A Lexicon of
Suburban Neologisms
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A

adaptive reuse: To use or redevelop an older structure or site that no longer serves its original purpose.

This process usually involves significant remodeling and restoration, but is considered an ecological alternative to new construction or developing a greenfield location.

See also: cluster zoning, compact land use, infill, mixed-use development, smart growth

alligator
1: A real estate investment producing negative cash flow

This occurs when land is purchased by a developer, then divided into more subdivisions than are actually developed. "An alligator investment "eats" equity because it lives on a diet of principal, interest, and property tax payments but does not produce income."

2: A strip of tire tread found on the roadside

Trucker lingo for blown tires or tread scattered on the road.

3: A broad-snouted crocodilian that occasionally wanders into these new developments. Gators have also been found in the suburbs of Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Cleveland, where police suspect they were once kept as pets.


anchor store: The major store of a shopping center, typically located on the corner or end of a group of stores

Supermarkets generally anchor community centers, department stores in excess of one hundred thousand square feet anchor regional malls, and super-regional shopping centers may have three or more anchors. Initially, the broad appeal of department stores and supermarkets attracted a high volume of consumers, who would then patronize smaller stores that surrounded the anchors. With the gradual decline of department stores' popularity over the past ten to fifteen years and the concurrent success of the big box retail model, malls and other shopping centers have had to be re-anchored or risk becoming a dead mall.

See also: outparcel

asphalt nation: A synonym for the United States that emphasizes the degree to which automobiles and the paving, pollution, and congestion that accompany them are intrinsic to the American way of life

In the book Asphalt Nation, Jane Holtz Kay assesses the auto age and examines ways that lob-bies, policies, and trends have lead to America's car culture. Kay believes the end of an era of reliance on cars approaches and that "we can find, create, and the revive the remedies, and that planning solutions depend, in the end, on land-use solutions - on mobility based on human movement and transportation beyond the private automobile."


auto park
1: A retail development with multiple car dealerships in one central location

Gathering car sales lots in one central location offers automobile dealers a visible location usually off of a major highway, enables consumers to comparison shop, and concentrates the impact of expansive pavement and advertising related to auto sales away from the city proper.

2: A megasite suitable for major automotive manufacturing

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has encouraged towns in the Southeast to run utilities to large open areas located near interstates, rail lines, and airports in order to lure major auto manufacturers to build plants. The TVA then certifies these spaces as suitable megalogies for future development.

3: A parking lot (British)

baby boomer: A person born during a marked rise in the birthrate

In the United States, this term applies to those born during the period following the end of World War II from about 1945 to 1965.

ball park: A stadium hosting privately owned sports teams and built primarily with public funds

A construction of the words "ball park" and "park barrel," ball park results from the appropriation of government funds for projects that benefit a relatively small constituency.

See also: growth machine

BANANA (Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone): An acronym for a person or organization proposing a different structure or operation on a site and unwilling to compromise on the issue

The term, a variation of which is "Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone," is often used pejoratively against groups opposing land development.

See also: LULU, NIMBY, NOTE

bedroom community: A typically suburban, largely residential area offering few employment opportunities and from which residents commute to work, also known as a commuter town

Bedroom communities often evolve out of their residential status as places of work and expand in suburban settings, enabling more people to both live and work in these areas. Early patterns of relocation witnessed a shift of businesses out of cities and into new suburbs, where these office or industrial parks. Business economies, particularly in the retail sector, also develop in bedroom communities, providing new sources of jobs to support expansive new residential settlement.

See also: edge city

berm: A raised mound of earth, usually covered in sod, separating two areas and typically used as a visual or barrier

See also: noise barrier

big box: A large retail store, typically with 75,000 to 250,000 square feet of space, distinguished by its rectangular plan, concrete-block construction, windowless, standardized exteriors, and single-story structure with a three-story height of about 30 feet

The big box model, with expansive parking lots and rapid construction in areas often insufficiently prepared to accommodate such enterprises, has been blamed for traffic congestion and sprawl.

See also: category killer, chain store, discount department store, outlet store, power center, superstore, value retailer, warehouse club

blandburb: A term coined by author Joel S. Hirschhorn for a suburban location characterized by extreme homogeneity and monotony that causes its residents to become depressed


boomburb: A city with more than one hundred thousand residents, although not the largest city in its metropolitan area, maintaining double-digit or higher
centaur: A gay man who lives openly in a predominantly heterosexual suburb.

In the book Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs: Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity, Wayne Brekhus studies three identity types: life-styles, commutes, and integrators. Being gay is central to the identity of a life-style, or peacock, who lives openly in gay-specific ghettos in urban areas. Centaurs, on the other hand, are integrators who live openly in the heterosexual space of the suburbs and “integrate” their gay identity into living in a heterosexualized world. They see their gay identity as an adjective that describes part of their life all of the time. Brekhus sees the open integration of gay men into suburban spaces as a relatively recent phenomenon that coincides with the social acceptance of gay identity in the culture at large.1

See also: chameleon


c天猫: A product, service, brand, or company that has an enormous competitive advantage. Originating in marketing and strategic management, this term has become synonymous with big box retailers such as Wal-Mart or Home Depot that dominate the market and drive smaller stores representing specific product and service categories out of business.

See also: big box, chain store, discount department store, outlet store, power center, supermarket, value retailer, warehouse club

chain store: One of a group of retail stores that share a brand and common merchandising policy, usually owned and franchised by a single corporate entity.

See also: big box, category killer, discount department store, outlet store, power center, supermarket, value retailer, warehouse club

Chameleons, a relatively recent phenomenon in the world of real estate, are used to describe people who live openly in a predominantly heterosexual suburb.


category killer: A product, service, brand, or company that has an enormous competitive advantage.

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Clariitas: A marketing information resources company established in 1971 that specializes in identifying target markets based on U.S. Census data and consumptive patterns.

Clariitas describes markets primarily as “social groups” that roughly classify people by location and income. Each is further segmented into “lifestyle clusters” that match demographics to consumption patterns. Clariitas clusters have been used not only for consumer research, but also to identify potential voters in elections.

Clariitas’ urbanization measures fall into four classes: Urban Areas, Second Cities, Suburbs, and Town and Country. The company further divides U.S. consumers into fourteen different groups and sixty-six different segments ordered according to socioeconomic rank, which considers various characteristics such as income, education, occupation, and home value. According to Clariitas’ PRIZM NE, the definitions and segments of the four suburbs groups are:4

Group S1 – Elite Suburbs
The most affluent suburban social group, Elite Suburbs is a world of six-figure incomes, postgraduate degrees, single-family homes and managerial and professional occupations. The segments here are predominantly white with significant concentrations of well-off Asian Americans. Befitting their affluent status, ”sites members are big consumers of large homes, expensive clothes, luxury cars and foreign travel. Despite representing a small portion of the U.S. population, they hold a large share of the nation’s personal net worth. [The Elite Suburbs group consists of the following segments: Upper Crust; Blue Blood Estates; Movers & Shakers; and Winner’s Circle.]

Group S2 – The Affluentials
The six segments in The Affluentials are one socioeconomic ring down from the Elite Suburbs—with a 25 percent drop in median income—but their residents still enjoy comfortable, suburban lifestyles. The median income in S2 is nearly $60,000, the median home value is about $200,000, and the mostly couples in this social group tend to have college degrees and white-collar jobs. Asian Americans make up an important minority here in these predominantly white segments. As consumers, the Affluentials are big fans of health foods, computer equipment, consumer electronics and the full range of big-box retailers. [The Affluentials group consists of the segments: Executive Suites; New Empty Nests; Pools & Patios; Beltway Boomers; Kids & Cul-de-Sacs, and Home Sweet Home-1.]

Group S3 – Middleburbs
The five segments that comprise Middleburbs share a middle-class, suburban perspective, but they are the least likely to own a pool or a backyard. As a result, these two groups are filled with very young residents. Two are filled with seniors and one is middle-aged. In addition, S3 includes a mix of both homeowners and renters as well as high school graduates and college alums. With good jobs and money in their years, the members of Middleburbs tend to have plenty of discretionary income to visit nightclubs and casual-dining restaurants, shop at mid-scale department stores, buy dance and easy listening CDs by the dozen and travel across the U.S. and Canada. [The Middleburbs group consists of the segments: Grey Power; Young Influentials; Suburban Sprawl; Blue-Chip Blues; and Domestic Duos.]

Group S4 – Inner Suburbs
The four segments in the Inner Suburbs social group are concentrated in the inner-ring suburbs of major metros—areas where residents tend to be high school educated, unmarried and lower-middle class. There’s diversity in this group, with segments that are racially mixed, divided evenly between homeowners and renters and filled with households that are either young or aging in place. However, the consumer behavior of the S4 segments is dominated by older Americans who enjoy social activities at veterans clubs and fraternal orders, TV news and talk shows, and shopping at discount department stores. [The Inner Suburbs group consists of the segments: New Beginnings; Old Glories; American Classics; and Suburban Pioneers.]

See also: clustered world

cloverleaf: An interchange at which two crossing highways form a series of curving entrance and exit ramps resembling, from an aerial view, the shape of a four-leaf clover.

One of the first types of interchanges developed, the cloverleaf allows vehicles to proceed in either direction on either highway without stopping at any traffic lights. However, it creates congestion due to the fact that vehicles are both entering and exiting traffic from the same lane. A cloverleaf takes up more land than almost any other type of interchange.

**cluster**

1: cluster subdivision

A traditional form of suburban development composed of groupings of similar houses sold at similar prices to families that purchase similar types of household goods, which results in geographic divisions between socioeconomic classes.1

2: cluster zoning

A type of development that increases the overall density of housing by reducing each home’s lot size, which in turn allows large areas of open space to divisions between socioeconomic classes.1

Community Interest Development (CID): Any development with private ownership of buildings, or units, but common ownership of land and communal elements; also known as Common Interest Development

CIDs are usually governed by a community association, such as a homeowner association (HOA) or property owner association (POA). Increasingly popular in newer residential areas, CIDs enforce covenants, codes, and restrictions (CC&Rs) that function as zoning ordinances governing a variety of issues for an entire development—everything from domestic animals and exterior appearances to home occupancy and infrastructure maintenance—under the premise of preserving overall property values in the community.

See also: clustered world, community interest development, common ownership association

compact land use: A development strategy that focuses growth around existing population centers

An urban-growth boundary, mixed-use development, and infill construction are important components of compact land use, which is seen as an antidote to sprawl and a way to encourage the use of public transportation.

See also: cluster zoning, infill, mixed-use development, smart growth

crunchy suburb: A typically inner-ring suburb characterized as progressive, anticommercial, or countercultural, particularly found in cities located in the northern rim of the United States through Vermont, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Oregon, and Washington

Satirized by David Brooks as a "progressive suburb dominated by urban exiles who consider themselves city folk at heart but moved out to suburbia because they needed more space," a crunchy suburb is populated by countercultural urbanites with kids as well as businesses that cater to these families, such as food co-ops. Brooks sees crunchy subdivisions as open-minded, inclusive, and in possession of the last truly anticommercial lifestyle.1


cul-de-sac: A dead-end street with a bulb-shaped turn-around

By limiting access through one inlet/outlet and reducing speed limits, cul-de-sac communities are thought to be one of the safest places to live. They command typically higher premiums in resale, and are popular with developers because they allow more homes to irregularly shaped plots of land. However, recent studies have pointed out that cul-de-sacs discourage pedestrians and public transportation. They also have some of the highest rates of traffic accidents involving young children.2 In cities such as Charlotte, N.C., Portland, Ore., and Austin, Texas, construction of cul-de-sac-based suburbs has basically been banned. In other places, cul-de-sac communities have been retrofitted with cross streets.3


cup-holder cuisine: A type of business that can be run from the home to well-groomed and designed landscape, an attractive exterior paint color, and a well-maintained house exterior—is thought to sell a house faster and for a higher price.

See also: drive-thru, fast food

curb appeal: A first impression of a house when seen from the street

Positive curb appeal—through such things as a well-groomed and designed landscape, an attractive exterior paint color, and a well-maintained house exterior—is thought to sell a house faster and for a higher price.

dead mall: A shopping center that has fallen into distress, decay, or decline through disuse, a deteriorating structure, and/or abandonment

Often a mall becomes unfavorable because it is out of fashion, has a high vacancy rate, or draws very little consumer traffic. Dead malls usually occur when surrounding neighborhoods go into socioeconomic decline, when there is competition with another larger shopping center, or when the anchor stores leave or close. As consumer trends have shifted over the past twenty years and more malls have become vacant, a number of architects, scholars, and governmental agencies have attempted to reinvent the indoor, enclosed shopping mall and consider new ways to use the greyfields created by dead malls.1

See also: greyfield

deeped community: A group of properties that each carry deed restrictions outlined in a Deed of Conveyance that must be followed by the property owner

Deed restrictions can limit everything from the type of business that can be run from the home to choices for the house’s exterior paint color.

See also: Community Interest Development (CID)

discount department store: A large retail store, usually between 75,000 and 250,000 square feet, offering a wide variety of merchandise at low prices

Target, Wal-Mart, and Kmart are prime examples of U.S. discount department stores.

See also: big box, category killer, chain store, outlet store, power center, supermarket, value retailer, warehouse club

disneyfication: The stripping of a real or historical place or event of its original character in order to package it in an ertsatz, simplified, and sentimentalized form

The term, derived from the name of the Walt Disney Company, describes what some see as the expanding influence of the principles behind the Disney theme parks, particularly for suburban development.1 The Walt Disney Company became directly involved in suburban development when it built a planned community named Celebration just south of Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida.2

See also: theme park, theming
drive 'til you qualify: A phrase used by real estate agents whereby potential homeowners travel away from the workplace until they reach a community in which they can afford to buy a home that meets their standards.

“ar size of the waist determines that of the mortgage, and therefore the length of the commute. Although there are other variables (schools, spouse, status, climate, race, religion, taxes, taste) and occasional exceptions (inner cities, Princeton), in this equation you’re trading time for space, miles for square feet.”


drive-thru: An establishment, such as a fast-food restaurant or a bank, where customers drive to a window to conduct business while remaining in the car.

Popular since the 1920s for its convenience, the drive-thru has recently been banned in some American cities because curb cuts for automobiles disrupt the sidewalk, endanger pedestrians, and take up more space than a standard parking lot. See also: drive-thru architecture, drive-thru cuisine

droscape: A term created by Alan Berger “to describe a design pedagogy that emphasizes the productive integration and reuse of waste landscapes throughout the urban world. . . . The term droscape implies that this, or waste, is scaped, or resurfaced, and reprogrammed by human intentions.”

See also: brownfield, greenfield, greyfield

duck: A type of architecture in which the shape of the structure is symbolic, often literally so.

Long Island’s Big Duck—an 18-by-30-by-20-foot duck-shaped concrete structure built in 1931 by duck farmer Martin Mauro to promote his business—was the inspiration for this term coined by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. “Where the architectural systems of space, structure, and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form. This kind of building—becoming sculpture we call the duck in honor of the duck-shaped drive-in, ‘The Long Island Duckling,’ illustrated in God’s Own Junkyard by Peter Blake. The duck is the special building that is a symbol.”

See also: drive-thru architecture, logo building


exurb: A suburban area, beyond densely settled subdivisions, featuring widely separated, large, expensive homes often surrounded by woods, creeks, or ponds and populated by upper and upper-middle-class residents.

A C. Spectorsky coined the term in his 1955 satirical book The Exurbانites to describe displaced successful New Yorkers who move away from the city to establish an ideal home on a large plot of land. More recently, exurbs have become a subject of many political debates and studies.

See also: leapfrog, sprinkler city


family room: An informal living area or recreation room in a residence.

See also: media room

fast food: 1: of, relating to, or specializing in food prepared in quantity by a standardized method and served quickly in a ready-to-eat state

2: designed for ready availability, use, or consumption and with little consideration given to quality or significance

See also: cup-holder cuisine, drive-thru

first ring: An area directly adjacent to a central metropolitan area that represents the first phase of suburban development, chronologically and geographically, beyond the city; also known as first tier.

See also: inner ring

food court druid: A satirical term coined by author Robert Lanham to describe a teenage groth or mall rat obsessed with fantasy role-playing games.

See also: mall rat


gate community: A community or common-interest development with controlled entrances, typically stafbed by private security guards, to regulate access by pedestrian, bicycle, and automobiles.

See also: Community Interest Development (CID), privatopia

garage band: An amateur rock band typically holding its rehearsals in a garage.

Some of the earliest garage bands appeared in the United States in the 1960s. A significant influence on U.S. punk, such groups often emphasized their amateur qualities by, for instance, playing simple chords or using the garage as a studio to make low-cost recordings.

Garage Mahal: A large or opulent garage or parking structure
growth machine: A characterization of local economic development, and who promotes these, that unites and politically mobilizes those in the upper echelons of the social hierarchy. That unites and politically mobilizes those in the upper echelons of the social hierarchy. A work or office space in an individual's private residence. Since the advent of the personal computer and breakthorugh in communication technologies in the 1990s, more workers have decentralized, creating an office in their living space and working from home. A significant tax deduction for home offices makes this way of working financially advantageous, if you qualify according to the IRS's stringent criteria. An organization established to govern a private community; specifically, a group of homeowners, elected by fellow members, that determines the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs) owners, tenants, and guests must obey according to a set of rules or bylaws. The HOA protects and preserves the value of the property and may also be responsible for repair and maintenance of the community's common areas, including swimming pools, health club facilities, and landscaping. Generally, the developer initially controls the association, then transfers control to the individual owners some years later. Usually the governing board of directors has an annual budget prepared, and then assesses each member a share of the costs. See also: Community Interest Development (CID)
nologies such as large-screen televisions, home theaters with stereo sound systems, computers, and video games.

According to a 2005 study by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), 85 percent of Americans want walk-in pantries, 77 percent want separate shower stalls in their bathrooms, 95 percent want laundry rooms, 64 percent want home offices, and more than a third want media rooms.1

See also: family room


megachurch: A church with a congregation of two thousand or more worshippers at each weekly service and characterized, in part, through the use of nontraditional music, theatrical lighting, sophisticated audio systems, and display technologies. Although Protestant in origin, more than half of U.S. megachurches are nondenominational. Unlike that of traditional churches, the architectural language of megachurches tends toward the secular. One of the largest such congregations in the United States is the Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, which uses a converted sports arena (once home to the Houston Rockets) to seat sixteen thousand worshippers. Though extreme in size, they tend not to be as ornate as the cathedrals of an earlier era. Architectural critic Witold Rybczynski notes that megachurches often resemble performing arts centers, community colleges, or corporate headquarters.2 They also tend to include a variety of spaces for the benefit of their congregation: the Willow Creek Community Church of Chicago, situated on a 155-acre site, features two sanctuaries, a gym and recreation center, a bookstore, a food court, and a cappuccino bar. “Megachurches celebrate comfort, ease and the very idea of contemporary suburban life.”3

megagamer: A small passenger van

mixed-use development: The practice of allowing multiple uses (any combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, or institutional) in a building or set of buildings

monster home: An extremely large new house built in a neighborhood of smaller homes

Monster homes typically come into being as “teardowns,” a term that describes the process of demolishing an existing, functional house and replacing it with a larger, more expensive home. In recent years, cities have begun to enact legislation that restricts the size of new homes in older neighborhoods. Some of these laws take the form of limiting new buildings to a certain percentage of its lot size. According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), in 1950 an average new house was 963 square feet and in 1970 it was 1,500 square feet. The 2005 average was 2,400 square feet, with one in five having more than 3,000 square feet. However, since 1971 average household size has shrunken from 3.1 people to 2.6 people in 2005. The average lot size also contracted from 9,000 square feet in the 1980s to 8,000 in 2005.4 Thus, the trend points to bigger houses being constructed for fewer people on smaller plots of land.

See also: boomurb, zoomurb

middle landscape


megaschool: A high school with a population of two thousand or more students

Megaschools most often come into being when two or more smaller high schools merge. Critics of the model often site its lack of intimacy, security, guidance, and support. A Western Michigan study suggested that the most effective size at which a high school can operate is between six hundred to nine hundred students.5


Making a Middle Landscape (MIT Press, 1991), in which he examines the factors that have shaped modern suburban development and its ameliorative possibilities.


minivan: A small passenger van

Popularized in the United States beginning in the 1980s, the American minivan was originally intended to appeal to families living in suburban areas. Minivans are typically taller than a station wagon, but smaller than a utility van.

See also: soccer mom

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See also: Edifice rex, McMansion, tractor mansion


nerdistan: An upscale suburb or suburban city in which a large percentage of the population is employed by nearby high-tech industries.

The term first came into use in a 1997 Washington Post essay titled "Escape from Nerdistan," written by urban scholar and author Joel Kotkin. Kotkin identified five prime examples of nerdistans: Orange County, California; North Dallas, Texas; Northern Virginia; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, and the area surrounding Redmond, Washington (headquarters for Microsoft). “South Orange County is a classic nerdistan—largely newly built, almost entirely upscale office parks, connected by a network of toll roads and superhighways to planned, often gated communities inhabited almost entirely by college educated professionals and technicians.”

See also: technoburb


New Suburbanism: An architectural and city planning movement that describes an approach to developing suburban communities based on the principles of Smart Growth and New Urbanism.

The basic concepts of New Suburbanism predate the Smart Growth and New Urbanism movements, as exemplified in older suburbs such as the Woodlands, outside of Houston, Texas; Irvine, California; Columbia, Maryland; and Reston, Virginia.1 This term came into broad use through urban scholar and author Joel Kotkin, who wrote a report titled "The New Suburbanism: A Realist's Guide to the American Future" (The Planning Center, 2005). Kotkin credits Randall Jackson, the president of the Planning Center, with coining the name.2 However, the term probably surfaced in 1999 with Bob Lembke, then-managing partner of Bromley Cos. LLC, developers of Bromley Park, a 16,000-acre master-planned community in Brighton, Colorado. Lembke spoke about his plans to combine

NASCAR dad: Euphemism for a white, working-class father believed to enjoy stock-car racing.

During the presidential election of 2004, the term NASCAR dad was coined by the media in reference to the key demographic the candidates needed to win over in order to secure the presidency.

See also: soccer mom

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New Urbanism: An architectural and city planning movement that opposes sprawl and seeks to develop neighborhoods that mimic successful aspects of city life. New Urbanist projects focus on pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented designs as well as sustainable growth that is “sensitive to environmental quality, economy, and social equity.” It has become known as traditional neighborhood design, or new-traditional design, and transit-oriented development. A further idealistic branch of New Urbanism was founded by Michael E. Arth in 1999 and is known as New Pedestrianism. New Urbanism’s most famous proponents are architects Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, two of the founders of the Congress for New Urbanism, established in 1993. Further reading: Congress for the New Urbanism, http://www.cnu.org/. See the Duany-Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) site for a list of New Urbanist readings, http://www.dpz.com/research.aspx. See also: New Suburbanism

New Suburbanism: A building, complex, or neighborhood in which a majority of residents are seniors (over age 60). A high concentration of the elderly may occur due to those who want to “age in place” or who are “stay puts” (both phrases refer to people who want to live in their homes as long as possible). In some areas, NORCs are officially recognized by city and state governments. Both New York City and Chicago provide some funding to NORCs. New York has a NORC-Supportive Service Program (SSP) that certain groups are proposing should be rolled out to the rest of the nation.¹

NOTE (Not Over There Either): A person or local organization that opposes an unwanted or undesirable land-use proposal, but does not want it built elsewhere, either. See also: BANANA, LULU, NIMBY

Office park: A commercial complex consisting of one or more office buildings set in a parklike landscape; also referred to as a business park, executive park, or office plaza. The office park may also contain gyms, restaurants, child-care facilities, and recreational areas. The buildings and grounds of an office park are often referred to collectively as a “campus.”

Park and ride: A municipal system that allows suburban commuters to park free and use public transit to travel to their destinations.
pedestrian-friendly: A term to describe designs that favor walking as the primary mode of transportation and the rights of pedestrians in general, championed by the New Urbanists, among others

property owner association (POA): An association created by the developer that determines the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs) owners, tenants, and guests must obey according to the bylaws. Various amenities run by the association are generally offered to its members, such as pools, parks, and tennis courts.

quality of life (QOL): A term used to describe the personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction one finds with nonmaterial comforts, such as the cultural, intellectual, or safety conditions under which one lives. A perceived improvement of quality of life is one reason why people may prefer suburban communities over urban centers. The phrase is often abbreviated as QOL in academic studies.

realtor mom: A term coined by David Brooks to describe a suburban Republican woman who lives in sprinkler city with her husband, dubbed "Patio Man." See also: Patio Man, sprinkler city

ring road: A higher-speed road, such as an interstate highway, that encircles a central city and passes between it and the first- or inner-ring suburbs.

roundabout: A circular intersection, or junction, of two or more roads where traffic flows in one direction around a central island, also called a rotary.

Slow growth began as a grassroots movement in California in the 1970s. Not to be confused with the "slow city" movement whose proponents are not necessarily opposed to city growth.

See also: no growth
A condition of worsening health for residents living in low-density suburbs
The term was coined by Joel S. Horshchorn in the book Sprawl Kids: "Sprawl stress syndrome is not just plain or acute stress that comes and goes in unusual situations, but is chronic stress. Chronic sprawl lifestyle stress results from a steady stream of frustrations and heartaches over long periods, like daily stress from driving in heavy traffic and never having enough time." 1


suburban plantation: A migrant labor camp situated in or near a suburban location and typically composed of makeshift structures that house workers employed in service industries supporting neighboring suburbs
In the documentary Rancho California (Por Favor) (2003), professor John Caldwell documented migrant farmworker camps such as Rancho de los Diablos, Kelly Camp, Porterville, and McConville Canyon, each located in suburban southern California where homeless, indigenous Mixteco workers coexist with gated communities in Carlsbad, La Costa, Encinitas, and Del Mar.

tank farm: A site with a large collection of storage containers for oil or liquid natural gas; also known as an oil depot
Tank farms are often located in or near ports with easy access to pipelines and shipping channels.

A term coined by Robert Fishman in his 1987 book Bourgeois Utopias. Although a technoburb may be dominated by a large number of technology-based businesses, they are so named as a result of the rise of advanced technology and telecommunications. “By technoburb I mean a peripheral zone that has emerged as a viable socioeconomic unit. Spread out along its highway growth corridors are shopping malls, industrial parks, computer-like office complexes, hospitals, schools, and a full range of housing types. Its residents look to their immediate surroundings rather than to the city for their jobs and other needs, and its industries find not only the employees they need but also the specialized services.” See also: nerdistan


telecommute: To work at home by the use of computers and other electronic devices
The commute to work is replaced by a telecommunications link with a central office.
See also: home office, SOHO

theming: The technique of creating restaurants, hotels, shopping malls, casinos, or even entire towns to simulate other, typically historic, places (Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, for example) or cultural experiences (such as the concept of an Irish pub)
See also: Disneyfication, themepark

TOAD (Temporary, Obsolete, Abandoned, Derelict): A term coined by lawyers and planners to describe places such as abandoned shopping malls, empty big
Rachel Hooper and Jayme Yen

box stores, drive-in theaters, or closed industrial sites
See also: dead mall, greyfield, ozoner

tower farm: A cluster of broadcast antennae and transmitting towers, including cellular phone towers
The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (section 704) guaranteed companies the right to erect cell towers, overriding local zoning laws.

tract mansion: A large, expensive, ostentatious house erected among similar-looking homes by a developer who builds on speculation
These homes are usually more than 4,000 square feet, and often combine a dizzying array of architectural styles (for instance, Baroque meets Greek Revivalist meets Cape Cod) in order to quickly impress potential buyers. Also referred to as a McMansion or a "twenty-minute house," referring to the time it takes a realtor to show it to potential buyers.
See also: Edifice rex, McMansion, monster home, starter castle

trailer park: An area equipped to accommodate mobile homes
Parking space for house trailers is rented, and the trailer park provides residents with utilities and services.

V

value retailer: A large store, usually with 75,000 to 250,000 square feet of space, that makes a profit from a high volume of items sold, rather than an inventory mark-up
See also: big box, category killer, chain store, discount department store, outlet store, power center, superstore, warehouse club

W

Walmartization: To become like or have an effect similar to Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer known for discount priced goods
The phrase is pejoratively used to describe the rise and economic impact of large, outer-suburb shopping outlets and big box stores over smaller commercial districts and locally owned businesses.

warehouse club: A large store, usually with 75,000 to 250,000 square feet of space, offering a limited number of product items (five thousand or less) in bulk at discounted prices
Examples of warehouse clubs include Costco, Pace, and Sam's Club.
See also: big box, category killer, chain store, discount department store, outlet store, power center, superstore, value retailer

weekend home: A second home, often in the suburbs, exurbs, or rural countryside, used on weekends or during vacations

weekend warrior: A homeowner who attempts do-it-yourself home-improvement projects over the weekend, often without extensive experience

white flight: A demographic characteristic in which Caucasian residents leave neighborhoods increasingly or predominantly inhabited by nonwhites
The most commonly cited example of white flight is the situation that occurred in the United States during the 1950s through 1970s as whites left the central cities for new suburban developments.

wigger: A derogatory slang term for a white person (typically a young suburban male) who affects the speech, dress, and behavior stereotypically associated with urban African Americans in general and hip-hop culture in particular; also known as wigga

Z

Zillow: An online real estate service company offering real estate valuations
Rich Barton and Lloyd Frink, both former Microsoft executives and founders of the travel company Expedia, launched the site zillow.com in 2006. Zillow offers free real estate information and home-value estimates, called "Zestimates," which have been criticized by some real estate agents as inaccurate.

zoomurb: A suburb growing even faster than a boomburb
See also: boomburb