

# 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."<sup>1</sup>

2: A strip of tire tread found on the roadside

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

3: A broad-snouted crocodylian that occasionally plagues suburban areas

As suburban areas encroach on wetlands in cities such as Tampa and Houston, alligators have wandered 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.

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004).

**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 superregional 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 led 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."<sup>1</sup>

1. Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America, and How We Can Take It Back* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1997), 8.

## 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 megasites for future development.

3: A parking lot (British)

## B

**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 pork:** A stadium hosting privately owned sports teams and built primarily with public funds

A contraction of the words "ball park" and "pork barrel," ball pork 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 Anything):** An acronym for a person or organization opposing a proposed 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, whether into 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 sound or visual barriers

**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<sup>1</sup>

1. Joel S. Hirschhorn, *Sprawl Kills: How Blandburbs Steal Your Time, Health, and Money* (New York: Sterling & Ross Publishers, Inc., 2005).

**boomburb:** A city with more than one hundred thousand residents, although not the largest city in its metropolitan area, maintaining double-digit or higher

rates of population growth in recent decades<sup>1</sup>  
See also: edge city, megaburb, sprinkler city, zoomburb

1. This type of fast-growing city was identified by Robert E. Lang and Patrick A. Simmons in a report for the Fannie Mae Foundation in 2001.

**brownfield:** Real estate property of which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant  
See also: drosscape, greenfield, greyfield

**burbed-out:** Having qualities stereotypically associated with suburbia, such as cookie-cutter houses, SUVs, chain-store shopping areas

## C

### carchitecture

1: Buildings that respond to the automobile in society

"Carchitecture has been a long, slow evolutionary response to the problem of accommodating the inherent contradiction of the car; the car will set society free, an automotive society creates traffic, traffic enslaves society."<sup>1</sup>

2: Buildings designed to be seen from cars

"We are living in a carchitecture age, an era in which most buildings are designed to be seen and appreciated from moving vehicles."<sup>2</sup>

See also: drive-thru, duck, logo building

1. Jonathan Bell, ed., *Carchitecture* (London: August Media, 2001).

2. Charlene Rooke, "Scenic Drive," *enRoute* (July 2004), <http://www.enroutemag.com/e/archives/july04/index.html>.

**category killer:** 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, superstore, value retailer, warehouse club

**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 Brekhuis studies three identity types: lifestyle, commuters, and integrators. Being gay is a central to the identity of a lifestyle, 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. Brekhuis 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.<sup>1</sup>

See also: chameleon

1. Wayne Brekhuis, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs. Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 29, 216.

**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, superstore, value retailer, warehouse club

**chameleon:** A gay man who lives in the suburbs and travels to "identity-specific spaces to be his 'gay self,'" often in the evenings or on weekends<sup>1</sup>

In the book *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs*, Brekhuis describes chameleons as using their gay identity as a mobile verb that they can turn on or off at will. Some structural factors that he believes affect gay suburban identity are that "oppression truncates against integrating and in favor of commuting" and "visible minority status truncates against commuting and in favor of lifestyle."<sup>2</sup>

See also: centaur

1. Wayne Brekhuis, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs. Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 28.

2. *Ibid.*, 216-217.

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

Claritas 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. Claritas clusters have been used not only for consumer research, but also to identify potential voters in elections.

Claritas' urbanization measures fall into four classes: Urban Areas, Second Cities, Suburbs, 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 consider various characteristics such as income, education, occupation, and home value. According to Claritas PRIZM NE, the definitions and segments of the four suburbs groups are:<sup>1</sup>

#### Group S1 – Elite Suburbs

The most affluent suburban social group, Elite Suburbs is a world of six-figure incomes, post-graduate 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 lofty salaries, S1 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 rung 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 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.]

#### Group S3 – Middleburbs

The five segments that comprise Middleburbs share a middle-class, suburban perspective, but there the similarity ends. 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 jeans, the members of Middleburbs tend to have plenty of discretionary income to visit nightclubs and casual-dining restaurants, shop at midscale 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: Gray 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 are 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

1. Excerpted from *PRIZM NE Marketing Segments*, Claritas Customer Segmentation, [http://www.claritas.com/claritas/Default.jsp?ci=3&si=4&pn=prizmne\\_segments](http://www.claritas.com/claritas/Default.jsp?ci=3&si=4&pn=prizmne_segments).

**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.<sup>1</sup>

**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 be used for parks, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, or agriculture. In addition to being a more ecologically sound alternative to a traditional development, cluster zoning reduces construction and maintenance costs by having shorter streets and utility lines.

See also: high density, smart growth

**3: clustered world**

Refers to the findings of marketer Michael J. Weiss, who divided the United States into forty marketing clusters named after residential stereotypes in the books *The Clustering of America*<sup>2</sup> and *The Clustered World: How We Live, What We Buy, and What It All Means About Who We Are*<sup>3</sup>

Weiss' data is based primarily on the market research done by Claritas.

See also: Claritas, SOHO

**4: fast-food cluster**

A collection of fast-food restaurants in a small geographic area

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 32.
2. Michael J. Weiss, *The Clustering of America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).
3. Michael J. Weiss, *The Clustered World: How We Live, What We Buy, and What It All Means About Who We Are* (London: Little, Brown, & Co., 2000).

**collector road:** A street with no more than four lanes that collects traffic from small local roads and delivers it to major roadways with faster speed limits (exceeding 35 mph) and additional lanes

New developments, which often do not include enough collector roads, lead to increases in traffic congestion, driving time, and stress on existing streets.

**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&R) 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: deeded community, gated community, homeowners 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 folks 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 suburbanites as open-minded, inclusive,

and in possession of the last truly anticommercial lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

1. David Brooks, *On Paradise Drive: How We Live Now (And Always Have) in the Future Tense* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

**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 houses onto 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.<sup>1</sup> “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.”<sup>2</sup>

1. William H. Lucy and David L. Phillips, *Tomorrow's Cities, Tomorrow's Suburbs* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2006).
2. John Nielsen, “Cul-de-Sacs: Suburban Dream or Dead End?,” *Morning Edition* (June 7, 2006), <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5455743>.

**cup-holder cuisine:** Food meant to be consumed on the go while driving or walking, often in a package designed to fit in a car's cup-holder

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.

**D**

**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.<sup>1</sup>

See also: greyfield

1. For a description of a project by the National Endowment for the Arts, see David J. Smiley, ed., *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2002).

**deeded 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, superstore, value retailer, warehouse club

**Disneyfication:** The stripping of a real or historical place or event of its original character in order to repackage it in an ersatz, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

See also: theme park, theming

1. See Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Boston: Blackwell, 1996). For the related term Disneyization, see Alan Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society* (London: Sage, 2004).

2. For more information on Celebration and suburban planning, see Andrew Ross, *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney's New Town* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999) and Bettina Drew, "Celebration: A New Kind of American Town" in *Crossing the Expendable Landscape* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1998).

**drive 'til you qualify:** A phrase used by real estate agents whereby potential homebuyers travel away from the workplace until they reach a community in which they can afford to buy a home that meets their standards

"The size of the wallet 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."<sup>1</sup>

1. Nick Paumgarten, "There and Back Again," *The New Yorker* (April 16, 2007).

**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: carchitecture, cup-holder cuisine

**drosscape:** 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 drosscape implies that dross, or waste, is scaped, or resurfaced, and reprogrammed by human intensions."<sup>1</sup>

See also: brownfield, greenfield, greyfield

1. Alan Berger *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 236.

**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 Maurer 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."<sup>1</sup> The duck is the special building that is a symbol."<sup>2</sup>

See also: carchitecture, logo building

1. Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 101. See also Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi, "On Ducks and Decoration," *Architecture Canada* (October 1968).

2. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977), 89.

## E

**edge city:** An area on the outskirts of a city with a high density of office buildings, retail centers, and businesses, and thus a political, economic, and commercial base independent of the central city

Journalist Joel Garreau coined this term to refer to a suburb with more jobs than bedrooms.<sup>1</sup>

See also: bedroom community

1. Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

**Edifice rex:** An extremely large new house, often built in an older suburb of smaller homes, characterized by an ostentatious, over-size facade

See also: McMansion, monster home, starter castle, tract mansion

**empty nester:** A parent whose children have grown up and moved away from home

Empty nesters are often residents of suburbs, where they once moved to raise their families.

**ethnoburb:** A "suburban ethnic cluster of residential areas and business districts in large metropolitan areas"<sup>1</sup>

The term was coined by Wei Li in a 1998 article about Los Angeles. While the community remains multiethnic, the ethnoburb has a high concentration (although not necessarily a majority) of one particular ethnic group.<sup>2</sup>

1. Wei Li, "Ethnoburb versus Chinatown: Two Types of Urban Ethnic Communities in Los Angeles," *Cybergeo* 10 (1998).

2. Vincent Miller, "Mobile Chinatowns: The Future of Community in a Global Space of Flows," *The Journal of Social Issues* 2 (2004).

**exurb:** A semirural 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. Spectorosky coined the term in his 1955 satirical book *The Exurbanites* to describe displaced successful New Yorkers who move away from the city to establish an ideal home on a large plot of land.<sup>1</sup> More recently, exurbanites have become a sought-after political demographic and the subject of many growth debates and studies.

See also: leapfrog, sprinkler city

1. A. C. Spectorosky, *The Exurbanites* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1955).

## F

**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 geo-

graphically, beyond the city; also known as first tier  
See also: inner ring

**food court druid:** A satirical term coined by author Robert Lanham to described a teenage goth or mall rat obsessed with fantasy role-playing games<sup>1</sup>  
See also: mall rat

1. Robert Lanham, *Food Court Druids, Cherokees, and Other Creatures Unique to the Republic* (New York: Plume, 2004).

## G

**garage**

1: A space primarily for parking or storing motor vehicles but also unused possessions, equipment, and tools

The successor to the carriage house, the detached garage was seen as a safer environment for storing automobiles, which contained volatile gasoline. Since the postwar period, the suburban garage structure is more typically integrated into the house itself and has grown in size and complexity.

2: A commercial establishment for repairing and servicing motor vehicles

See also: garage band, Garage Mahal, snout house

**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

**gated community:** A community or common-interest development with controlled entrances, typically staffed by private security guards, to regulate access by pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles  
See also: Community Interest Development (CID), privatopia

**greenfield:** Land undeveloped except for agricultural use, especially that considered for new industrial or residential development

See also: brownfield, drosscape, greyfield

## greenway

1: Land converted for recreational use; particularly a trail or linear open space established along a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream, or ridge line, or along a railroad right-of-way

2: A trail or bike path; any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage

3: Open space that links parks and rural land; a belt of interconnected parks or rural land surrounding a town or city

**greyfield:** Economically obsolete, outdated, failing, moribund, and/or underutilized real estate assets, such as formerly industrial waterfront sites or dead malls; alternate spelling: grayfield

The term, coined by Pricewaterhouse Coopers and the Congress for New Urbanism in 2001, refers to the color of the extensive asphalt pavement that occupies these sites. Unlike brownfields, greyfields do not have high levels of pollution and are equipped with an infrastructure that makes them ripe for redevelopment.

See also: brownfield, drosscape, greenfield

## gridlock

1: A traffic jam; a high density of vehicles on a grid of intersecting streets such that movement is stopped or extremely slowed

2: A situation resembling gridlock; frustrating stagnation, a complete lack of movement or progress resulting in standstill

**growth machine:** A characterization of local governments, particularly municipalities that produce wealth for those in power by encouraging real estate development at the taxpayers' expense

Sociologist Harvey Molotch observed in 1976 that a common interest in growth is one of the few issues that unites and politically mobilizes those in the upper echelons of the social hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> To this day, the basic issues that Molotch's thesis addressed, such as growth, local economic development, and who promotes these, remain central to the politics of cities.<sup>2</sup>

See also: ball park

1. Harvey Molotch, "The City as Growth Machine" in *The American Journal of Sociology*, 1976, <http://www.nw-ar.com/face/molotch.html>

2. Andrew E. G. Jonas and David Wilson, eds., *The Urban Growth Machine: Critical Perspectives Two Decades Later* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

## H

**high density:** Having a large number of families, individuals, dwelling units, households, or housing structures per unit of land

High-density housing has historically carried a stigma due to its association with poverty, crime, and other social problems. For this reason, ordinances have been passed in many areas limiting the density of development. However, planners and developers have argued that high-density housing helps curb sprawl, allows residents to walk to the supermarket or local schools, offers residents more direct access to public transportation, and costs less for the developer in terms of infrastructure and land use. Row houses, townhomes, and apartment buildings have therefore increasingly become a part of cluster zoning and infill development.

See also: cluster, infill, low density

## home office

1: Headquarters or main office of a company

2: A work or office space in an individual's private residence

Since the advent of the personal computer and breakthroughs 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. A Community or Common Interest Development (CID) often restricts homeowners from operating an independent business from their residence.

See also: SOHO, telecommute

**homeowners association (HOA):** 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 repairs 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)

**HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lane:** A designated express lane on highways for use exclusively by vehicles with two or more passengers

Commonly marked with diamonds painted on the pavement, the HOV lane is less congested than other lanes on the highway and therefore meant to encourage carpooling. Some cities have recently experimented with charging single occupancy vehicles a toll to use the HOV lane during peak traffic periods.

## I

**infill:** The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant sites in a built-up area; also called "odd-lot development"

See also: compact land use, mixed-use development

**inner ring:** Suburban areas that are adjacent or in close proximity to city centers

Inner-ring suburbs were usually among the first areas in a metropolitan region, built during the boom that followed World War II, and frequently located within a three-digit interstate highway. Many inner-ring suburbs have been in decline due to new suburban-growth competition and have experienced increasing rates of poverty and crime.

See also: exurb, first ring, leapfrog

## L

**landfill:** A disposal site in which solid waste is compacted and covered with earth in alternate layers of specified depth according to an approved plan

Hazardous waste is not permitted, and landfill sites are regulated so they can be reused for another purpose in the future. Nonetheless, a landfill is usually considered to a LULU (locally unwanted or undesirable land use).

See also: BANANA, LULU, NIMBY, NOTE

**leapfrog:** To bypasses empty land for development in order to build in a remote location

A condition of sprawl, leapfrogging was encouraged in the late twentieth century by tax policies that favored greenfield development and still occurs when developers want to move beyond city boundaries to avoid its land-use regulations.

See also: exurb, first ring

**lifestyle commuter:** Someone who works in the city but lives outside an urban area, usually in an exurb, because a more rural lifestyle is preferred

**light rail:** A rapid-transit public transportation system, sometimes referred to as a contemporary version of the streetcar

**logo building:** A building with a prominent trademark sign, or whose design is distinctive and easily recognizable from the road

Some communities find this architecture distasteful and have worked together with franchises to design buildings better integrated with their specific surroundings.

See also: architecture, duck

**low density:** Having a lesser number of families, individuals, dwelling units, households, or housing structures per units of land

Americans often prefer low-density housing and believe that generous lots make for safer neighborhoods and higher property values. However, low-density development contributes to sprawl and encourages residents to be more dependent on their automobiles.

See also: compact land use, high density, infill, mixed-use development, sprawl

**LULU (Locally Unwanted Land Use or Locally Undesirable Land Use):** An acronym for a nuisance or detriment to local sites and neighboring land

LULUs can be anything from parking lots to nuclear power plants, landfills, prisons, or psychiatric hospitals. Environmental justice observers point out that LULUs are disproportionately located in poor or minority neighborhoods. However, this observation is the topic of much debate as others claim employment and other benefits that may compensate for their detrimental aspects.

See also: BANANA, NIMBY, NOTE

## M

**mall rat:** A young person who spends much of his or her leisure time at a shopping center primarily for socializing and entertainment, rather than shopping

See also: food court druid

**media room:** One of the many activity-specific rooms associated with newer suburban homes and dedicated to accommodating new electronic tech-

Rachel Hooper and Jayme Yen

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.<sup>1</sup>

See also: family room

1. Les Christie, "Die, die, monster home!," CNNMoney.com (August 18, 2005).

**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.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup>

1. Witold Rybczynski, "An Anatomy of Megachurches: The New Look for Places of Worship," *Slate* magazine (October 20, 2005).

2. Paul Goldberger, "The Gospel of Church Architecture, Revised," *New York Times*, April 20, 1995.

**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 cite 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.<sup>1</sup>

1. Sue Robertson, "Is Bigger Always Better?," *School Planning and Management* (November 2001).

**megasite:** A large parcel of land of more than 1,000 acres, typically a greenfield, ideal for heavy industrial development and offering easy access to highways and railroads

**McMansion:** A large, hastily built, cookie-cutter house with a footprint of greater proportion to its lot size, constructed with details simulating a hodgepodge of architectural styles and numerous modern, high-tech features

The term, derived from the fast-food restaurant McDonald's, was coined in the 1980s by architects and architecture critics in response to the many oversize, poorly designed homes being built in American suburbs. McMansion also refers to a new, large house that stands out from the surrounding homes because of its garishness, especially those built in established neighborhoods of smaller homes.

See also: Edifice rex, monster home, ranchburger, tract mansion

**megaburb:** A suburban area with an accelerated growth rate that continues to climb; an "economically integrated, wealth producing and consuming machine"<sup>1</sup>

See also: boomburb, zoomburb

1. James S. Russell, "When Suburbs Become Megaburbs," *Architectural Record* (August 2003). <http://www.jsrussellwriter.com/megaburbs.html>.

### middle landscape

1: A historic notion of suburbia as idealized by the upper-middle classes of the first industrial revolution

Middle landscape originates with Leo Marx, a professor of American Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who described it as situated somewhere between the "chaos, garbage, and immigrant-dense metropolis" and the "uncivilized, provincial, and poor countryside."<sup>1</sup>

2: The area between the city and the countryside  
Peter Rowe popularized the term in his book

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

1. Cory Dolgon, "Suburbia," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 8, 2005).

**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

**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

See also: adaptive reuse, cluster zoning, compact land use, infill, smart growth

**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 shrunk 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.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the trend points to bigger houses being constructed for fewer people on smaller plots of land.

See also: Edifice rex, McMansion, starter castle, tract mansion

1. Les Christie, "Die, die, monster home!," CNNMoney.com (August 18, 2005).

## N

**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

**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."<sup>1</sup>

See also: technoburb

1. Joel Kotkin, "Avoiding Excesses Has Buoyed L.A.'s Tech Sector," *Los Angeles Business Journal* (August 20, 2001).

**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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

the amenities of suburban life with the principles of *New Urbanism* in order to create a development that didn't shun the car, but still offered ways for people to connect as a community as they would in denser environments.<sup>3</sup>

A principal idea of *New Suburbanism* is "suburban villages," which behave more like small towns and are less reliant on central cities: "In contrast to *New Urbanism*, new suburbanism tries to work within sprawl rather than fight it. Promoters seek not a return to the dense urban paradigm of Jane Jacobs but instead the creation of an archipelago of villages connected not only by roads (and sometimes trains) but also by new communications technology. While it may sometimes follow the design principles created by *New Urbanists*, the suburban village embraces the reality of dispersion and encourages less dependence on long-range commuting, including to the urban core. It looks less to the urban past of the industrial era and more to the postindustrial future of a new village-dominated epoch."<sup>4</sup>  
**See also:** *New Urbanism*

1. Joel Kotkin, "What Is the New Suburbanism?," *Planetizen.com* (April 24, 2006).
2. Kotkin, "The New Suburbanism," *Architecture* (June 2005).
3. Pete Lewis, "The New Suburbanism," *ColoradoBiz* (January 1999).
4. Kotkin, "What Is the New Suburbanism?," 2006.

**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."<sup>1</sup> It has become known as traditional neighborhood design, neo-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 the *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*

1. Ajay Garde, "Designing and Developing *New Urbanist Projects* in the United States: Insights and Implications," *Journal of Urban Design* (February 2006).

**NIMBY (Not In My Backyard):** An acronym used to express opposition to the location of an unwanted and undesirable facility in the neighborhood, usually because they are considered unsightly, dangerous, or will lead to decreased property values

Prime subjects of *NIMBY* protests include jails, garbage dumps, and drug or convict rehabilitation centers.

**See also:** *BANANA*, *LULU*, *NOTE*

**no growth:** A city planning movement that opposes new developments of any sort

**See also:** *slow growth*, *smart growth*

**node:** A suburban enclave on the periphery of cities  
 Nodes are part of an auto-centric landscape of suburban destinations connected by highways and roads.

**noise barrier:** A wall or other solid obstruction alongside a highway, typically made of concrete or wood, designed to reduce roadway noise into an adjacent neighborhood; also known as noise wall

According to urban historian and architect Dolores Hayden, noise walls rarely work well because on wide highways the noise will go over the wall and bounce back from it.<sup>1</sup>

**See also:** *berm*

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

**non-place:** Spaces of such temporary, transient activity as to not have the significance to be regarded as "places"; also called *non-space*

The term "non-place" was coined by French anthropologist Marc Augé, who wrote *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995). Examples of non-places include airports, supermarkets, hotel rooms, and highways.

"Marc Augé coined the term *non-lieux* [non-places] to describe specific kinds of spaces, chiefly architectural and technological, designed to be passed through or consumed rather than appropriated, and retaining little or no trace of our engagement with them. These spaces, principally associated with transit and communication, are for Augé the defining charac-

teristics of the contemporary period he calls 'supermodernity,' the product and agent of a contemporary crisis in social relations and consequently in the construction of individual identities through such relations."<sup>1</sup>

1. Emer O'Beirne, "Mapping the Non-Lieu in Marc Augé's Writings," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 42, no. 1 (2006).

**NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community):**

A building, complex, or neighborhood in which a majority of residents are seniors (over age 60)

The State of New York defines a *NORC* as a community in which 40 to 50 percent of the heads of households are at least sixty years old. 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.<sup>1</sup>

1. Anita Altman, "The New York *NORC-Supportive Service Program*," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* (Spring 2006).

**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*

## O

**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."

**outer-ring suburb:** Newer suburban developments further from the urban core than first- or inner-ring suburbs

Traditionally, metropolitan geographic space is divided into three classifications: central city, sub-

urbs (as a donut-shaped ring surrounding the city center), and the rural area/countryside lying beyond the suburbs. (The metropolitan region is classified as the combination of the central city and the suburbs.) However, as the suburbs themselves become increasingly differentiated, scholars parse new classifications that take into account a specific time of development or imply rates of growth and distance away from the urban core. Examples of newer naming conventions include: *first suburbs*, *streetcar suburbs*, *post-World War II suburbs*, *inner-ring suburbs*, *outer-ring suburbs*, *exurbs*, *boomburbs*, *zoomburbs*, *subcenters*, and *satellite cities*.<sup>1</sup>

**See also:** *boomburb*, *exurb*, *first ring*, *zoomurb*

1. Nancey Green Leigh and Sugie Lee, "Philadelphia's Space In Between: Inner-Ring Suburb Evolution," *Opolis: An International Journal of Suburban and Metropolitan Studies* 1, Issue 1 (2005).

**outlet store:** A large store, usually with 75,000 to 250,000 square feet of space, serving as a discount arm of a major department store or a manufacturer, such as Nike or Levi's

Outlet stores are typically located in the metropolitan periphery or in exurban locations to avoid direct competition with department stores. They are typically clustered together with other discount stores to form outlet malls.

**See also:** *discount department store*, *value retailer*, *warehouse club*

**outparcel:** A store not physically connected to a mall, but located on its premises; also called an outlot tenant or pad tenant  
**See also:** *anchor store*

**ozoner:** Slang for an outdoor or drive-in movie theater

Primarily built during the 1950s, these theaters now tend to be abandoned, replaced in popularity by television and multiplex cinemas. *Ozoners* are a prime example of a *TOAD* (temporary, obsolete, abandoned, derelict).

**See also:** *TOAD*

## P

**park and ride:** A municipal system that allows suburban commuters to park free and use public transit to travel to their destinations

Physically the system calls for large parking lots to be adjacent to a bus or rail station. While park and ride is intended to reduce urban traffic congestion, their own parking lots can become so congested as to require commuters to organize a carpool to the park-and-ride lot.

**Patio Man:** A satirical term coined by David Brooks to describe a suburban Republican man who lives with his wife (dubbed Realtor Mom) and is obsessed with backyard leisurely pursuits and the latest in outdoor grilling technology<sup>1</sup>  
See also: Realtor Mom

1. David Brooks, "Patio Man and the Sprawl People," *The Weekly Standard*, August 12, 2002.

**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  
See also: New Urbanism

**Peter Pan suburb:** A suburban area with no planning for the elderly

**picture window**

1: A large window, or grouping of windows, designed to frame an exterior view in a house

A picture window dominates the wall or the room in which it is located.

2: A metaphor for suburbia

The term gained in popularity during the post-war period when it was used by author John Keats in his 1957 novel, *The Crack in the Picture Window*. Writes William S. Saunders, "Keats' novel so railed against the disfunctionalities of suburban lifestyles that he compared suburbia to the urban nightmare of George Orwell's *1984*."<sup>1</sup>

"His characters were John and Mary Drone, who lived in Rolling Knolls, where 'For literally nothing down, you too can find a box of your own in one of the fresh-air slums we're building around the edges of American cities . . . inhabited by people whose age, income, number of children, problems, habits, conversations, dress, possessions, perhaps even blood types are almost precisely like yours.'"<sup>2</sup>

The picture window as literary device makes another appearance in Benjamin Cheever's novel *The Good Nanny* (2004). Aileen Panetta writes, "The reference to the picture window is telling. Critics of

the suburbs were ready to assert that the physical environment, the house itself, could have a debilitating effect on the inhabitants—destroy their personalities. The picture window became a contested object. Builders maintained that, besides being cheap to install, it allowed maximum access to light and to nature; critics decried its ubiquity, its charmlessness, its negation of privacy, and its enforcement of the display of virtually identical status objects. For its detractors, the picture window became synonymous with the ills of suburbia itself."<sup>3</sup>

1. William S. Saunders, *Sprawl and Suburbia. A Harvard Design Magazine Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
2. Rosalynn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How Suburbs Happened* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
3. Aileen Panetta, "Westchester: The Suburb in Fiction" from *Westchester: The American Suburb*, ed. Roger G. Panetta (Bronx, New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).

**pod:** An area of single-use zoning (such as a shopping center or residential subdivision) located off a major road

"The term may have derived from peas in a pod or from the pod people in the classic film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Long, winding roads that go nowhere characterize dead-worm subdivisions, places with multiple pods. Pods are often a cul-de-sac . . . or a group of them."<sup>1</sup>

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

**pork chop:** A term used to describe a residential lot that requires a long driveway to reach the house

"Pork chop lots indicate sprawl because they indicate pressure to sell farmland."<sup>1</sup> When owners come under pressure to meet rising taxes, they may sell large lots off existing farmland, one or two at a time. This process is referred to as "nickel and dime housing," a phrase used by planner Tom Daniels. The first lots to be sold are those fronting the road, the second set to go are pork chop lots.

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

**privatopia:** A verbal contraction of "private utopia" referring to a planned or gated community in

which a homeowner's association establishes and enforces rules pertaining to such aspects as property appearance and resident behavior

Such associations, when formed in the absence of an official municipality, may also maintain and operate their own basic infrastructure, including water, sewer, trash, and fire department.  
See also: Community Interest Development (CID), gated community, homeowners association, property owner association (POA)

**power center:** A large retail shopping center consisting primarily of big box stores

Power centers have risen in popularity as the regional mall has been in decline.  
See also: big box, category killer, chain store, discount department store, outlet store, superstore, value retailer, warehouse club

**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.

See also: homeowners association, Community Interest Development (CID)

**Q**

**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 more than urban centers. The phrase is often abbreviated as QOL in academic studies.

**R**

**ranchburger:** A one-story ranch house in a subdivision of similar homes

Ranchburgers are mass-produced and "consumed" like fast-food hamburgers.

**Realtor Mom:** A satirical term coined by David Brooks to describe a suburban Republican woman

who lives in sprinkler city with her husband, dubbed Patio Man<sup>1</sup>

See also: Patio Man, sprinkler city

1. David Brooks, "Patio Man and the Sprawl People," *The Weekly Standard*, August 12, 2002.

**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

The design is meant to relieve traffic congestion in the urban core, although it often leads to heavy traffic just beyond. It is also referred to as a beltway.

**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

It is considered a traffic-calming device designed to slow traffic, particularly in residential areas. Also known as a traffic circle. The first roundabout in the United States was Columbus Circle in New York City, built in 1905 and designed by William Phelps Eno, a pioneer in traffic control and regulation known as the "Father of Public Safety."

**S**

**SLAPP suit (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation):** A lawsuit in which a corporation or developer sues an organization in an attempt to force it to drop protests against a corporate initiative

A common scenario is one where local residents, petitioning to change zoning laws to prevent a real estate development, are served with a SLAPP suit for interfering with a developer's business interests. Many states now have anti-SLAPP suit legislation to protect citizens' rights.

**slow growth:** An urban planning and transportation movement intended to slow down the pace of new housing and commercial development

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

**smart growth:** An urban-planning and transportation movement that advocates sustainable land use through compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented,



pedestrian-friendly, and environmentally conscious development

Smart growth focuses on concentrating growth in the central city and older suburbs as opposed to developments on the edges.

See also: adaptive reuse, cluster zoning, compact land use, high density, infill, mixed-use development

**snout house:** A house from which the garage protrudes like a nose from the main residence toward the street

Common criticisms of this layout include the fact that the garage dominates street frontage, children cannot be watched at play, and the front door is hidden from view.

**soccer mom:** A typical suburban mom with children whom she ferries around (most likely in a minivan) to various after-school activities

During the presidential election of 1996, the media used the term to denote that portion of the demographic that candidates needed to woo in order to win the presidency.

See also: NASCAR dad

**SOHO (Small Office Home Office):** A marketing term that describes the small business and business-at-home worker

See also: home office, telecommute

**speed bump or speed table:** A traffic-calming device in the form of a rounded ridge (bump) or flat, raised plane (table) across a road or driveway designed to slow traffic

While speed bumps are designed to reduce or discourage vehicle through-traffic, the speed table can also serve as a pedestrian crossing.

**sprawl:** The spread of settlements extending beyond the outskirts of a city on undeveloped land

*Sprawl is characterized as haphazard or unchecked growth with a dependency on the automobile, low population densities, fragmented open spaces between real estate developments, frequent lack of public spaces and community centers, single-use zoning, and commercial developments surrounded by extensive parking lots.*

**sprawl stress syndrome:** A condition of worsening health for residents living in low-density suburbs

The term was coined by Joel S. Hirschhorn in the book *Sprawl Kills*: "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."<sup>1</sup>

1. Joel S. Hirschhorn, *Sprawl Kills: How Blandburbs Steal Your Time, Health, and Money* (New York: Sterling & Ross Publishers, 2005), 212.

**sprinkler city:** A fast-growing outer suburb or exurb

The term, which references the irrigation systems necessary to maintain manicured lawns, was coined by David Brooks to describe the locus of the Republican party's base in "Patio Man and the Sprawl People," *Weekly Standard*, August 12, 2002. See also: boomburb, exurb, Patio Man, Realtor Mom, zoomburb

**starter castle:** An extremely large, ostentatious new house

The term is a play on "starter home," a house for a first-time buyer. A starter castle may be built on the site of a teardown, when an existing, functional house is demolished to make room for a new, often much larger structure.

See also: Edifice rex, McMansion, monster home, tract mansion

**streetcar suburb:** Early suburbs, built between 1870 and 1910, constructed along horse carriage and later electric streetcar lines

The property of a streetcar suburb was often owned by the transit companies. Developments could occur within city boundaries as well as in adjacent industrial cities and suburbs. Because they were not designed for the automobile, streetcar suburbs are typically denser than the suburban developments that followed.

**strip mall:** A long, single-story retail complex housing adjacent stores, businesses, and restaurants

Usually a common parking lot is situated in front edged by a sidewalk, and the entire development faces the road with stores aligned in a row. Also referred to as a shopping plaza or mini-mall.

**subdivision:** A housing development created by partitioning land into individual lots for sale or lease

**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 McGonigle Canyon, each located in suburban southern California where homeless, indigenous Mixteco workers coexist with gated communities in Carlsbad, La Costa, Encinitas, and Del Mar.

**superstore:** An over-size retail store that sells many kinds of merchandise or a wide variety of products in a specific category, such as electronics or recreational sporting goods

See also: big box

**SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle):** A large passenger automobile with a roomy interior and a higher driving position built on a truck chassis, typically capable of four-wheel drive

Descended from commercial and military vehicles such as the Jeep, the SUV gained popularity in the 1990s and early 2000s. Although intended for off-road travel, it is more commonly a status symbol and alternative to the minivan. SUVs have also been negatively referred to as "urban assault vehicles."

T

**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.

**technoburb:** An exurb that has organically morphed into a city with an infrastructure, industries, and services spread throughout the area

The term was 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, cam-

pus-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."<sup>1</sup>

See also: nerdistan

1. Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

**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

**theme park**

1: An entertainment complex, typically outdoors, containing a collection of attractions that share an overarching narrative or theme

Descended from traveling fairs and carnivals, early amusement parks offered rides and attractions to visitors in one location. Modern approaches to theme parks are believed to originate with Disneyland and Walt Disney World, beginning in the 1950s in the United States.

2: A type of urban/suburban planning that combines history, architecture, entertainment, and retail to create a simulation of an idealized, citylike space

Examples include megamalls such as the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, Faneuil Hall in Boston, and Universal Studios' City Walk in Los Angeles. The term came into broader use through the book *Variations on a Theme Park. The New American City and the End of Public Space* (1992), edited by Michael Sorkin. He writes that these new "theme park" urban environments are also notable for their consumption of imagery, obsession with security and surveillance, and lack of public space.

See also: Disneyfication, theming

**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, theme park

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

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.

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

1. Dolores Hayden, *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).