this spread-out, low-density population pattern.

The larger cities created well-staffed planning agencies to cope with this postwar suburban explosion. These staffs devoted most of their time to immediate concerns, such as day-to-day zoning and subdivision control, and to urban redevelopment programs.

Interest in central city redevelopment arose when the census of 1940 indicated that central cities were beginning to lose population to surrounding suburban areas. In response, urban land and business interests urged creation of public redevelopment authorities capable of using state-granted powers of eminent domain to acquire and demolish deteriorated districts. Supporters of this plan wanted the federal government then to subsidize private corporations to encourage reconstruction—for nonhousing purposes—on these cleared sites. The advent of the war forestalled further development of this idea, but intense interest arose again in 1945. In that year, Pennsylvania passed the first state urban redevelopment act that granted a subsidy for the reconstruction of deteriorated central city areas for uses other than housing; the primary result was the Golden Triangle project in Pittsburgh.

In 1947 all federal housing programs, including the FHA mortgage insurance program, were relocated to a new Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA), and the first of the massive postwar FHA suburban housing projects to be supported by mortgage insurance emerged at Levittown, New York, followed by Park Forest, Illinois, in the following year.

Unwin's concept of the neighborhood unit, as expanded upon by Perry in the Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs in 1929 and as modified by him in 1939 to exclude all but single-family detached units, became the basis of postwar FHA and VA mortgage insurance requirements. A new minimum national standard arose, in effect, from the priority given by Perry in 1939 to the single-family detached residence. As specified in the FHA mortgage insurance require-
ments of the 1930s, these residences were to be located in uniform owner-occupied districts, on curved streets with green front-yard setbacks and two trees per lot. This accrued pattern was codified in the American Public Health Association's publication *Planning the Neighborhood* in 1948. 

Residential suburban decentralization of the American city in the late 1940s was accompanied by the beginning of the dispersal of manufacturing plants from their long-established locations in the core of the city to locations along major railroads and highways at the perimeter. This dispersal was made possible by major improvements in highway systems, subsidized development of over-the-road freight trucking fleets, and widespread automobile ownership among factory workers. These conditions were pointed up in 1949 with the establishment of the first regional shopping center in the United States. In that year Don M. Casto opened the Town and Country Shopping Center (known at the time as "The Miracle Mile") at the outskirts of Columbus, Ohio, beyond the new suburban developments.

The Housing Act of 1949 created a federal program for central-city redevelopment based on the model of the Pennsylvania Act of 1945. Under the program, physically deteriorated areas became eligible for federal support for clearance and redevelopment for any reuse. With the aid of federal subsidies, huge areas of central cities were cleared by local redevelopment authorities and reconstructed by and for private enterprise. The 1949 act made city planning an important activity in the United States, as it required that any federally aided urban redevelopment program conform to a plan for the entire community, creating an instant demand for professionally trained city planners.

*Planning concerns at midcentury*

The Census of 1950 reported a population of 151 million Americans, owning 48 million automobiles, with 84.5 million people living in metropolitan areas. Suburban fringe areas had increased in population by 35 percent since 1940, whereas central cities had increased by only 13 percent. This Census also reported that 2.5 million of the 40 million American urban homes were dilapidated. The 1949 Housing Act, as actually appropriated, provided for just 26,000 new low-income public housing units a year. At that rate, the 2.5 million dilapidated units occupied by the urban poor would be replaced shortly before A.D. 2050.

Many communities, feeling the pressure for residential development, sought to preserve the rural character of their communities, to maintain high land values, and to preserve their social character (excluding all but the reasonably affluent) by enacting minimum lot area requirements of one-half to one acre or more and minimum residential floor areas that would preclude less than substantial construction. Armed with state court support, and using the neighborhood unit composed of owner-occupied, single-family detached homes as a basic building block, community after community enacted similar regulations, usually with standards far beyond minimal protective needs. Over time, central cities became surrounded by suburban ordinances whose cumulative effect was to deny entry to lower-middle- and lower-income groups—often racial minorities—who were residents of the central city.

The Housing Act of 1954 extended the clearance programs of the 1949 act to the rehabilitation of areas in the process of deteriorating and to the conservation of nondeteriorating areas in danger of deteriorating. The act's emphasis on conservation strongly encouraged adoption and enforcement of housing codes. The act also required a "workable program" for the elimination of future deterioration, from which the concept of the community renewal plan emerged. Among the elements of this program were neighborhood analyses, housing for displaced persons, and citizen participation in the redevelopment process. These emphases led local urban redevelopment staffs to direct their attention away
from commercial redevelopment of the city core and toward efforts to improve the opportunities of poor residents of the inner city, paving the way for the "social advocacy" planning of the 1960s.

The Housing Act of 1954, in which urban redevelopment was retitled "Urban Renewal," specifically required that urban redevelopment projects be part of a comprehensive city plan, complete with surveys and projections. To ease the financial burden of preparing such plans, Title I, section 701, provided for fifty-five federal-local funding of such plans for communities of under 25,000 people.

Since such communities could not afford permanent staffs for this work, it fell to private planning consultants. The "701" program not only created vaster employment opportunities for planners but also created a major private urban development consulting industry in America. These "701" projects were coordinated through state planning offices, providing an incentive to rekindled state planning efforts. Increased professional opportunities were immediately reflected in academic systems: between 1950 and 1960 the number of graduate planning programs in America more than doubled.

The latter half of the 1950s saw a major shift of retail centers to the urban perimeter in the form of shopping centers located at or near the intersection of radial and concentric perimeter highways. Undoubtedly the most influential of these developments was Northland Shopping Center in Detroit, designed by Victor Gruen and Associates, which opened in March 1954 and served as a model for new shopping centers throughout the country.

In response to the loss of commercial vitality in the historic city core, downtown business groups and city governments initiated efforts to revitalize central areas. These plans commonly provided an inner belt freeway around the commercial core with radial freeways leading to the suburban areas, large perimeter parking garages, and a central area of street malls reserved solely for pedestrian use. During the next decade, many cities adopted the inner belt freeway and radial freeway components of this design as a result of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, which provided for a $60-billion defense highway construction program consisting of over 40,000 miles of limited-access highways linking every major city in the nation.

Concurrent with the large-scale relocation of production industry to the perimeter of the city during this period, the "industrial park" emerged. Highly desirable industrial sites along major rail lines and highways were identified by developers and were provided with generous sites and utilities to meet industrial needs. The better designed industrial developments were often surrounded by bands of landscaped and earth-bermed open space, creating highly functional and environmentally attractive industrial accommodations in the suburbs or near the open countryside.

From 1957 until the end of the decade, the major planning activities undertaken in the United States included urban renewal clearance projects, center-city rehabilitation projects, preparation of new long-range (twenty-year) comprehensive plans based on the now-classic methods, and day-to-day zoning and subdivision control work. In addition, the planning staffs of some cities, notably New York and Washington, D.C., proposed building height and bulk controls that would be more flexible than simple limits on height and setback. Included among these experimental concepts was control by floor area ratio; this ratio indicates the maximum permitted relationship between building floor area and net site area and allows virtually any shape and height of building as long as this ratio is not exceeded.

The Housing Act of 1959 made matching funds available for the preparation of comprehensive plans at the metropolitan, regional, state, and interstate levels. By 1960 half of the costs of comprehensive planning in America were being subsidized by the federal government as an inducement to all levels of government to participate in this activity.
By 1960, 70 percent of the nation's 180 million Americans were living in urbanized areas, and megalopolis, the regional city, was a reality, spreading from Boston to northern Virginia.

**From 1960 to 1980**

The primary influence on planning in the decades between 1960 and 1980 came from changing federal priorities, primarily in the areas of economic and community development. The next two sections consider these developments in detail, tracing a shift from the broad social programs of the 1960s to the “New Federalism” of the 1970s.

**The programs of the 1960s**

In the late 1950s, more flexible land use controls—such as the floor area ratio and performance standards—created greater diversity in development patterns. In 1961 this trend was continued when the New York City Zoning Code of 1916 was replaced by a new code that specified site area requirements per room (a room-density device); incorporated special incentives such as bonuses for provision of plazas, arcades, and pedestrian walkways; created a flexible building setback system; and provided for development control by open space ratio.

The Housing Act of 1961, in section 221(d)3, provided for an interest subsidy to private nonprofit corporations, limited-dividend corporations, cooperatives, and some public agencies to construct rental housing for low- and moderate-income families. This interest subsidy program became the basic federal housing program of the 1960s.

Membership in the American Institute of Planners (AIP), founded in 1917 as the American City Planning Institute with 52 charter members, had grown to over 3,000 by 1962. In that year, New Jersey became the first state to license the practice of planning, followed in 1966 by Michigan, which licensed use of the title planner but not the practice of planning. AIP members were generally unenthusiastic about these actions because they had the effect of defining the planning profession at a time when planners believed that dynamic role changes were required to respond to the planning needs of a rapidly changing society.

In 1963 the Community Renewal Plan (CRP) efforts of many cities were redirected toward assisting lower-income groups to improve their economic standing and their opportunities. Citizen participants in these programs began to press for planning activities extending far beyond the classic city planning confines of land use, building bulk, and utilities and transportation facilities. The mid-1960s also saw initiation of a new scale in private merchant-builder housing efforts, as numerous privately constructed new towns were begun, including Reston, Virginia, and Columbia, Maryland. These new towns were generally satellite dormitory suburbs for the upper middle class.

The creation in 1965 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided urban interests with a cabinet-level position, such as rural interests enjoyed through the Department of Agriculture, for the first time in American history. The first secretary of HUD was Robert Weaver. The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, the most comprehensive extension of federal urban development and housing programs since 1949, provided rent supplement payments for those below the local poverty line, loans at 3 percent interest for low- and moderate-income families, and subsidies for an additional 240,000 low-rent public housing units. This was followed by enactment of the Model Cities program through the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966.

The Model Cities program, initiated by President Johnson, was unique in the history of American city planning; in earlier federal programs designed for local
implementation, problems were identified and defined and responses or solutions devised at the federal level. In the Model Cities program, residents of subdistricts designated as Model City districts created their own quasi-political organization, decided on their problems and priorities, and proposed their own means of arriving at solutions. These organizations and their proposed programs were then funded by the federal government. Although this federal incentive to initiate local district planning—in which urban users defined solutions to their own problems—encountered serious difficulties, the Model Cities program solidly established policy formulation by citizens as an essential part of almost every future urban development program.

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 ended the legality of racial discrimination in the sale or rental of 80 percent of American housing. Later in that same year, in Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co., the Supreme Court ruled that section 1982 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 prohibited racial discrimination in all housing in America.

In recognition of the need for more and better housing for low- and moderate-income families, the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 included programs for the construction of 6 million subsidized housing units during the next ten years. Section 235 extended home ownership to low- and moderate-income families with FHA-mortgage-insured loans by means of a monthly payment from HUD to the mortgage holder, reducing the owner’s monthly costs. Section 236 provided federal interest supplements for mortgages on multifamily rental and cooperative housing, thus reducing the cost of these units.

In response to the way in which many communities had used zoning ordinances to lock out low-income groups, in 1969 Massachusetts passed the Law for Low- and Moderate-Income Housing. This law authorized the state to review and to override local zoning laws when they had the effect of making it uneconomical to build housing for low-income families.

In 1961 Congress passed a law permitting states to legalize ownership of a housing unit without title to the land on which the site is located. This stimulated condominium developments throughout the United States in the late 1960s.

In the early 1950s, single-family detached housing units, the basic building block of the neighborhood unit, accounted for more than 90 percent of the nation’s new housing starts, a proportion that decreased to 60 percent in the late 1960s and to less than 50 percent in the early 1970s. One of the major reasons for the drop was the rising cost of the new single-family detached house, which by the late 1970s was beyond the reach of about 70 percent of American families; the higher costs were created by a combination of rising minimum standards, land costs, financing costs, property taxes, and building material costs.

Planned unit development (PUD) zoning provisions had begun to appear in response to the new scale of residential development following World War II. Earlier zoning standards assumed lot-by-lot development rather than area development, but in the late 1960s, interest in large-scale condominium development and cluster patterns led to the establishment of special PUD zones, in which normal development controls were waived upon special approval of a project. Once experience proved such flexible project planning zones desirable, variable density provisions were created, allowing experimentation in site design. Provisions for varied residential types and mixed land use followed, continuing the evolution toward flexible performance control of urban development.

In 1969, implementing the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget issued Circular A-95, which required area-wide regional planning agency review of all proposals for local participation in federal development programs. This stimulated the creation of a network of regional clearinghouses charged with receiving and disseminating project information as well as coordinating applications for federal assistance. Circular A-95
helped establish an administrative base for regional planning and coordination in the 1970s.

New directions in the 1970s

As the decade began, the Nixon administration announced that, in fulfillment of its New Federalism programs, many federal urban development programs would be terminated and replaced by a system of community development based on decentralized programs and federal revenue sharing. President Nixon signed the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act in October 1972, creating a multi-billion-dollar general revenue sharing program.

Two years later, in 1974, Congress passed the original Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) legislation, which furthered the revenue-sharing aspect of the New Federalism. Local governments had discretion in the use of these block funds, and local councils—generally more conservative than Congress on these issues—tended to direct these funds away from broad socioeconomic programs and toward "safe" capital projects, such as parks, firehouses, swimming pools, and tennis courts. These federal funds were often sufficient to make such projects possible without an increase in local taxes. The Democrat-controlled Congress believed that funds appropriated to benefit minorities and lower-income groups were being abused, and in the CDBG legislation Congress required that these funds be used for their originally allocated purposes. The Nixon and Ford administrations illegally ignored this congressional directive and encouraged the use of block grant funds in lieu of general local revenue, thus gutting the congressionally approved programs.

Serious conflicts developed between the Democrat-dominated Congress and the Republican administration under Ford. Congress continued to try to further the goals of the New Frontier and the Great Society as articulated by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and as provided for in congressional actions; but the Ford administration, following the policies of the Nixon administration, continued to abolish, to delay implementation, and to deflect the funds provided for the social programs enacted by Congress.

When Carter took office in 1976, he was obliged by law and by campaign promises to honor congressional directives. HUD announced that by August 1977, all planning agencies desiring "701" planning funds would have to have a housing element that met the requirements of the 1974 act: to increase housing opportunities, disperse lower-income housing, and ease racial and economic segregation. But as HUD began to redirect its programs, it encountered serious resistance from local officials, both Democrats and Republicans. By 1977 local governments had become accustomed to a steady stream of federal funds with no strings attached. To return these funds to their congressionally authorized purposes, local governments believed that they would have to institute unpopular increases in local taxes. Local officials throughout America pressured Congress and the Carter administration to ease the requirements of the 1974 act.

HUD Secretary Patricia R. Harris argued for a new Housing and Community Development Act (CDA) that would redirect the community development programs to the benefit of low- and moderate-income families, as originally charged by Congress. But the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977 provided that only 75 percent of CDA funds would be used for their original purposes, and this amount was negotiated downward annually. The act also extended "701" comprehensive planning funds on an annual appropriation basis, which meant that they, too, would be phased out. Finally, a stagnant economy led Congress to amend Title 7 of the 1970 Housing and Urban Development Act to require a "national urban policy" statement from the president (starting in 1978), rather than an "urban growth policy" statement.
Between 29 January and 2 February 1978, five hundred participants in The White House Conference on Balanced National Growth and Economic Development gathered to advise President Carter. The conference recommended a strong federal role in long-range planning for the impact of federal policies and investments; the establishment of national economic and employment goals; a national energy policy; federal encouragement of state planning, metropolitan tax-base sharing; and the creation at the federal level of a unit to advise the president on national growth and development and to coordinate federal activities related to national growth objectives. But President Carter's 1978 State of the Union message indicated that his administration's policies would be focused differently:

Government cannot solve our problems. It can't set our goals. It can't define our vision. Government cannot eliminate poverty or provide a bountiful economy or reduce inflation, or save our cities or cure illiteracy or provide energy. . . . We simply cannot be the managers of everything and everybody.

In his Urban Policy Message of 27 March 1978, President Carter announced "a new partnership to conserve America's communities" in which the private sector and state and local governments would take on a greater leadership and financial role to help reduce the burden of the $80-billion federal deficit.

By mid-1978 it was clear that the United States did not have, and would not have, anything that could be termed a national urban policy. The programs of the 1960s—Model Cities, Urban Renewal, Manpower Training—were in disuse and disfavor. Revenue sharing, the principal urban policy of the earlier 1970s, continued to provide general support for local communities but precluded use of these funds for national social programs, while passage of Proposition 13 in California in the summer of 1978, mandating a rollback in property taxes, encouraged similar efforts throughout the United States to limit funds available to state and local governments for social programs.

In 1978 the Carter administration implemented the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program, created by Congress in 1977 to assist distressed cities and urban counties through "leveraging": providing limited federal funds to induce private investment in areas of economic and neighborhood stagnation. UDAG program criteria were set to ensure that funds would be directed to older declining cities, economically stagnant neighborhoods, areas of extensive poverty and unemployment, and areas of slow population and employment growth. Although only 28.4 percent of UDAG funds went to central-city neighborhoods in the first year of the program, HUD did require all recipient communities to show through housing and equal employment opportunities that they had an ongoing commitment to low- and moderate-income persons and to minorities.

By the autumn of 1979, the UDAG program had become the centerpiece and virtually the only surviving element of President Carter's urban initiatives. Congress increased UDAG funding almost 70 percent in 1979, in spite of a General Accounting Office finding that many million-dollar UDAGs were not serving their intended purpose. Congress again significantly decreased "701" Comprehensive Planning Programs funds, the House Appropriations Committee arguing that since $11 billion in CDBG funds had flowed to metropolitan areas since 1975, local communities themselves should be allocating some portion of these federally provided funds to support planning services; thus, "701" funds were no longer needed. Congress again significantly cut "701" funds in the 1980 budget, and as American communities entered the eighties, they were, for the first time since 1954, without specific federal funds earmarked in support of planning.

Despite the withdrawal of federal policies in support of planning, important new directions were taken by planners during the decade of the 1970s. The protection of the natural environment and the extension of housing to under-
served populations became objectives of planning efforts in the early 1970s. The energy crisis and the economic recession provided further challenges for planners in mid-decade.

**Housing in the suburbs**

Throughout the decade, housing for low- and moderate-income families continued to be a difficult problem. Although the U.S. census of 1970 reported that more Americans were living in the suburban fringes of metropolitan areas than in central cities, lower-income families, particularly racial minorities, generally did not share in this suburban dispersal of American housing. This fact can be attributed in large part to exclusionary zoning practices. Mary Brooks brought this subject into the open in *Exclusionary Zoning*, published by The American Society of Planning Officials in 1970. In the same year, in an attempt to correct exclusionary practices, Dale Bertsch, executive director of the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, prepared a Regional Housing Dispersal Plan for the Dayton, Ohio, region that came to be known as the Dayton Plan. This plan allocated new, low- and middle-income housing units throughout a five-county regional metropolitan area on a “regional fair share” basis. The concept of “fair share” had considerable influence on subsequent zoning regulations.

In the late 1960s, responding to the same housing needs, the Southern Burlington County chapter of the NAACP brought suit against the township of Mount Laurel, New Jersey, challenging the developing suburban township’s zoning ordinance for its failure to provide a variety of housing opportunities, particularly for families of low and moderate income. In 1975 the New Jersey Supreme Court found in favor of the NAACP, ruling that local land use regulations “cannot foreclose the opportunity . . . for low- and moderate-income housing and . . . must affirmatively afford that opportunity, at least to the extent of the municipality’s fair share of the present and prospective need thereof.” The court gave Mount Laurel ninety days to revise its zoning ordinance to correct these deficiencies, thereby becoming the first state supreme court to impose an affirmative, “inclusionary” land use obligation on local governments throughout the state.

During the following years, however, the court’s decision in *Mount Laurel* resulted in few changes in municipal zoning policies and little opportunity for the construction of low- and moderate-income housing. Early in 1977, the New Jersey Supreme Court clarified and expanded upon the *Mount Laurel* decision. In *Oakwood at Madison v. Township of Madison et al.*, the court held not only that the township had an obligation to provide its regional fair share of low- and moderate-income housing but also that such developing communities must overzone for “least cost” housing to encourage low land costs. During the 1980s the Supreme Court of New Jersey found it necessary to tackle the same issues once again in a case known as *Mt. Laurel II.*

The U.S. Supreme Court, in contrast, did not undertake actions in support of the HUD-based programs of the early 1970s. In *Village of Arlington Heights et al. v. Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation et al.* (1978), the Court held that if there is no record of proof of an intent to discriminate in the adoption of an exclusionary ordinance, the act of discrimination does not exist. Although proof of intent is difficult to establish, this principle became the foundation for the Court’s future approach to civil rights issues.

Although HUD did undertake to disperse federally assisted housing projects in the suburbs in the late 1960s, its efforts were often effectively blocked by the requirement that a local referendum be held prior to initiation of a project. White—and generally relatively affluent—residents of suburban areas tended to vote to exclude such projects; the only districts in which minorities and the poor could count on heavy support were those areas they currently occupied.
In the *Valtierra* cases (1971), the U.S. Supreme Court upheld these referendum requirements, stating: "Provisions for referendums demonstrate devotion to democracy, not to bias, discrimination or prejudice."

Numerous referenda against public housing, low-income housing, and multifamily housing followed the Supreme Court decision in the *Valtierra* cases. In northeastern Ohio, land use change came virtually to a halt as one community after another introduced referenda on proposed developments. Eastlake, Ohio, amended its zoning ordinance to require a citywide referendum and at least 55 percent voter approval of any change in existing land use legislation. On 21 June 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Eastlake's referendum requirement (*Forest City Enterprises v. Eastlake*), a decision that prompted many suburban communities to adopt similar referendum requirements.

California, which had experienced soaring housing costs in the 1970s, took a direct approach to the need for low- and moderate-income housing. The state took the lead in creating inclusionary housing programs, which provide by law for a broad range of housing, by income. Palo Alto and Davis, California, adopted ordinances requiring tract home builders to sell 10 percent of their new units below cost to moderate-income families who could not otherwise afford them. By the end of 1979, Boulder, Colorado, and Montgomery County, Maryland, also had adopted inclusionary housing requirements. In that same year, the California Coastal Commission held that the state's inclusionary laws applied to luxury beachfront hotel rooms; the commission required hotel builders to rent a fixed number of rooms in each new development at half price to permit middle-income families access to the shoreline.

On taking office in 1974, President Ford signed the Housing and Community Development Act, which abolished categorical, purpose-specific grants and replaced them with a block-grant system that merged previously separate grant programs into lump sums, to be allocated on the basis of a formula. This program, mandated by Congress as part of a Housing Assistance Plan (HAP), required submission of a three-year development plan identifying "both short- and long-term community development objectives which have been developed in accordance with area-wide development planning." The act also required that the HAP assess the housing assistance needs of lower-income persons . . . residing in or expected to reside in the community [to] promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and [to] avoid undue concentrations of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low-income persons.

The act further indicated its primary objective as

the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. . . . The federal assistance is for the support of . . . reduction of the isolation of income groups within communities and geographical areas and the promotion of an increase in the diversity and vitality of neighborhoods through the spatial deconcentration of housing opportunities for persons of lower income.

This marked the first time that congressional action was directed toward economic as well as racial segregation.

Although the Community Development Block Grant programs required that the Housing Assistance Plan provide for the regional distribution of low- and moderate-income housing and primarily benefit low-income persons and racial minorities, the Ford administration in the mid-1970s did not implement these requirements. Community Development Block Grants were made to suburban communities free of these obligations; many of the communities then used these funds for entirely different purposes. Nor did HUD, under President Ford, implement its congressional mandate to disperse low-income housing projects, continuing instead to concentrate them in deteriorated areas of central cities.
This pattern became so blatant that district court orders were sought to require HUD to fulfill its congressionally mandated duty as required by the 1974 law. In Carla A. Hills (Secretary of HUD) v. Dorothy Gauthreaux et al. (1976), the U.S. Supreme Court found HUD guilty of violating the Constitution and federal statutes through “sanctioning and assisting [the Chicago Housing Authority’s] discriminatory program.”

Summing up the federal housing policies of most of the decade in a 619-page report released on 8 January 1978, the American Bar Association’s Advisory Commission on Housing and Urban Growth charged that the housing policies of federal, state, and local governments during previous administrations had overtly and covertly discriminated on the basis of race or income and had created and maintained purposefully exclusionary systems.

**Growth management and the environment**

In his 1970 State of the Union message, President Nixon stressed the need to preserve the natural environment. This emphasis was consistent with increasing public concern for clean air, clean water, and the protection of natural resources. During his time in office, Nixon established both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the President’s Council on Environmental Quality. The task of the council was to set policy to implement the provisions of the Environmental Policy Act of 1970. The major provision of this act required all government agencies and licensees to file an environmental impact statement, documenting the probable effects of the undertaking, each time new construction was contemplated.

During the 1970s, those who advocated opening suburban areas to the less affluent often collided with environmentalists, who propounded no-growth or slow-growth policies for the metropolitan fringes. Proposals for “growth management” for rapidly developing suburban areas were grounded not only in concern for the environment but also in the need to control municipal expenditures for capital improvements. In Golden v. Planning Board of the Town of Ramapo (1972), for example, the New York Court of Appeals upheld a zoning ordinance that made issuance of a development permit contingent on the presence of public utilities, drainage facilities, parks, road access, and firehouses. Although the community did intend to provide the required facilities in the future, new development could proceed promptly only if its location would not demand new facilities in advance of Ramapo’s schedule. The community developed an elaborate point system to determine under what circumstances a developer could be granted a permit. Ramapo reported in 1974 that this program had reduced housing starts by one half. In the 1980s, however, the program, which was so influential in its time, was abandoned because the community’s development situation had radically changed.

In the wake of Ramapo, many communities at the perimeter of metropolitan areas undertook no-growth or slow-growth programs. In 1971 Petaluma, California, in the San Francisco area, adopted an Official Statement of Development Policy that specified a geographically balanced strategy of new residential construction based on a quota of 500 building permits per year. In the previous year 2,000 had been granted. In 1975 the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (Construction Industry Association of Sonoma County v. City of Petaluma) upheld this process, stating that “the concept of the public welfare is sufficiently broad to uphold Petaluma’s desire to preserve its small-town character, its open spaces and low density of population and to grow at an orderly and deliberate pace.” Upon appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the case, upholding the circuit court opinion. In 1976, building on the growth control and performance zoning actions pioneered in Ramapo and in Petaluma, the California Supreme Court, in Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay v. City of Livermore,
upheld the denial of the issuance of all building permits for residential construction until certain specific performance criteria were met for the city as a whole.

In November 1976, as Jimmy Carter won election to the presidency of the United States, the voters of California approved the California Coastal Zone Act, by far the most far-reaching environmental legislation to be ratified by any of the thirty coastal states, creating a Coastal Zone Commission with broad powers to control the development of coastal areas. Concern for environmental issues was in the forefront of the American consciousness in 1976.

**Historic preservation**

As the end of the decade approached, historic preservation and rehabilitation, important causes that would be taken up by planners in communities across the country, were brought to public attention both by law and by example. In 1978 the completion of Boston’s historic Faneuil Hall marketplace adaptation, featuring restaurants and shops, created a successful new center for urban life in Boston. During the same year, in New York, the controversy surrounding the preservation of the Grand Central terminal was settled by the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Penn Central Transportation Co. et al. v. City of New York et al.*, the Court held that the company was not entitled to compensation when the terminal was designated a historic landmark; backed by the Court’s decision, New York City prohibited construction of a fifty-three-story office building over the terminal. Although all fifty states and more than five hundred municipalities had passed landmark preservation laws by 1978, until *Penn Central* many state and local governments had hesitated to designate prime commercial properties as landmarks for fear of future financial liability. The Supreme Court decision permitted states and localities to move ahead safely with landmark designations.

**Professional planning**

By 1977, sixty years after its founding at Kansas City in 1917, the American Institute of Planners had grown to over twelve thousand members in forty chapters, and there were over fifty degree-granting planning programs in American colleges and universities. In mid-1978, the members of the American Institute
of Planners and the members of the American Society of Planning Officials voted to consolidate into a single organization—the American Planning Association (APA). At this time, the new association has a membership of about twenty thousand planning commissioners, professionals, students, and interested citizens.

Since 1980

The 1980 Census reported 226.5 million Americans, 76 percent living in metropolitan areas. Yet, 48 of the 100 largest American cities lost population between 1970 and 1980. St. Louis, which had been the fourth largest city in the United States at the beginning of the century, lost 27 percent of its population during that decade, the greatest decline of any American city. During the same decade, Chicago lost 600,000 people, primarily white families moving to suburban areas, and for the first time blacks and Hispanics composed more than half of the city's population.

In response to strong criticism by central-city community groups, HUD committed 90 percent of UDAG funds to neighborhood projects in the first two quarters of 1980. Just one month before the presidential election, President Carter signed into law the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, which expanded federal aid to low- and moderate-income housing programs by 30 percent. Under the Carter administration, CETA jobs increased 400 percent, 95 percent of which went to the disadvantaged population; furthermore, subsidized housing starts increased from 15,000 a year under the Ford administration to 265,000 a year under Carter.

Ronald Reagan was elected president in November 1980. During the campaign, Reagan faulted Carter's social programs, arguing that releasing free enterprise from regulation would solve the economic and social problems of America without government intervention. The first half of the 1980s under Reagan was characterized by a federal emphasis on deregulation and on local rather than national determination of priorities. National programs in support of customary public planning initiatives were in abeyance. Local planners found it increasingly necessary to develop and rely on state and local assistance for their programs and to form alliances with private-sector groups. Economic development programs had high priority for planners, and sophisticated fiscal devices began to be introduced into planning, such as computer-based local impact fees charged to private developers for the provision of infrastructure.

In March 1981, Representatives Jack Kemp and Robert Garcia introduced a bill (H.R. 7094) promoting "enterprise zones," a concept imported from England that provided various incentives to investors in industrial developments within certain depressed areas of central cities. Suspension of minimum wage requirements for enterprise zone residents was among the elements proposed. Although federal legislation authorizing designated enterprise zones died twice in congressional conference committees, the idea was taken up by a number of states. From 1982 to 1986, twenty-five states adopted enterprise zone legislation.

The Supreme Court's 1981 decision in the case of San Diego Gas and Electric Company v. City of San Diego suggested that an expansion of government liability might be in store: specifically, that government might be held liable for money damages for an unconstitutional temporary taking caused by excessive land use regulation.

Also in 1981, in Wilson and Voss v. County of McHenry, the Second District Court of Illinois upheld a zoning regulation that required a minimum one-quarter-square-mile lot in an agricultural zone, noting that the preservation of farmland is a valid public purpose and that the regulation was "reasonable," being based on a duly adopted comprehensive plan. The need to determine the "reasonableness" of public policy and regulation, particularly in light of the
possibility of public liability for the impact of policy decisions. Led in the early 1980s to a renewed interest in developing long-range, comprehensive plans. Where such plans existed, the wish to minimize municipal and personal liability encouraged adherence to them.

In 1981 the Section 8 housing subsidy program was terminated. That same year, American housing starts fell to a thirty-six-year low. The CETA jobs program was eliminated, as were many other categorical aid programs. Fiscal stress experienced by many American cities, including New York City's near-bankruptcy and Cleveland's default on bank loans, worsened in 1982. The national unemployment rate edged over 10 percent, and many firms in the steel, auto, and farm implement industries either closed or significantly cut back production. In 1982 President Reagan cut urban-directed programs by 10.6 percent, followed by another 8.1 percent in 1983. Federal cuts in urban aid forced cities to deal directly with a number of social problems. An increase in the number of homeless persons—resulting from a complex interaction of economic factors and public health decisions—posed a significant and difficult problem in many cities. Federal budget cuts in social services had negative effects primarily in the North and the Midwest, while increased military spending benefited primarily the Pacific Coast, Texas, and New England.

Community planning and development programs generally stagnated in the early 1980s, and many planning staffs were cut. In the Sun Belt, however, large-scale development continued to encourage widespread physical planning. In many ways, developments at the federal level in the early 1980s had the greatest effect on regional planning agencies. Their coordinating roles conflicted directly with the federal emphasis on decentralization, and their one major power, approval or disapproval of federal categorical grants, died with the onset of block grants and revenue sharing.

Between 1980 and 1982, 33 of the 100 largest American cities continued to lose population. In 1983, 178 million Americans lived in metropolitan areas, an increase of 6 million people in three years, while the population of most central cities stabilized or continued to decline. As the national unemployment rate reached approximately 9.6 percent and federally funded jobs and social support programs were curtailed, the number of Americans living in poverty increased. In midsummer 1983 the Census Board reported that in 1982 alone, 2.6 million people had been added to the number below the poverty line, that 15 percent of the population was below the poverty line, and that one of every two black children was living in poverty. Between 1981 and 1983, the Reagan administration had eliminated sixty-two urban grant programs, and 10 percent of the remaining programs had been combined into block grants whose purpose would be determined locally. Under the Carter administration, UDAG and CDBG programs generally had been targeted to disadvantaged residents of central cities. Under the Reagan administration, however, neighborhood programs in most cities were terminated or lost their federal funding; UDAG and CDBG funds were applied to hotels and office buildings in city centers.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), centerpiece of President Nixon's environmental program, languished during the early 1980s. In 1983 mismanagement of the EPA came to light amid charges of unethical conduct, including attempts to afford private industry special treatment in the toxic waste program. The assistant administrator of the EPA was fired and the head of the EPA resigned.

The appreciation for and economic use of historic resources continued to grow during the beginning of the 1980s. In New York City, phase one of a rejuvenated South Street Seaport opened in 1983, a re-creation of the old East River waterfront near Fulton Street projected to cost $351 million and to involve more than twenty-five buildings and a pier. St. Louis, in response to dramatic decline in the population of the central city, became a leader in the use of investment tax
credits to rehabilitate older buildings. In 1984 alone, $51 million was spent in St. Louis to renovate properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and another $55 million was spent on redeveloping historic districts in the city. The Rouse Company spent $135 million to rehabilitate St. Louis’s Union Terminal, transforming it into a festival marketplace and hotel.

In 1984 San Francisco demonstrated its commitment to historic preservation with a far-reaching new downtown plan and zoning ordinance. The ordinance proposed the transfer of development rights as an incentive to historic preservation, steering new development away from the historic downtown area to a
thirty-square-block "special development district" on South Market Street, far from the historic core of the city. The plan also included developer charges to support low- and moderate-income housing, a means of supporting housing that several other cities are attempting to incorporate into their plans and ordinances.

In his 1984 National Urban Policy Report, President Reagan reiterated his view that maintaining noninflationary growth, increasing state and local responsibilities, and encouraging public-private cooperation were the keys to dealing with urban problems. During the early and mid-1980s, planners focused on long-range physical planning for capital construction to ensure the least possible expenditure of now-scarce tax funds in the provision and operation of infrastructure. Projects originating in the private sector replaced broad social programs, and public-private partnerships, negotiation and arbitration, and consensus making became daily concerns of the planning community.

President Reagan was re-elected in November 1984. By 1985 there were 237.1 million Americans. Since 1980, 90 percent of the population growth had been in the West and the South. Metropolitan areas continued to grow at a faster rate than the rest of the country, central-city populations continued to decline, and 35.3 million Americans lived in poverty.

Conclusion

Planning for American urban settlements is as old as the settlements themselves. The physical form of cities was of great concern to the founding fathers, who carefully set down those community forms they believed most conducive to realizing functional and humanly self-fulfilling settlements. Although the industrialism and massive immigration of the nineteenth century seriously compounded America's urban problems when the country was politically least capable of coping with them, the nineteenth century saw significant accomplishments in the development of large city parks, the first attempts to control the worst housing conditions, the beginning of planned suburbs, the development of mass transit and commuter railroads, and, at the end of the century, the first federal government programs and legal authorities designated to deal with urban development problems.

The years from 1900 to 1920 saw the advent of the automobile as a major factor in American cities, the birth of the planning profession in the creation of the American City Planning Institute (subsequently the American Institute of Planners and now the American Institute of Certified Planners), the development and expansion of land use zoning and comprehensive zoning, the formation of the first official citizen planning commissions, and the creation of civic centers and long-range city plans. The most notable city plan by far was Daniel Burnham's bold proposal for Chicago (1909), which called for a metropolitan approach to planning.

The years of prosperity and depression, 1920 to 1940, saw the rapid spread of comprehensive zoning (sanctioned unequivocally by the Supreme Court) and land subdivision controls. The extraordinary growth in automobile production, along with the growth of streets and highways, created new land development problems for the still-new planning field. During the 1920s several model housing developments were undertaken, including Sunnyside, New York, and Radburn, New Jersey, which influenced much of the land development in this country for years to come. Federal laws passed in 1934 and 1937 created the basis for public housing in America and, through the Federal Housing Administration, for mortgage insurance programs that established the standards for the millions of single-family detached houses that were to be built in suburban America after World War II.

After the war the nation saw a vast expansion of suburban housing, the establishment of planning as an ongoing activity of local governments, the devel-
opment of more technically refined zoning and subdivision controls, a significant
growth in the number of planning schools, large-scale urban renewal activities,
extensive citizen participation, and the development of the interstate highway
system.

In the 1980s, with decreased financial resources and the elimination of federal
support for city and regional planning, the practice of planning is once again in
competition for local support dollars and is being sold locally on its value in
creating a functionally and economically efficient community system for the
delivery of needed goods and services at the lowest community costs for capital
construction and operations. Urban and regional planners are at work across
the entire range of local governments, especially in management and finance,
as they deal with critical social, functional, and economic development issues.
The constantly changing world of the planners, in a professional and functional
sense, is set forth in the rest of this book to help meet the changing needs of
urban development for America in the 1990s.

1931).