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## It Takes a Region

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## It Takes a Region

### **Cover Page Footnote**

The author would like to thank the staff at PolicyLink, especially Judith Bell and Janet Dewart Bell.

# IT TAKES A REGION

*Angela Glover Blackwell\**

## INTRODUCTION

American cities, reeling from the impact of relentless suburbanization, have taken a beating in recent decades. So, too, have many African Americans who fifty years ago, hoping to build a better life, left the South in large numbers and began settling in these cities. Recent dramatic demographic changes in cities and older suburbs brought on by immigration and shifting settlement patterns have added a new complexity to the regional picture.<sup>1</sup>

While low-income communities and communities of color suffer the most negative consequences of regional inequity, the impacts of uneven and unhealthy development patterns create widespread problems. Auto-oriented sprawl is causing long, crowded commutes and more driving, which leads to worsening air pollution and worry among single-parent and two-worker families about stealing parental time from children. Farmland and open space are being steadily eaten up by the continuous spread of businesses and housing beyond the boundaries of the central city and inner suburbs into more distant rural areas.

Growing awareness regarding the fallout of sprawl is signaling a new round of debates regarding the future of metropolitan regions. This debate is being taken up by groups with diverse interests ranging from advocates for smart growth who see revitalization of cities and older suburbs as a way to contain sprawl and preserve open space, to mayors and county administrators who wish to connect cities to the growing prosperity of surrounding regions, to advocates for equal opportunity and full inclusion who see a direct connection between growing inequity and regional development patterns.

Does the policy agenda emerging from the push for smart growth reach the needs of people of color being left behind by met-

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1. See *infra* Part II.

ropolitan development patterns? Is something more or different required to achieve regional equity? After exploring these and other questions, this article proposes equitable development as an action and policy agenda that can align multiple interests into a sustainable movement for positive change.

### I. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Increasingly, people's life chances are determined by where they live.<sup>2</sup>

One of the more troubling urban trends of the '70s and '80s was the concentration of poverty in America's inner cities.<sup>3</sup> During these decades, as whites continued their march from cities to the suburbs, middle-class African Americans spread out within cities to areas that had previously been inaccessible because of discrimination.<sup>4</sup> Surprisingly, the expanded housing opportunities that had been sought under the banner of racial progress turned into racial disaster for many African Americans left behind in once vibrant, economically integrated neighborhoods that had turned into communities in which almost everyone was poor.

This resulting isolation of poor African Americans from the more politically sophisticated and connected African Americans made these neighborhoods and residents extremely vulnerable to neglect and the full impact of discrimination and racism.<sup>5</sup> Further, the likelihood of obtaining good jobs diminished as those living in concentrated poverty became increasingly isolated from natural job networks—the connection to people who are working and can provide information about and access to job opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Adding to this mix was the steady decline in inner-city public schools and the growing trade in drugs as legitimate work opportunities disappeared.<sup>7</sup>

This period also ushered in an ascendance of African Americans into positions of political power, especially in cities. Unfortunately, this was accompanied by an exodus of retail establishments, business headquarters, and traditional civic leaders to the suburbs. Adding to this the devastation caused by the disappearance of

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2. See generally, WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON, *THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED: THE INNER CITY, THE UNDERCLASS, AND PUBLIC POLICY* (1987).

3. *Id.* at 3-19.

4. *Id.*

5. WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON, *WHEN WORK DISAPPEARS* 25-50 (1996).

6. *Id.*

7. *Id.*

manufacturing jobs, cities were left in decline, with shrinking tax bases and an abundance of residents requiring expensive services.<sup>8</sup> By the late 1980s sociologists and others were discussing the emergence of a “permanent underclass” and, despite the heroic efforts of local leaders and community builders, conditions caused by persistent poverty and high unemployment became self-reproducing.<sup>9</sup> Whole cities began to be thought of as unsafe, poverty ridden, and undesirable. Naturally, many who could move to places with less strain and stigma did just that, further exacerbating the situation.

Just outside of these declining cities was robust expansion into the suburbs: spacious houses, new state-of-the-art school buildings, numerous strip malls, shiny enclosed shopping centers, and miles and miles of highways connecting suburbanites to city jobs by tearing through urban neighborhoods and winding into the steadily sprawling suburban reaches. More recently, these highways completely bypass the cities and connect suburb to suburb as new business centers develop in suburban locations. Was all of this just the invisible hand of the free market?

Sprawl and regional inequity are not natural results of a free market economy. Rather, they are direct results of public policies that have provided incentives for suburban growth at the expense of central cities and older suburbs and their low-income residents. It was all made possible with the vast assistance of federal laws, policies, and resources, such as the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, which provided billions for roads and little for public transit; the Federal Housing Administration (“FHA”),<sup>10</sup> which insured low-interest mortgages to white, middle-class households (for twenty years these mortgages were offered on a race-restricted basis); and “Urban Renewal,” which in the name of downtown revitalization physically divided and damaged many inner-city neighborhoods.<sup>11</sup> Complementing these policies were other developments that helped advance the rapid decline of cities, such as the beginning of mass-produced suburban tract houses, like Levittown, which made it cheaper for families to buy homes in the suburbs than to rent apartments in the city; continuing racial discrimination in education, housing, and employment, which kept many African Ameri-

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8. *Id.*

9. *Id.*

10. See Daniel Hutch, *The Rationale for Including Disadvantaged Communities in the Smart Growth Metropolitan Development Framework*, 20 YALE L. & POL’Y REV. 353, 358 (2002).

11. *Id.* at 362.

cans from making progress and produced extreme racial tension that laid the foundation for the urban riots of the 1960s, further damaging the image of cities.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-1980s racial inequality in the United States was so deeply embedded in housing patterns that literally where one lived could stand as a proxy for life opportunity. The past twenty years have seen only a further solidification of this phenomenon. In communities of inner-city, concentrated poverty, the children attend schools that fail to equip them with the skills needed to become contributing members of society. Adults in these communities often lack the skills required for good jobs, and those that have the skills too often find that the jobs they could get are too distant from their homes, a situation made worse by the absence of public transit. In *Sprawl as a Civil Rights Issue: A Mayor's Reflections*, William A. Johnson, Jr., Mayor of Rochester, New York, notes that the City of Cleveland contains 80% of the metropolitan area's African-American poor while 80% of the entry-level jobs are in the suburbs.<sup>13</sup> In fact, data from the 2000 Census reveals that, though there was a slight reduction in the physical isolation of African Americans from jobs, this group "remains the most segregated racial/ethnic group from jobs."<sup>14</sup>

The criminal activity and the poor relationships with law enforcement cause many young men in these communities to have criminal records, which further decrease opportunities for meaningful employment.<sup>15</sup> There is also a growing awareness that these

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12. Robert Fishman, *The American Metropolis at Century's End: Past and Future Influences*, 11 FANNIE MAE FOUND. SURV. 2000, at 200-07.

13. William A. Johnson, Jr., George Washington Univ. Ctr. on Sustainable Growth, *Sprawl as a Civil Rights Issue: A Mayor's Reflections*, 2002, at 5, available at [http://www.growingsensibly.org/cmapdfs/GS\\_fall2002.pdf](http://www.growingsensibly.org/cmapdfs/GS_fall2002.pdf) (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

14. Steven Raphael & Michael A. Stoll, Brookings Inst., *Modest Progress: The Narrowing Spatial Mismatch Between Blacks and Jobs in the 1990s*, Dec. 2002, available at [http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/publications/Raphael\\_Stoll\\_spatial\\_mismatch.pdf](http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/publications/Raphael_Stoll_spatial_mismatch.pdf) (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

15. ANGELA GLOVER BLACKWELL ET AL., SEARCHING FOR THE UNCOMMON COMMON GROUND: NEW DIMENSIONS ON RACE IN AMERICA 179 (2002). The United States has the highest rate of imprisonment in the world—surpassing Russia, the only other country that comes close to rivaling the U.S. level. There is a definite hue to those imprisoned. The nation's capital leads the states with the highest rate: a black man is forty-nine times more likely than a white man to be in prison. See [http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/usa/Rcedrg00-01.htm#P149\\_24292](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/usa/Rcedrg00-01.htm#P149_24292) (last visited Aug. 25, 2004). But the high rates of incarceration are not due solely to proximity to, or participation in, crime. There is a racial bias in the criminal justice system as borne out by the following: analyzing national and state data, researchers have recently determined that while African Americans represent 15% of those below the age of eighteen, they are 26% of all the young arrested, 46% of those detained in juvenile jails,

neighborhoods contribute to poor health as well, based on the absence of access to fresh fruits and vegetables, because there are no full-service grocery stores in the neighborhoods, the presence of abandoned toxic sites, and over-exposure to conditions and substances that are asthma triggers.<sup>16</sup> In essence, development patterns have continued extreme inequality for poor people of color in this country, even as the passage of civil rights laws opened doors that allowed for extraordinary progress and accomplishments by many people of color who managed to overcome or live outside of these neglected areas.

## II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE EMERGE

Fortunately, a number of factors that are simultaneously emerging could open a space for addressing the inequality that has been associated with the steady sprawling of the past fifty years. These trends include: the changing demographics including large numbers of immigrants entering cities and older suburbs; a reduction in the numbers of people living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty; growing poverty in the suburbs; a renewed interest in living in cities on the part of young professionals and empty nesters; and the emergence of movements for smart growth and regional equity.

The 2000 Census has the country talking and thinking about the increased numbers of immigrants. As the country ponders the implications of a United States in which there is no majority racial or ethnic group, there may be increased concern about how to invest in promoting the well-being of new arrivals so that they can be fully contributing members of society. This will require paying more attention to the schools and services in the places where recent immigrants live, which turn out to be, in many cases, the same

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and 58% of all juveniles sent to adult prison. See Eileen Poe-Yamagata & Michael A. Jones, *Building Blocks for Youth, And Justice for Some*, 2000, available at <http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004). Young white men charged with violent offenses have an average imprisonment of 193 days after trial; for African-American and Latino youth, the figures are 254 and 305 days, respectively. See Manning Marable, *Facing the Demon Head On: Institutional Racism and the Prison Industrial Complex*, 22 *SOUTHERN CHANGES* 3 (2000). Similarly, black adults receive longer sentences than whites for convictions for the same crime, even when whites have more past offenses. The war on drugs has also played a role in the darkening of the state prison population. The structure of criminal enforcement tends to reinforce the arrest pattern by targeting the low-income neighborhoods where the drug trade may flourish rather than the suburban areas (or university campuses) where many consumers reside.

16. PolicyLink, *Reducing Health Disparities Through a Focus on Communities* (2002).

places where African Americans and other poor struggling families reside. The number of Latinos has surpassed that of African Americans. Further, the prediction is that the next forty years will produce a significant change in the racial and ethnic make-up of this country. The shift is already visible in California, as it became the first state in the nation without a majority racial or ethnic population group. According to the 2000 Census, 47% of state residents are non-Hispanic white, 32% are Hispanic, 11% are Asian and Pacific Islander, 6% are African American, and 1% are American Indian.<sup>17</sup> Immigration has played a very strong role in California's changing demographics. In 1990, 22% of the state's population was foreign-born, and by 2000, this share had risen to 26%.<sup>18</sup> As will be discussed later, in California many of these immigrants are poor and living in communities of concentrated poverty.

The Census also revealed that, for the first time in decades, the number of Americans living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty declined in the 1990s.<sup>19</sup> Some of the greatest declines were in the Midwest, with Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis showing stunning percentage drops of 74.4, 43.1, and 35.5%, respectively.<sup>20</sup> The national decline was 24%.<sup>21</sup> The South too showed big drops, but the news is not all good, as concentrated poverty dropped only slightly in the Northeast and actually went up in the West—the latter clearly a result of recent immigrant poverty in California—a very real concern in terms of what it portends for the future of these newer arrivals.

The changes in inner-city, concentrated poverty are promising, but if it becomes no more than shuffle board, with inner-city residents seeking opportunity by leaving decaying neighborhoods only to move to other neighborhoods that are entering decline, the future could hold more disappointment. It is worth noting that, while concentrated poverty is declining in some cities, it is increasing in some suburban communities, particularly the one hundred largest metropolitan areas. From 1980 to 2000 there was a 121% increase in the number of poor residents (to 1.07 million) living in

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17. 2000 U.S. Census, available at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>.

18. Laura E. Hill & Joseph M. Hayes, *California's Newest Immigrants*, 5 PUB. POL'Y INST. OF CAL. 1, 2 (2003).

19. 2000 U.S. Census, available at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.*



suburban communities of concentrated poverty.<sup>22</sup> This accompanies the much-talked-about sharp increases in the numbers of Asian, Latino, and African Americans living in the suburbs. Fifty-four percent of all U.S. Latinos now reside in the suburbs; the Latino suburban population grew 71% in the 1990s.<sup>23</sup> Much of this increase is tied to improved economic circumstances for the families. In the case of older inner-ring suburbs, however, many of the new arrivals are poor or working poor and have made the logical choice to try to find a better neighborhood in which to raise their families, but have unknowingly moved to an area that is beginning to experience the neglect and abandonment that has devastated the nation's inner cities.<sup>24</sup>

Yet another interesting development during the past few years has been gentrification—the process of neighborhood change that results in the replacement of lower-income residents with higher-income ones. Most notably this has been seen in full force in San Francisco, Boston, and Chicago and less rapidly, but visible, in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and Denver. While it is difficult to gather accurate data on the rates of gentrification, or on those who are moving into once neglected neighborhoods, there is enough anecdotal information and examples of clearly transformed neighborhoods to cite this as a slow-moving development.<sup>25</sup> As more children of baby boomers go off to college or independence, freeing their parents to abandon suburban living, and younger adults postpone child bearing and spend time in the cities, this could become a larger trend. The result could produce more concern about cities and conditions therein.

These trends and developments easily fit with the concerns of the smart growth movement. The past decade has seen a conscious focus on addressing the negative impact of thoughtless development patterns that have led to abandonment of cities, and the huge infrastructure investments that they represent, as America has stretched out into ever more distant locations. This sprawl has cost

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22. Kathryn L.S. Pettit & G. Thomas Kingsley, *Concentrated Poverty: A Change in Course*, URB. INST., 2003, at 4, available at [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310790\\_NCUA2.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310790_NCUA2.pdf) (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

23. Brookings Inst., Pew Hispanic Ctr, *Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations*, 2002, at 1.

24. WILLIAM H. HUDNET III, *HALFWAY TO EVERYWHERE: A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'S FIRST-TIER SUBURBS* 24-34 (2004).

25. Brookings Inst., *Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A primer on gentrification and Policy Choices*, 2001 available at <http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/gentrification/gentrification.pdf> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

billions in new investments in highways, roads, sewers, schools, and other new infrastructure.<sup>26</sup> There has also been a huge loss of open space and farmland, leaving many to conclude that this pattern of development is not sustainable.<sup>27</sup> Environmentalists and planners have joined forces with concerned residents and elected officials to promote more thoughtful development, termed “smart growth.” The advocates also recognize that the nation must think more in terms of the well-being of regions, since, in the global economy, survival of cities and suburbs will depend on the economic competitiveness of the region.<sup>28</sup>

In *Civil Revolutionaries: Igniting the Passion for Change in America's Communities*, Douglas Henton et al.—in promoting more regional awareness—cites Neal Peirce, Curtis Johnson, and John Hall as “having made a strong case for the growing importance of regions in the global economy.”<sup>29</sup> In *In Citistates: How Urban America Can Prosper in a Competitive World*, the authors point out that regional citistates must be a central focus for leadership and policy because metropolitan areas are the real labor markets, the functioning economic communities, the commute shed, and the environmental basins.<sup>30</sup>

Charles Lyons, President of the National League of Cities (“NLC”), asserts the need for thinking beyond the inefficiency of fragmented governance to looking at the problems this fragmentation has produced for those left behind.<sup>31</sup> He identifies the human suffering and promotes a focus on achieving regional equity. In a futures report by the NLC, entitled “Divided We Fall: Inequality and the Future of America's Cities and Towns,” Mr. Lyons discusses “extreme inequalities based on race, class and geography.”<sup>32</sup> The NLC believes that our communities need to “act regionally to reduce barriers to opportunity” and actively reach out to “advocate for state and federal policies to level the playing field.”<sup>33</sup>

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26. *Id.*

27. *Id.*

28. MANUEL PASTOR, JR. ET AL., REGIONS THAT WORK 155-182 (2000).

29. DOUGLAS HENTON ET AL., CIVIC REVOLUTIONARIES: IGNITING THE PASSION FOR CHANGE IN AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES 10 (2004).

30. NEIL R. PEIRCE ET AL., IN CITISTATES: HOW URBAN AMERICA CAN PROSPER IN A COMPETITIVE WORLD 35-37 (1994).

31. Charles Lyons, Presentation at the Congressional City Conference, Mar. 7, 2004. The presentation outlines the NLC's 2003 Futures Report, *Divided We Fall: Inequality and the Future of America's Cities and Towns* [hereinafter NLC].

32. NLC, *supra* note 31.

33. *Id.*

Another emerging opportunity is regional equity, which entails giving children and families of all races and classes the best possible environment in which to live. Advancing regional equity involves reducing social and economic disparities among individuals, social groups, neighborhoods, and local jurisdictions within a metropolitan area.<sup>34</sup>

Cities and suburbs are not distinct entities but are parts of a whole. Regional equity moves toward an inclusive development process. Regional equity involves:

Providing economic opportunity and living-wage jobs for all residents.

Building healthy, mixed-income neighborhoods with sufficient affordable housing distributed throughout the region.

Fostering strong civic engagement and responsive institutions to ensure that all residents have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Providing low-income residents with the opportunity to build assets and become beneficiaries of reinvestment and positive change in their community.

Fostering greater cooperation to promote a broader tax base and to have a fair distribution of resources for quality schools and other public services.

The confluence of events and concerns described above—changing demographics, declining concentrated poverty, growing poverty in the suburbs, gentrifying neighborhoods, threats to the environment, and diminishing quality of life due to commutes—have created fertile ground for groups, coalitions, and concerned individuals to organize and begin to advocate for change. The emerging movements for smart growth and regional equity have much in common. Most, however, have concluded that the challenges faced by low-income communities of color must be specifically addressed, and it is unrealistic to expect that merely changing development patterns without targeted attention on the needs of these groups will reverse the existing inequity. Fortunately, local activists are demonstrating that development can be done differently. The next section will give some examples of actions that are being taken.

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34. See PASTOR ET AL., *supra* note 28, at 155–182.

### III. COMMUNITY-BASED REGIONALISM AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

The emergence of the region—rather than the city—as the dominant economic and social geographic unit has led advocates for social change to think and act regionally. This “community based regionalism” is premised on the understanding that the future of low-income communities is tied to broader regional, social, political, and economic factors. Community actors are evolving their strategies and tactics in pragmatic and strategic ways to meet the reality of community and regional development processes.

The following examples show: inner-city communities creating destination points around transit stops and refusing to be used as switching stations for suburban commuters just passing through on their way to and from jobs; advocates promoting region-wide housing affordability so that families can more easily take advantage of regional opportunity; efforts to connect inner-city residents to regional job opportunities; and one community’s attempt to create a livable neighborhood in the inner city by providing needed services and wealth-building and entrepreneurial opportunities.<sup>35</sup>

#### A. Chicago’s West Garfield Park Neighborhood

Bethel New Life, a faith-based community development corporation (“CDC”), has spearheaded the development of a \$4 million, 23,000-square-foot Transit Center in the low-income West Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago.<sup>36</sup> The impetus for the Transit Center originated in 1992 when the Chicago Transit Authority announced plans to close the local station and the entire Green Line. Community leaders convinced the Authority to modernize the line instead; in 1993 the Authority introduced a \$300 million capital project to rebuild the Green Line. In 2002, six years after the re-opening of the Green Line, the average weekday ridership had increased by 19% over the pre-rehabilitation ridership.<sup>37</sup>

The Transit Center is designed to coordinate economic investment around transit stops with the needs of the surrounding low-

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35. See *infra* Parts III.A-D.

36. See Local Initiatives Support Corporation, *Growing Smart Neighborhoods: Information, Models and Trends for Community Developers*, Apr. 2002 [hereinafter *Growing Smart Neighborhoods*], available at [http://www.lisc.org/resources/assets/asset\\_upload\\_file702\\_810.pdf](http://www.lisc.org/resources/assets/asset_upload_file702_810.pdf) (last visited Sept. 12, 2004).

37. See CTA Press Releases, *Ridership Gains Reflect Improved Green Line Service*, May 29, 2002, available at <http://www.transitchicago.com/news/archpress.wu?action=displayarticledetail&articleid=110733> (last visited Sept. 12, 2004).

income community. It will include shops and restaurants, a day-care center (which will eventually include around-the-clock and weekend care for those families not working regular business hours), an employment office, and a walkway that connects the building to the Lake Pulaski station.<sup>38</sup> It will produce some of its own energy with photovoltaic generators, and it is designed to serve the local neighborhood as well as commuters passing by on the rail line. The project also calls for fifty units of affordable single-family and multifamily homes to be built one block from the rail station and ten minutes from an elementary and a middle school.<sup>39</sup>

### B. Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning is a tool that can put a good place to live within the reach of a broad cross-section of residents. It requires developers to make a percentage of housing units in new residential developments available to low and moderate-income households.<sup>40</sup> In return, developers receive nonmonetary compensation—in the form of density bonuses, zoning variances, and/or expedited permits—that reduce construction costs.<sup>41</sup>

A number of variations on inclusionary zoning—both at the state and local levels—are being implemented across the United States.

Statewide inclusionary policies are a promising model for achieving greater scale in the production of affordable housing and greater equity among jurisdictions in the supply of affordable housing. Some states have mandatory provisions (for example New Jersey), while others have voluntary programs, such as in Minnesota. In California, statewide legislation requires inclusionary zoning in all redevelopment areas.

At the local level, Montgomery County, Maryland's ordinance requires developers of fifty units or more to set aside from 12.5 to 15% of units as affordable, in exchange for a density bonus of up to

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38. Keith Schneider, *Making Tough Streets a Little Friendlier: Bethel New Life Transforms Chicago's West Side*, GREAT LAKES BULLETIN NEWS SERVICE, May 15, 2002, available at <http://www.mlui.org/growthmanagement/fullarticle.asp?fileid=15181> (last visited Sept. 12, 2004).

39. See *Growing Smart Neighborhoods*, *supra* note 36.

40. PETER CALTHORPE, *THE REGIONAL CITY: PLANNING FOR THE END OF SPRAWL* 76-78 (2001).

41. *Id.*

22%.<sup>42</sup> Inclusionary zoning in Boulder, Colorado, requires that at least 20% of total units must be affordable for all new residential developments.<sup>43</sup> Developers may meet these requirements with off-site units, or land or cash donations. Santa Fe's inclusionary zoning law ties affordable housing requirements to the prices of market rate units. Areas with higher market rate housing face steeper affordable housing requirements. A number of community organizations are launching campaigns to get this effective policy in place in their jurisdictions.

### C. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative

In 1995, The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched the Jobs Initiative, an eight-year, six-site demonstration project.<sup>44</sup> The Jobs Initiative seeks to link welfare recipients and other low-income job seekers to jobs that pay good wages and offer opportunities for career advancement.<sup>45</sup>

The six sites' regional economies range from robust to stagnant. Common to each Jobs Initiative site is the fact that employment growth has been increasingly concentrated within the suburbs. Accordingly, job access is a pressing issue for inner-city residents of these communities. All six sites have close working partnerships with employers and are building case management systems to assist low-income workers once they become employed.

Between 1997 and 2000, the participating sites served almost 10,000 job seekers and placed nearly half into jobs averaging \$9.15 per hour.<sup>46</sup> More than half of those placed into jobs were still working twelve months later. Sites include Denver, New Orleans, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Milwaukee.

### D. Market Creek Plaza

Market Creek Plaza is a twenty acre, mixed-use commercial and cultural center in the heart of one of San Diego's most ethnically

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42. See *Montgomery County, Maryland, Overview of Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program (MPDU)*, available at <http://www.mc-mncppc.org/research/analysis/housing/affordable/mpdu.shtm> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

43. See POLICYLINK, *Inclusionary Zoning: Legislation and Ordinances, Boulder, CO*, available at <http://www.policylink.org/EDTK/IZ/resources.html> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

44. See generally ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION, *The Jobs Initiative*, at <http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/jobsinitiative/index.htm> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.*

diverse and most distressed urban neighborhoods.<sup>47</sup> It is anchored by a grocery store and includes multicultural restaurants, retail, office space, and a 500-seat, open-air amphitheater.<sup>48</sup>

A product of an extensive community planning process, Market Creek is among the nation's first real estate development projects that will be owned by community residents. It is anticipated that community residents will have the opportunity to transition from stakeholders to stockholders in the development. To facilitate this transition, a limited liability corporation is being set up to sell shares (units) directly to residents.

Neighborhood investors will be included as a special class of stockholders (members). The Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation<sup>49</sup> has provided comprehensive support for this resident ownership strategy—providing training in the economics of investment, to maximize the skills, knowledge, and information access of resident investors and supporting the establishment of several related entities, to expand community asset development and capacity building in connection with this project.

Each of the preceding examples is guided by the principles of equitable development:

**INTEGRATE PEOPLE-AND PLACE-FOCUSED STRATEGIES.** Community and regional development and revitalization policies and practices must integrate people-focused strategies—efforts that support community residents and families—with place-focused strategies—those that support local businesses and nonprofit institutions and that stabilize the neighborhood environment. This integrated approach is necessary to reduce unintended negative consequences—such as displacement—for low-income populations.

**REDUCE LOCAL AND REGIONAL DISPARITIES.** Win-win solutions must be crafted that simultaneously improve outcomes for low-income communities and build healthy metropolitan regions. Metropolitan areas that pay systematic attention to both regional growth and central-city poverty issues are most likely to be competitive for national and international economic opportunities.

**PROMOTE “DOUBLE BOTTOM-LINE” INVESTMENTS.** Public and private investments in low-income communities are key for revi-

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47. See Andrew T. Allen & Andrew Narwood, *Land Use Modification in an Urban Setting*, UNIV. OF SAN DIEGO, SCH. OF BUS. ADMIN., at 3-7 (working paper) available at <http://www.ersa.org/ersaconfs/ersa03/cdrom/papers/58.pdf> (last visited Aug. 25, 2004).

48. *Id.*

49. *Id.*

talization, but to reduce poverty these investments must produce a “double bottom line: (1) financial returns for investors and (2) community benefits for residents (e.g., jobs, homes, and businesses).

**ENSURE MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP, AND OWNERSHIP.** Participation of community residents and organizations in planning and development provides community members with a direct stake in ensuring the success of revitalization efforts. Community residents and organizations must also have access to the tools, knowledge, and resources that can guarantee meaningful participation in the development process.<sup>50</sup>

Equitable development provides the tools, strategies, and policies for sustainable change. It asks “who benefits?” and then finds the answer that ensures that everyone does, including low-income communities and residents. Equitable development is grounded in community building and participation; it embraces complexity and comprehensiveness and promotes inclusion through new strategies and policies.

As an action and policy agenda, equitable development is responsive to the emerging opportunities discussed above. It finally brings the needs of people—especially the most vulnerable—directly into the analysis and planning by demanding a dual focus on the needs of people and physical improvement of place. This focus requires that investments are made so that existing residents are not displaced by revitalization efforts. But it also opens the door to move people to opportunity when there are no immediate prospects for improvement.

In communities where there is still neighborhood vitality, but inadequate services, equitable development would seek to attract the desired services—like grocery stores—but do it in a way that produces a double bottom line—profits for investors but employment and wealth-building opportunities for residents.<sup>51</sup>

The Chicago transit village is an example of reducing regional disparities by leveraging transportation dollars to address the needs of local residents while serving the needs of commuters.<sup>52</sup> This approach is at the heart of advancing development strategies that reduce local and regional disparities. The needs of suburban

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50. POLICYLINK, *Promoting Regional Equity: A Framing Paper*, 2002, at 7 [hereinafter *Promoting Regional Equity*].

51. POLICYLINK *Sharing the Wealth: Resident Ownership Mechanisms*, 2001, at 5 [hereinafter *Sharing the Wealth*].

52. *Id.*



commuters would not have to be at odds with those of inner-city residents; both can be effectively addressed once the template of equitable development is applied.

#### IV. POLICY IS KEY

Sustainable progress ultimately centers upon policy. As Robert D. Bullard suggests:

[C]ity, county, state, and federal officials need to work cooperatively to arrest [regional] traffic congestion, air quality problems, declining urban infrastructure, and growing social and economic disparities between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' . . . The solution will take time. Public and private interests—working together and across political, geographic, class, and racial boundaries—can solve this problem.<sup>53</sup>

Sprawl expert John A. Powell picks up on that point, urging community stakeholders to action:

These are your monies, your public resources used to push people farther from the city. . . . We are sucking the resources out of the central city. . . . Jobs are moving further out; opportunities are moving out. . . . Fundamentally these are moral and spiritual problems. The challenge . . . is to figure out how to work together.<sup>54</sup>

Only through policy can practice become consistent, comprehensive, and connected.

For example, recall that the items that were identified as contributing to suburbanization and disadvantaging cities and city residents were either policy initiatives or heavily influenced by policy; the 1956 Interstate Highway Act that subsidized a major infrastructure investment related to sprawl (roads and highways) and ensured the dominance of the automobile by covering 90% of the cost of new highways, but a smaller percentage of mass transit; and the FHA mortgage financing that contributed to suburban expansion, wealth creation that helped build the white middle class (most wealth comes from home ownership in America), and continued discrimination in housing and wealth building for African Americans.<sup>55</sup> These policies—good, bad, and neutral—were the springboard for drastic change in America.

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53. *SPRAWL CITY: RACE, POLITICS, AND PLANNING IN ATLANTA* 16 (Robert D. Bullard et al. eds., 2000).

54. Alvin Bavyly, *Speaker tells how sprawl has abetted segregation*, KANSAS CITY STAR, June 22, 2003, at B2.

55. *Sharing the Wealth*, *supra* note 51, at 5.

Likewise, an equitable development policy agenda could leverage regional and local development to promote full inclusion and participation.

Such an agenda could:

CREATE PATHWAYS FOR RESIDENTS OF LOW-INCOME/LOW-WEALTH NEIGHBORHOODS TO DIRECTLY BENEFIT FROM REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT by negotiating with developers of major commercial real estate projects to secure community benefits and institutionalize these community benefits into policy; by building coalitions to pass local living wage ordinances; and by undertaking campaigns to ban toxic facilities from low-income communities of color.

SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE STATE AND REGIONAL LEVELS TO REDUCE DISPARITIES ARISING FROM SPRAWL AND INEQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS by enacting legislation to hold publicly subsidized economic development projects accountable; by promoting “fix-it-first” state transportation policies rather than policies to build roads and highways; by promoting state formulas for more equitable siting of new schools to reduce sprawl, strengthen neighborhoods, and enhance equal educational opportunity; by aggressively pursuing the establishment of inclusionary zoning laws and other fair share and mixed-income housing strategies; and exploring regional tax base sharing and regional governance options.

LEVERAGE NATIONAL LEGISLATION TO PROMOTE REGIONAL EQUITY by urging the Congress to reauthorize the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century; and by advocating for the passage and full enactment of the National Housing Trust Fund.<sup>56</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Today, we have a golden opportunity to finally make the right choices, to reverse the mistakes of the past fifty years—all by aiming for the uncommon common ground.

Consider that many members of the suburban majority are growing frustrated with the forces that took them to the outer edges of urban areas. Many are fed up with long commutes, with traffic gridlock at all hours of the day, with the lack of affordable housing near where they work, with the inability to walk anywhere, with the health problems that result from auto dependency. Some are

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56. *Promoting Regional Equity*, *supra* note 50, at 27–28.

tired of the sterility of suburban life and long for the vibrancy of mixed-income urban neighborhoods.

A growing number are even starting to recognize that a body cannot live without a heart, that if the urban core dies, the suburbs will decay as well.

Our older inner-ring suburbs now confront many of the problems once confined to inner cities. They are experiencing growing concentrations of poverty, their schools are facing new challenges, their services are being stretched thin, and their concerns about the lack of regional equity mirror those in urban neighborhoods.

At PolicyLink, we are working vigorously to strengthen our communities and to achieve both diversity and justice, by lifting up what works. Fortunately, there are many innovative strategies that are working very well and spread across America.

For example, affordable housing trust funds and community land trust funds are proving successful in providing low-wealth families good places to live and homeownership opportunities in mixed-income and gentrifying neighborhoods.

Inclusionary zoning—requirements or incentives to include affordable housing in all new developments—is helping to reduce concentrated poverty by making it possible for low-wealth families to live in higher-income areas.

These are the kinds of innovative approaches that produce double bottom-line returns—that ensure that people both contribute to and benefit from economic activity, that integrate people-based and place-based strategies lifting up those left behind into one holistic, seamless response, that strengthen our democracy by giving voice to disenfranchised communities, and that empower us to create a nation in which diversity is reflected at all levels of the decision-making process and social justice prevails.

And to make all of this happen, it does, indeed, take a region.

