The American River Parkway's Suburban Setting: The Sacramento Dream

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A Vision & Policy Primer from the American River Parkway Preservation Society

April 9, 2012

Our Vision

We want our Parkway, seven generations from now, to be a vibrant, accessible, and serene sanctuary, nourishing and refreshing the spirit of all who enter it.

Our Mission

Preserve, Protect, and Strengthen the American River Parkway, Our Community's Natural Heart

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Executive Summary

1) One of the primary reasons the suburbs have historically been an important refuge for city dwellers wishing to escape the city, is safety; most particularly when they are out and about in the city's public space, the city sidewalk, about which Jane Jacobs writes. "When people say that a city, or a part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks." (pp. 9-10)

2) The smart growth oriented urban planner in Sacramento looks out over the sea of suburban housing surrounding the American River Parkway and sees wasted space, but the people fortunate enough to live here, see sacred space; space devoted exclusively to their families and their private lives, space where their children are relatively safe and can grow to maturity within the most defining aspect of the American Dream, the California suburban lifestyle, the Sacramento Dream. (p. 12)

3) While the car, among the urban planning community, is largely tainted by the negative narrative of suburban living—and correctly the cause of some pollution—much of the value of being in our own car as we tool around the community to work, play and shop, is the way in which it provides an extension of our personal space and comfort, as a buffer against the often chaotic and hard-edged nature of the public space we all have to traverse daily. (p. 15)

4) The suburban lifestyle we enjoy today—the "mass phenomenon"—is one sought from ancient times. "Outside the walls of Rome was what citizens called *suburbium*, meaning what was literally below or outside the walls. Here were land uses that couldn't be accommodated in the city..." (p. 19)

5) In California the war against the suburbs is full-throated, as Kotkin (2011, July 26) writes: "In recent years, homeowners have been made to feel a bit like villains rather than the victims of hard times, Wall Street shenanigans and inept regulators. Instead of being praised for braving the elements, suburban homeowners have been made to feel responsible for everything from the Great Recession to obesity to global warming. In

California, the assault on the house has gained official sanction. Once the heartland of the American dream, the Golden State has begun implementing new planning laws designed to combat global warming. These draconian measures could lead to a ban on the construction of private residences, particularly on the suburban fringe." (p. 23)

6) Living in the suburbs is at the heart of the American Dream and virtually every day, I am reminded in some way of the great joy that is part of our family life largely resulting from our life in the suburbs, whether it is the busy chirping of the flocks of birds eating from our bird feeders or bathing in our bird baths, or the squirrels eating up the sunflower seeds sprinkled on the patio each morning, or the occasional hawk finding our back yard to keep the dove and squirrel population in check; or the warmth of the winter and early spring sun when sitting in the back yard, and the refreshing cool of the pool under the blazing Sacramento summer sun; and the peace and quiet largely surrounding us broken occasionally by a barking dog or the playing of the neighbors children or the murmur of a barbeque party; being able to jump in the car and within a couple minutes to be shopping in the grocery store or ordering in a restaurant for a spontaneous meal; or take the short walk to the river; it is all wonderful, all part and parcel of suburban life in the suburban communities surrounding the American River Parkway and the river flowing through it. (p. 26)

7) There is so much that has been learned over the past several decades about city planning and so much still needing to be learned, and for one fundamental idea—the actual structure of our cities—we can look to Bogart (2006) who wrote. "Even by 1960 observers such as Jane Jacobs and Jean Gottman has discerned a new structure for metropolitan areas, although popular interpreters of their work have neglected this insight. This new structure was called the *polycentric city*, in recognition of the multiple centers of economic activity that now comprised the metropolitan area. While some people have recognized this change for more than forty years, it still has surprisingly little impact on the design of public policy. (pp. 27-28)

Introduction

We had concluded our research reports in 2008, having covered all of our organization's five guiding principles, but as we have developed a sixth guiding principle, (see Appendix VI) this research report examines the underlying ideas contributing to that principle.

Each of our guiding principles are essentially concerned with the value of the individual's Parkway experience, and the largely suburban setting within which the Parkway exists—and the large suburban population of Parkway users and voluntary caretakers—certainly affects that experience.

Brief Review

Let's review our six guiding principles—along with the current related updates—and connect them to the user experience and the specific reports and policy ideas we've suggested over the past.

1) Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.

This principle was addressed threefold in our 2007 report *Governance, Ecoregionalism & Heritage,* where we presented the idea that to create a sustainable Parkway we need to protect it through National Heritage Area status; fund it through the development of a large-scale philanthropic effort; and manage it with a nonprofit organization contracting with a Joint Powers Authority of local government.

These three strategies would develop the national stature the Parkway deserves, the supplemental funding it needs, and the management to merge those two major efforts towards the dedicated Parkway focus elevating this local treasure to sustainable permanency.

The necessity of parks in general was well expressed by Will Rogers (2003), the President of the Trust for Public Lands, who said:

> The emergence of America as an urban nation was anticipated by Fredrick Law Olmstead and other 19th century park visionaries, who gave us New York's Central Park, San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and similar grand parks in cities across the nation. They were gardeners and designers—but also preachers for the power of parks, fired from within by the understanding that they were shaping the quality of American Lives for generations to come.
>
> In the view of these park visionaries, parks were not "amenities." They were necessities, providing recreation, inspiration, and essential respite from the city's blare and bustle. And the visionaries were particularly concerned that parks be available to all of a city's residents—especially those who did not have the resources to escape to the countryside. (p. 5)

[Update, April 2012: County Parks is shrinking fast and the administration is wisely turning to more innovative forms of management, including contracting out of certain aspects of parks management, as a recent story interviewing the new parks director, Jeff Leatherman, from the *Sacramento Bee* noted:

> In recent years, the department has lost about 33 percent of its funding and 40 percent of its staff....
>
> **[Interviewer:] Privatization and other forms of management have been proposed as options. Former Rep. Doug Ose is leasing Gibson Ranch. Another group proposed taking over the county parks, supported by a tax. What might we see in the future?**
>
> **[Leatherman]:** Privatization will be considered when appropriate. Partnerships will be essential. We also have agreements with the American Parkway Partnership, which helps take care of the parkway. The California Youth Soccer Association runs the Cherry Island Soccer Complex. Effie Yeaw Nature Center and MacFarland Ranch are run by organizations.

Retrieved April 2, 2012 from http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/02/4383287/qa-with-jeff-leatherman-director.html#storylink=cpy **]**

2) What's good for the salmon is good for the river.

This principle was addressed in our 2006 report *The American River Parkway: Protecting its Integrity and Providing Water for the River Running Through It:* with our focus on building the Auburn Dam to provide the proper water temperature and flow to give the salmon optimal conditions in the American River.

[Update, April 2012: Even though the water rights for the Auburn Dam have been lost and the general consensus is that there is virtually no chance of the Auburn Dam ever being built; the fact is that with congressional re-approval of the dam, the Bureau of Reclamation could reapply for the water rights; especially if there were buyers for the water, three steps that may very well be possible under the leadership of Congressman Tom McClintock, chair of the House Water and Power Sub-Committee.**]**

3) Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.

This principle was addressed in our 2005 report: *The American River Parkway Lower Reach Area: A Corroded Crown Jewel; Restoring the Luster*, where we suggested using the *Housing First* approach to provide housing to the chronic homeless who make up the bulk of illegal campers in the Parkway—since adopted by the city and county—and maintaining regular police sweeps in company with local homeless service providers modeled after the Matrix program that worked well in San Francisco.

[Update, April 2012: Legal assaults on the city and county's attempt to control illegal camping are hampering the ability of public leaders to sustain public safety—threatened by the concentration of large scale illegal campgrounds—within the Parkway.**]**

4) If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.

This principle was also addressed by our 2007 report along with principle #1, and noted that with the increased status of a National Heritage Area, and with active and dedicated oversight by the nonprofit organization managing the Parkway, the ability to protect the Parkway viewshed would be increased dramatically. Also, the increased philanthropic

effort could designate endowed funding to buy Parkway adjacent properties for inclusion into the Parkway as they become available.

5) Regarding new Parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

This principle was addressed in our 2008 report, *The American River Parkway: Recreation, Education, and Sanctuary, A Vision and Policy Primer: Enhancing the Recreational & Educational Resources and Deepening the Sanctuary Experience of our Parkway*, and along with ratifying the need for a nonprofit organization to manage the Parkway to ensure financial stability, and adopting an ecoregional approach for the American River Watershed through the National Heritage Areas program; we called for an aggressive public safety effort, including:

> Consider conducting regular sweeps by the police through the Parkway to eliminate illegal camping, accompanied by homeless advocate and treatment organization representatives, ensuring that warnings are given before the sweeps and any confiscated personal property of the homeless is properly stored for reclaiming. Enlarge and expand ranger patrols, with a major focus on the highest crime area, adopt a model being used in Houston for horse ranger patrols, and create a citizen hot-line and public safety website where photos of illegal camps, trash dumps, or other illegal activity can be posted anonymously. (ARPPS 2008 Report http://www.arpps.org/Report4-RecreationEducation.pdf p. 37)

6) Continuing encasement of open space, restricting suburban community development upon which a sustainable tax base funding necessary public works is built, is contrary to sound future planning.

This will be examined in this report and will revolve around the desire most Americans share to live in the suburbs—ratified by the facts on the ground—and an example of a highly desired suburban lifestyle is that surrounding the American River Parkway.

One of the primary reasons the suburbs have historically been an important refuge for city dwellers wishing to escape the city, is safety; most particularly when they are out and about in the city's public space, the city sidewalk, about which Jacobs (2011) writes.

> When people say that a city, or a part of it, is dangerous or is a jungle what they mean primarily is that they do not feel safe on the sidewalks.
>
> But sidewalks and those who use them are not passive beneficiaries of safety or helpless victim of danger. Sidewalks, their bordering uses, and their users, are active participants in the drama of civilization versus barbarism in cities. To keep the city safe is a fundamental task of a city's streets and its sidewalks.
>
> This task is totally unlike any service that sidewalks and streets in little towns or true suburbs are called upon to do. Great cities are not like towns, only larger. They are not like suburbs, only denser. They differ from towns and suburbs in basic ways, and one of these is that cities are, by definition, full of strangers....
>
> The bedrock attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all these strangers. He must not feel automatically menaced by them...
>
> Today barbarism has taken over many city streets, or people fear it has, which comes to much the same thing in the end. (pp. 37-38)

Being insulated from the barbarism of the city is one of the primary reasons life in the suburbs is so attractive, and that is most certainly true in Sacramento.

Banfield (1968) writes about the city and its problems.

> It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the serious problems of the cities will continue to exist in something like their present form for another twenty years at least. Even on the most favorable assumptions we shall have large concentrations of the poor and the unskilled, and—what, to repeat, is by no means the same thing—the lower class in the central cities and the larger, older suburbs. The outward movement of industry and commerce is bound to continue, leaving ever-larger parts of the inner city blighted or semi-abandoned. (p. 255)

Thirty years later, Sacramentan Bob Waste (1998) writes.

> Sometime around 1990, the basic fabric of American cities changed dramatically. The new post-1990 ecology of American cities is characterized by a seemingly *permanent crisis* involving persistently high levels of poverty, hunger, homelessness, violent crime, infrastructure deterioration, fiscal stress, and—perhaps understandably given the elements that accompany it—voter alienation and a decline in civic participation. Fully *8 percent* of our gross national product is consumed annually by the pathologies of this permanent crisis. (p. 1)

The American River Parkway's Suburban Setting: The Sacramento Dream

The suburban home, lifestyle, and residents have been the recipients of criticism ever since people began moving from the congested, polluted, and dangerous cities out to the nice house in the country, and, as this article from Kotkin (2012) notes, the call for the end of suburban living as if it is just-around-the-corner, is as much a fantasy as the validity of the criticism.

> Nothing more characterizes the current conventional wisdom than the demise of the single-family house. From pundits like Richard Florida to Wall Street investors, the thinking is that the future of America will be characterized increasingly by renters huddling together in small apartments, living the lifestyle of the hip and cool — just like they do in New York, San Francisco and other enlightened places.
>
> Many advising the housing industry now envisage a "radically different and high-rise" future, even though the volume of new multi-unit construction permits remains less than half the level of 2006. Yet with new permits at historically low levels as well for single-family houses, real estate investors, like the lemmings they so often resemble, are traipsing into the multi-family market with sometimes reckless abandon.
>
> Today the argument about the future of housing reminds me of the immortal line from Groucho Marx: Who are you going to believe, me or your lyin' eyes? Start with the strong preference of the vast majority of Americans to live in detached houses rather than crowd into apartments. "Many things — government policies, tax structures, financing methods, home-ownership patterns, and availability of land — account for how people choose to live, but the most important factor is culture," notes urban historian Witold Rybczynski.
>
> Homeownership and the single-family house, Rybczynski notes, rests on many fairly mundane things — desire for privacy, need to accommodate children and increasingly the needs of aging parents and underemployed adult children. Such considerations rarely enter the consciousness of urban planning professors, "smart growth" advocates and architectural aesthetes swooning over a high-density rental future.
>
> Just look at the numbers. Over the last decade— even as urban density has been embraced breathlessly by a largely uncritical media — close to 80% of all new households, according to the American Community Survey, chose to settle in single-family houses.

> Now, of course, we are told, it's different. Yet over the past decade, vacancy rates rose the *most* in multi-unit housing, with an increase of 61%, rising from 10.7% in 2000 to 17.1% in 2010. The vacancy rate in detached housing also rose but at a slower rate, from 7.3% in 2000 to 10.7% in 2010, an increase of 48%. Attached housing – such as townhouses – posted the slightest increase in vacancies, from 8.4% in 2000 to 11.0% in 2010, an increase of 32%.
>
> The attractiveness of rental apartments may soon be peaking just in time for late investors to take a nice haircut. Rising rents, a byproduct of speculative buying of apartments, already are making mortgage payments a more affordable option in such key markets as Atlanta, Chicago, Miami, Phoenix and Las Vegas.
>
> Urbanist pundits often insist the rush to rental apartments will be sustained by demographic trends. One tired cliché suggest that empty nesters are chafing to leave their suburban homes to move into urban apartments. Yet, notes longtime senior housing consultant Joe Verdoon, both market analysis and the Census tells us the opposite: most older folks are either staying put, or, if they relocate, are moving further out from the urban core. (n.p.)

The smart growth oriented urban planner in Sacramento looks out over the sea of suburban housing surrounding the American River Parkway and sees wasted space, but the people fortunate enough to live here, see sacred space; space devoted exclusively to their families and their private lives, space where their children are relatively safe and can grow to maturity within the most defining aspect of the American Dream, the California suburban lifestyle, the Sacramento Dream.

I've recently been reading the book by D. J. Waldie (1996), *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*, about which Dr. Kevin Starr says:

> I have read hundreds, perhaps a thousand or more, memoirs of California. *Holy Land* ranks with the best of them. With spare fact, minimalist prose, and rich emotion, Don Waldie has managed to present the rise of suburban Southern California in its full complexity. His prose hovers on poetry. His sentences speak volumes. Here is a book that upon publication will join the canon of works through which California continues to identify itself. (Back cover)

Reading it brings back many wonderful memories of growing up in the suburbs, on the corner lot, in my own room, a huge lawn I had to mow for my allowance, and later, my own paper route all around our suburb of about 500 homes to which I delivered papers to about 100 of them.

Waldie writes:

> You and I grew up in these neighborhoods when they were an interweaving of houses and fields that were soon to be filled with more houses.
>
> A particular sound marked the boundary of the neighborhood. It was the barking of dogs near full dark in summer. Do you remember it?
>
> The flat barking skipped from block to block, unhinged from causes, not necessarily your neighbor's dog, but their dog too.
>
> That sound became the whole neighborhood clearing its throat before going to bed and sleep. (p. 3)
>
> Both my parents are dead; my older brother moved away to repair cars. I live in the house that belonged to the three of them, the house my parents bought for $6,700, and into which my brother was born as their first gift.
>
> I have taken their places, displacing everything of theirs except the way in which they succeeded in fitting into this small house before I was born.
>
> My brother and I, who shared a room for almost twenty years, slept in identical beds. Our bedspreads were always the same...
>
> After work at city hall, I walk home on straight, flat sidewalks. Their lines converge ahead of me into a confusion of trees and lawns.
>
> The sidewalk is four feet wide. The street is forty feet wide. The strip of lawn between the street and the sidewalk is seven feet. The setback from curb to house is twenty feet.
>
> This pattern—of asphalt, grass, concrete, grass—is as regular as any thought of God's. (*Ibid*. pp. 47-48)
>
> The critics of suburbs say that you and I live narrow lives.
>
> I agree. My life is narrow.
>
> From one perspective or another, all our lives are narrow. Only when lives are placed side by side do they seem larger. (*Ibid*. p. 94)

To the smart growth advocate, being a suburbanite versus urbanite is virtually always suspect, and it's reflected in our language. The Oxford Dictionary (1993) has as one of its definitions of suburban:

> **2.** Having characteristics regarded as typical of residents or life in the suburbs of a city; *esp*. provincial, narrow-minded, uncultured, naïve. (p. 3127)

However, being urbane, from urban, fares much better.

> **2.** Having the qualities or characteristics associated with town or city life; *esp*. elegant and refined in manners, courteous, suave, sophisticated. (*Ibid.* p. 3527)

Prejudice against suburban living as somehow living an inauthentic life is widespread and repeated regularly, as a recent local example, in a March 24th editorial in the *Sacramento Bee* about the future plans for Broadway.

> I remember when the thoroughfare barely survived the insult that is the elevated Capital City Freeway erected two blocks north in the late 1960s. Still, even in the shadow of the freeway, Broadway remains interesting and vibrant, not in the shiny new mall, suburban way but in a more authentic, urban edgy way. (Rutland, 2012, n.p.)

We can see how upside down this prejudice against the suburbs is in relation to the Parkway where those areas that are embraced by the suburbs—from Cal Expo to Folsom Lake—are cozy, neighborly, and family-centric, the very reason so many who only frequent that part of the Parkway refer to it as the crown jewel of the Sacramento region.

While those who frequent the area known as the Lower Reach, from Discovery Park to Cal Expo, largely surrounded by the urban areas of Downtown and North Sacramento, have a much different experience, which leads to the common description of that area as the most dangerous area of the Parkway.

It is this local reality from which we will examine the larger reality of the value of suburban living in relation to urban, which from our point of view, each is valuable from the perspective of those who treasure their lives within each—and all other—types of community.

When I lived in downtown Sacramento in various locations over the years—on the seventh floor of Capital Towers at 7th and P Streets, a lovely large house on 26th and Capital Avenue and in a few midtown apartments—I loved it, because it fit my lifestyle at

the time. I was single, either going to college or working as a consultant, traveling a lot; and not having to worry about a car or leaving my house unattended worked for me.

Once I married and we had a child, everything changed, and living in the suburbs, in terms of schools, spacious yards for our family, which includes pets, fish pond, pool, patio and barbeque, the ease of getting around in our cars, and just the sense of quiet and calm that pervades the suburbs along the Parkway—we've lived in Arden Park, Gold River, and Sierra Oaks—make suburban living the best option.

While the car, among the urban planning community, is largely tainted by the negative narrative of suburban living—and correctly the cause of some pollution—much of the value of being in our own car as we tool around the community to work, play, and shop, is the way in which it provides an extension of our personal space and comfort, as a buffer against the often chaotic and hard-edged nature of the public space we all have to traverse daily.

Verdoorn (2012, February 21) writes about the influence of the car on suburban development.

> Since the early 20th century, the almost universal adoption of the automobile by US residents has had a profound impact on how we plan and design communities. The widespread use of the auto not only spurred development outside of traditional urban centers, it minimized the need to blend multiple land uses into compact areas.
>
> In contrast, traditional neighborhood design, especially in the northern Midwest and Northeast, accommodated a microcosm of commerce including grocery, butcher, hardware, tavern, cafe and dining establishments to serve relatively small markets living and working within walking distance of the neighborhood.
>
> The advent of the automotive age has spurred the development of suburbs outside the urban core that are characterized by carefully separated land uses, especially between residential and non-residential uses. Most cities developed zoning ordinances which created barriers to 'protect' residential sanctity. (n.p.)

For us, suburban living centers not only on the car, but on the ranch-style house: one story and sprawling, big windows, surrounded by a yard and fence, two or three car garage, and, especially in Sacramento, topped off by a pool.

Hess (2004) writes about the ranch house:

> The Ranch House is a twentieth-century invention. From sprawling ramblers under cedar-shake roofs to the minimal ranches of mass-produced housing tracts; from sleek contemporary varieties to middle class ranches on quarter acre lots with board-and-batten siding, diamond window mullions, and dovecotes over the garage; from Colonial, Spanish, and French Country ranches to the open plan ranch of family rooms and sliding glass doors—the ranch is the primary housing type from a period of American national expansion. It is the face of the suburb, whether beloved or reviled....Beginning in the 1950s, the Ranch House became one of the most widespread, successful, and purposeful of American housing types—a shelter of choice for both movie stars in the San Fernando Valley and aerospace factory workers in Lakewood [the suburban community described in *Holy Land* quoted earlier]. The Ranch House matches the philosophical potency of the bungalow, it outstrips the brownstone in numbers, and it challenges the log cabin in mythic power. As the suburbs expanded, the Ranch House grew out of a search for a homestead in nature. (p. 11)

One of the early designers of the California Ranch was Cliff May—in a way, a true guru of the California Dream—about whom Gregory (2008) writes:

> Cliff May was larger than life and attracted larger-than-life personalities to his ranch house lifestyle, from Hollywood composers to oil men, from the inventor of the Lear jet to one of Australia's largest chicken farmers. He once said "I just build one kind of house...I just had one style." But this house and style came to epitomize the American dream after World War II. Cliff personally designed or built more than one thousand homes and commercial properties and his plans were used in the construction of more than eighteen thousand tract ranch houses. Whole neighborhoods, like the Ranchos in Long Beach, California, and Harvey Park in Denver, Colorado, are comprised of Cliff May ranch houses. Cliff became a kind of design ambassador to the nation and the world.
>
> Design historian Jody Greenwald credits Cliff May with transforming the modern American ranch house from a thick-walled, enclosed structure into an elegant, light-filled pavilion that flowed into a garden-cum-outdoor living room. And architectural historian David Bricker says that in Cliff May's work, "nature was always just a few steps away." I would go a step farther and say that Cliff May perfected what might be called the "Architectural palindrome"—that is, he created a seamless experience of indoors-outdoors and outdoors-indoors.
>
> By the end of his career—which stretched from the early 1930s to the 1980s—Cliff May ranch houses could be found in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, the Caribbean, Mexico, and even Australia, Ireland, and Switzerland. Though Cliff was by no means the only designer of the suburban ranch house, he was the most influential popularizer of the style, giving it an

> almost theatrical glamour that was hard to resist. And he took it to its logical extreme. The Cliff May ranch house became an export version of the California ideal. At once modern and traditional, practical and romantic, man-made and organic, it was California planted in a container: you just had to add water. (p. 20)

Of historical interest is the original brochure advertising the Long Beach Ranchos tract, designed by Cliff May and Chris Choate in partnership with builder Ross Cortese, in 1954, see it at http://www.ranchostyle.com/RanchosBrochure_1954.pdf

Another major reason the suburbs are so attractive to people is the sense of community and the standards generally prevailing there, standards that encourage a sense of safety and privacy respected, which does not generally characterize the central city, about which Wilson (1983) writes.

> Increasingly, the central city is coming to be made up of persons who have no interest, or who face special disabilities, in creating and maintaining a sense of community. There are several such groups, each with a particular problem and each with varying degrees of ability to cope with that problem. One is composed of [the] affluent...without children (young couples, single persons, elderly couples whose children have left home) who either...lack an interest in community or (as with the elderly couples) lack the ability to participate meaningfully in the maintenance of community. But for such persons there are alternatives to community, principally, inhabiting a special physical environment that insulates the occupant from those threats it is the function of community to control. They move into high-rise buildings in which their apartment is connected to an elevator either to a basement garage or to a lobby guarded by a doorman and perhaps even a private police force. Thick walls and high fences protect such open spaces as exist from the intrusion of outsiders. The apartments may be air-conditioned, so that the windows need never be opened to admit street noises. (p. 33-34)

For people who like the city, the uncertainty of it is part of the edginess they find attractive—as I did at one point in my life—and it does not necessarily feel unsafe to them as they adopt certain ways of presence, clothing, and carriage that can provide some of the safety and privacy sacrificed living there. For those activists who like the city and do not like the suburbs, the past several decades have been devoted to creating and maintaining an international movement of environmentalists and urban planners operating under the assumption that the suburban lifestyle so deeply treasured by most human beings and Americans most of all—and none any more so than in the

magnificent suburban neighborhoods surrounding the American River Parkway—is a lifestyle that is the cause of most of the problems of the planetary environment, as proclaimed by Duany (2010) in one of the bibles of the environmentalist movement.

> We can now state in no uncertain terms that blame for the planet's environmental problems lies with the life style of the American middle class: the way we live large and occupy too much land; the way we must drive to accomplish so many perfectly ordinary tasks; the way we grow our food; and the way our dependence on cars leads us to compensate for social isolation with an astonishing level of unnecessary consumption. In other words, the root cause of the fearsome crises we are now facing is this pleasant suburban life of ours, and we have to do something about it *right now*. (p. xviii, italics in original)

One prominent Sacramento environmentalist leader echoes this position.

> There are myriad economic, social and environmental reasons urban sprawl, and its resulting automobile dependency, has been the scourge of every California community – indeed every American community – for 60 years. (Mogavero, 2011, n.p.)

Paradoxically, throughout history, the intensity and pressure of the urban core has provided the environment for innovative wealth creating that enable its most successful producers to leverage luxurious lives lived in the suburbs, the areas most often described derisively as sprawl.

Bruegmann (2005) in his eloquent history of suburban living defines sprawl and puts it into historical context.

> ...low-density, scattered, urban development without systematic large-scale or regional public land-use planning.
>
> Using this definition, we can safely say that sprawl has been a persistent feature in cities since the beginning of urban history. Throughout this history, as cities have become economically mature and prosperous, they have tended to spread outward at decreasing densities. What was new in the twentieth century was that sprawl at last became a mass phenomenon. This decrease in density in affluent cities is perhaps the single most important fact in urban development of our era. There are few urban areas in the world today that exhibit densities anything like those that characterized most large cities from Mesopotamian times through the nineteenth century. Where 150,000 people per square mile was once a standard urban density, it is rare to find densities of even 25,000 people per square mile in

> affluent cities today, and most urban dwellers live in densities much lower still. (p. 18)

The suburban lifestyle we enjoy today—the "mass phenomenon"—is one sought from ancient times.

> Outside the walls of Rome was what citizens called *suburbium*, meaning what was literally below or outside the walls. Here were land uses that couldn't be accommodated in the city...
>
> Ancient, medieval and early modern literature is filled with stories of the elegant life of a privileged aristocracy living for large parts of the year in villas and hunting lodges at the periphery of large cities. Nor was the preference for living quarters outside the center restricted to the Western world. Exactly the same sentiments in favor of low-density living outside the city were voiced by the gentry in China at least as early as the Ming dynasty [1368 to 1644]. High density, from the time of Babylon until recently, was the great urban evil, and many of the wealthiest or most powerful citizens found ways to escape it at least temporarily. (*Ibid*. p. 23)

And, it is truly a universal aspiration, as Kotkin in his book *The City* (2005) writes:

> Suburbia, triumphant in the world's leading economy, also swept successfully through virtually every part of the advanced industrial world...
>
> This "universal aspiration" emerged early in former colonial cities in Argentina and Australia. Urbanites in these land-rich countries were quick to take advantage of peripheral locations. By 1904 Buenos Aires had spread out so far, that as one Spanish observer commented, it "was not a city, but a combination of adjoining cities." This trend would continue throughout the rest of the century.
>
> Much the same occurred in Australia. As the rural population dropped precipitously after 1930, the suburbs around the great Australian cities, notably Melbourne and Sydney, grew as rapidly as in the United States. Like their American counterparts, Australian intellectuals generally despised the suburbanizing trend, but the population still gravitated to these less than culturally effervescent places, which, as one writer charitably observed, appealed to "the Australian's concentration on his home and family." (pp. 122-123)

As most environmentalists and urban planners keep trying to sell the case that the "great urban evil" is suburban sprawl, Americans—and others virtually everyplace around the globe—yearned for a life in the suburbs, a life they clearly believed was the fulfillment of the American Dream desired by all, as noted by Kotkin (2005, November).

> As early as 1923, noted *National Geographic*, Americans were "spreading out." The Great Depression temporarily slowed the outward migration but not the yearning among Americans. Following the end of World War II, the pace of suburbanization again accelerated, accounting for a remarkable 84 percent of the nation's population increase during the 1950s.
>
> Once a nation of farms and cities, America was being transformed into a primarily suburban country. No longer confined to old towns or "streetcar suburbs" near the urban core, suburbanites increasingly lived in new, ever-more spread-out developments such as Levittown, which arose on the Long Island flatlands in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Behind this drive lay a fundamental reality that often escapes urban theorists: Compared to the option of living closely packed in apartment blocks, most human beings will opt for more space and privacy, and perhaps even a spot of lawn. Noted the prominent Los Angeles urbanist, the Italian immigrant Edgardo Contini:
>
> *The suburban house is the idealization of every immigrant's dream—the vassal's dream of his own castle. Europeans who come here are delighted by our suburbs. Not to live in an apartment! It is a universal aspiration to own your own home.*
>
> As Contini noted, this preference for suburbia and the single-family home was not just for Americans. In places with ample land, such as Australia and Canada, the suburban impulse was widely adopted. Even less recognized, this decentralizing pattern has emerged even in some of the world's oldest settled cities, such as London, Paris, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Tokyo. This has occurred despite often strong government incentives to keep people in the center, high energy costs and excellent transit. (p. 6)

Bruegmann (2005) writes about the historic criticism of sprawl as it developed in Britain over the past century, noting:

> Also predictably, criticism of sprawl has virtually always been aimed at people outside the speaker's or writer's own circle.
>
> As I noted in chapter 3, rising prosperity in London and other British cities in the 1920s allowed an unprecedented number of families to move outward into areas of greatly reduced density. The incredible growth of the suburbs with their miles of semidetached houses led to a violent reaction among members of Britain's literary and artistic elite. "We are making a screaming mess of England," a typical jeremiad started. The author continued with this arresting metaphor: "A gimcrack civilization crawls like a gigantic slug over the country, leaving a foul trail of slime behind it." The book in which this essay appeared was edited by the most tenacious and vociferous of the opponents of suburban growth in this period and almost certainly the era's most interesting anti-sprawl prose stylist, the architect Clough Williams-Ellis. William-Ellis in an earlier publication, his

> scathing 1928 volume *England and the Octopus* spared no adjectives in his war on developers: “There was no attempt at an intelligent general lay-out plan: all was cut-throat grab, exploitation and waste—a mad game of beggar-my-neighbor between a host of greedy little sneak-builders and speculators—supplying the demand for homes meanly and usuriously.” But, a few pages later his target was the inhabitants themselves: “As the Joneses fly from the town, so does the country fly from the pink bungalow that they have perched so hopefully on its eligible site. The true countryman will know that the area is infected—the Jones have brought the blight of their town or suburb with them—and in all probability they and their home will be followed by an incursion of like-minded people similarly housed, and the country will be found to have further withdrawn itself beyond the skyline in its losing retreat towards the sea.” (pp. 117-118)

The description of human beings—especially suburbanites—as an infection and cause of all natural problems, folded into a rejection of the Judean-Christian theology of human beings as stewards of the earth, forms a central locus of the environmentalist movement, clearly enunciated in the platform of the Foundation for Deep Ecology, one underlying narrative animating the environmentalist movement and from their website we read:

> 1) The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: inherent worth; intrinsic value; inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
>
> 2) Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
>
> 3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
>
> 4) Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
>
> 5) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
>
> 6) Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
>
> 7) The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher

> standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
>
> 8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.
>
> - *Arne Naess and George Sessions*

Retrieved April 2, 2012 from http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm

Chase (2001) elaborates:

> From America's long-term infatuation with primitive wilderness the [environmental] movement derived the notions that preservation meant "restoring" these prehistoric "conditions" by leaving nature alone. From preservationists such as Thoreau and Muir it inherited a Calvinistic certainty in the righteousness of its cause which justified moral exclusion of those deemed to be damned.
>
> Borrowing from European ideas, it transformed ecology from a promising science into a highly political one. From thinkers such as Hegel and Naess it derived a monistic metaphysics justifying activism and absolutism, and a belief that nature was the source of political truth. The vision of all things as interconnected led to the idea that all things were equally valuable. Positing ecosystem health as the supreme value diminished the standing of individuals.
>
> Out of this odd coupling of mystical American ideals with systematic European philosophies rose a doctrine that was neither fascist nor entirely home-grown but something new—biocentrism, which held that the best way to preserve nature was to leave it alone, and that the supreme good to which society should dedicate itself is not human happiness, but the health of nature. The ecosystem became the model for culture, and global survival was deemed to depend on promoting "diversity" by social engineering or by force. (p. 412)

Bruegmann (2005) also writes about the anti-sprawl movement's beginnings in America, after the ravages of World War II focused the attention of European nation's on rebuilding their city centers destroyed by bombing.

> With Europe's population and economy decimated, the United States became the most important battlefield in the war against sprawl in the first decades after World War II. What triggered this new campaign was the prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s and the resulting building boom. As in the booms of the 1880s and 1920s, the majority of the new growth took place at the periphery and at lower densities than ever before. It appears that lot sizes in subdivisions in the United

> States, which had been expanding since the late nineteenth century, reached their apogee in the 1950s when a large number of American families were able to purchase suburban lots of a quarter acre or even larger...By the middle of the 1950s, a strong reaction against decentralization and suburbanization was underway among urban professionals.

Fortune Magazine Conference

> In the late 1950s the topic of sprawl caught the eye of journalist William H. Whyte, a young and precocious staff member at *Fortune* magazine who was already well known for a pioneering study of the postwar suburban community of Park Forest, outside Chicago. Whyte convened what was probably the first conference specifically devoted to sprawl. In attendance were some of the most important names in American city planning and architecture. After the conference, Whyte gathered essays by some of the participants into a book called *The Exploding Metropolis*. This book was a hymn of praise to the dense traditional city and a bitter attack on postwar suburban development. Whyte's own introduction and his essay entitled "Urban Sprawl" brought the term to a wide reading public. On the first page of his essay he informed readers that "huge patches of once green countryside have been turned into vast, smog-filled deserts that are neither city, suburb, nor country and each day—at a rate of some 3,000 acres a day—more countryside is being bulldozed under." While the assumptions and language of this passage were obviously inspired by British critics of the interwar years, Whyte then introduced a new, more specifically American target as his prime example of all that was wrong with contemporary urban development: Los Angeles. He described the flight in an airplane from Los Angeles to San Bernardino as "an unnerving example of man's infinite capacity to mess up his environment." In the decades that followed, the suburban subdivisions of Los Angeles replaced the slums of Manchester as the ultimate urban horror, at least for intellectuals and academics living in the dense old industrial cities of the American northeast. (pp. 121-122)

In California the war against the suburbs is full-throated, as Kotkin (2011, July 26) writes:

> In recent years, homeowners have been made to feel a bit like villains rather than the victims of hard times, Wall Street shenanigans and inept regulators. Instead of being praised for braving the elements, suburban homeowners have been made to feel responsible for everything from the Great Recession to obesity to global warming.
>
> In California, the assault on the house has gained official sanction. Once the heartland of the American dream, the Golden State has begun implementing new planning laws designed to combat global warming. These draconian measures could lead to a ban on the construction of private residences, particularly on the suburban fringe. The new legislation's goal is to cram future generations of

> Californians into multi-family apartment buildings, turning them from car-driving suburbanites into strap-hanging urbanistas.
>
> That's not what Californians want: Some 71% of adults in the state cite a preference for single-family houses. Furthermore, the vast majority of growth over the past decade has taken place not in high-density urban centers but in lower-density peripheral areas such as Riverside-San Bernardino. Yet popular preferences mean little in a state where environmental zealotry increasingly dictates how people should live their lives.
>
> Some advocates do cite market forces to justify their policies. Economists on the left and right have cited the recent housing bust as proof that homes are not great investments, suggesting people would be better off leaving their money to the tender mercies of Wall Street speculators. Some demographers also suggest that young people will choose to live in high-density regions throughout their lives and that as boomers age they too will opt out of suburbs for urban apartment living.
>
> These "facts" may be more grounded in academic mythology than reality. Some widely quoted experts, like the Anderson Forecast at UCLA, cite Census information to say that demographics are shifting demand from single-family homes to condos and apartments, although the Census asked no such question. These experts also fail to address why condo prices have dropped even *more* in the major California markets than single-family home prices; the percentage of starts that come from single-family houses shifts from year to year, but last year's number tracks around the same level as seen in the 1980s. (n. p.)

Cox (2012) elaborates on California's war against suburbia.

> It's no secret that California's regulatory and tax climate is driving business investment to other states. California's high cost of living also is driving people away. Since 2000 more than 1.6 million people have fled, and my own research as well as that of others points to high housing prices as the principal factor.
>
> The exodus is likely to accelerate. California has declared war on the most popular housing choice, the single family, detached home—all in the name of saving the planet.
>
> Metropolitan area governments are adopting plans that would require most new housing to be built at 20 or more to the acre, which is at least five times the traditional quarter acre per house. State and regional planners also seek to radically restructure urban areas, forcing much of the new hyperdensity development into narrowly confined corridors. ...
>
> To understand how dramatic a change this would be, consider that if the planners have their way, 68% of new housing in Southern California by 2035 would be condos and apartment complexes. This contrasts with Census Bureau data

> showing that single-family, detached homes represented more than 80% of the increase in the region's housing stock between 2000 and 2010.
>
> The campaign against suburbia is the result of laws passed in 2006 (the Global Warming Solutions Act) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in 2008 (the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act) on urban planning. The latter law, as the Los Angeles Times aptly characterized it, was intended to "control suburban sprawl, build homes closer to downtown and reduce commuter driving, thus decreasing climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions." In short, to discourage automobile use. (n. p.)

One of the anti-suburban arguments put forth by the smart growth proponents is that we are running out of room due to suburban sprawl, about which Bruegmann (2005) wrote:

> Agriculture aside, some observers, particularly those in the largest and fastest growing cities, believe that sprawl is consuming an excessive amount of land and is well on the way to paving over the entire American countryside. The use of the prejudicial term “consuming,” even in supposedly dispassionate analysis, is symptomatic. It suggests that farmers or agricultural companies do not “consume” land but that any developer or suburban homeowner does even though the farmland is just as much a product of human action as the subdivision. In any event, by even the most generous estimates, the total amount of developed land today is probably no more than about 5 percent of the total of nearly 2 billion acres in the continental United States. Looked at another way, it would be possible to accommodate the entire population of the United States, nearly 300 million people, at suburban densities within the slightly over 65,000 square miles of the state of Wisconsin. It is also important to note that the amount of land added to the country’s supply of permanent open space, including public parks, national forest, and other areas set aside from development, has been increasing faster that the amount of urbanized land. (p. 143)

Sacramento is a suburban region, whether from the older close-in suburbs like the Fab Forties, Woodlake and Oak Park, to the newer further-out like Sierra Oaks (Appendix I is a historic sales piece developed for the then new suburb of Sierra Oaks) Fair Oaks, Carmichael, Rancho Cordova, Gold River, & Citrus Heights, we are primarily a suburban community, and that is a very large part of our desirability for families and retirees.

Conclusion

I was raised as a suburbanite, lived as an urbanite for many years when young and single, and have become a suburbanite again, never to change.

Living in the suburbs is at the heart of the American Dream and virtually every day, I am reminded in some way of the great joy that is part of our family life largely resulting from our life in the suburbs, whether it is the busy chirping of the flocks of birds eating from our bird feeders or bathing in our bird baths, or the squirrels eating up the sunflower seeds sprinkled on the patio each morning, or the occasional hawk finding our back yard to keep the dove and squirrel population in check; or the warmth of the winter and early spring sun when sitting in the back yard, and the refreshing cool of the pool under the blazing Sacramento summer sun; and the peace and quiet largely surrounding us broken occasionally by a barking dog or the playing of the neighbors children or the murmur of a barbeque party; being able to jump in the car and within a couple minutes to be shopping in the grocery store or ordering in a restaurant for a spontaneous meal; or take the short walk to the river; it is all wonderful, all part and parcel of suburban life in the suburban communities surrounding the American River Parkway and the river flowing through it.

A great writer who wrote lovingly and penetratingly about the suburbs was John Updike—Appendix III—and his often biting writing captures, not only the daily wonder and light, but the oft-described underlying darkness and desperation which, while occupying much of the thought of suburban critics, is more of a reality in literature than in actuality.

Finally, a brief mention about the revitalization of central urban areas, a revitalization which is certainly compatible with the health of the suburbs, and which could begin with an exploration of the early 20th Century City Beautiful Movement, which plans the city around the idea of beauty—Appendix V.

Using the standard of beauty as a center of urban planning has also been discussed recently in an article by Scruton (2012, March) entitled: *A plea for beauty: a manifesto for a new urbanism*, which makes three key points:

- The decline of American cities, which saps the nation's social, cultural, economic, and political vitality, is due largely to the ugliness of their centers.
- Neither market solutions nor centralized master planning can save our cities.
- Urban renewal depends on attracting the middle class with the kind of beauty that flourishes in cities and obeying aesthetic side constraints that create a sense of settlement.

Jane Jacobs, the seminal American critic of orthodox city planning and a fervent New Yorker, did not particularly care for the City Beautiful Movement, referring to it in her seminal book on cities:

> The aim of the City Beautiful was the City Monumental. Great schemes were drawn up for systems of baroque boulevards, which mainly came to nothing. What did come out of the movement was the Center Monumental, modeled on the fair. City after city built its civic center or its cultural center. These buildings were arranged along a boulevard as at Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, or along a mall like the Government Center in Cleveland, or were bordered by park, like the Civic Center at St. Louis, or were interspersed with park, like the Civic Center at San Francisco. (2011, p. 33)

Manhattan is seen as a glorious example of urban living, elegantly produced in the Tom Hanks/Meg Ryan Manhattan-based movie, *You've Got Mail;* and the recent article, *The Greatest Grid*—Appendix IV—takes a look at its history and structure, noting:

> The first lesson of the [Manhattan] grid is that scale is everything. The plan was scaled to 19th-century life and dimensions; it predated the automobile, which it accommodates badly. But what it gave us, with its short, 200-foot block lengths and small, 20- to 25-foot lot sizes, its direct and easy navigability, is a walkable, personal city at human scale, where every street is an endlessly varied and inviting series of visual experiences, of constantly changing shopfronts, restaurants and buildings of infinite styles and uses. (n. p.)

There is so much that has been learned over the past several decades about city planning and so much still needing to be learned and for one fundamental idea—the actual structure of our cities—we can look to Bogart (2006) who wrote.

> Even by 1960 observers such as Jane Jacobs and Jean Gottman has discerned a new structure for metropolitan areas, although popular interpreters of their work have neglected this insight. This new structure was called the *polycentric city*, in recognition of the multiple centers of economic activity that now comprised the metropolitan area. While some people have recognized this change for more than forty years, it still has surprisingly little impact on the design of public policy. With notable exceptions, such as Phoenix's *urban villages* planning concept, most metropolitan areas remain wedded to a picture of the world in which the downtown of the central city is the dominant employment center. Local governments and private individuals devote great resources to reverse the exodus of businesses from the downtown. Some of this activity is appropriate, but much of it has an impact resembling that of King Canute's orders to the tide. (p. 9)

The central point we should try to remember is that we all—suburbanites and urbanites—though the differences in our urban/suburban planning strategies may be substantial and of deep historical, ideological, and even theological provenance, respect for the dignity of each other and the choices each of us make in living our lives, and the future of health, prosperity, and good will we all desire for Sacramento, is an excellent baseline for productive dialogue and effective policy strategies that can create and sustain beautiful urban and suburban communities in our fair city.

Our organizational strategy—Appendix II—will continue to work to prime the Parkway and related policy discussions within these parameters.

Appendix I

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF SIERRA OAKS . . . .

Sierra Oaks is the realization of a dream of far-sighted young men. At a time when Fulton Avenue was but a dirt road and the surrounding property just pasture, Chris R. Jones, Sr., Wilbur F. Brand, Sr., and Frank P. Williams pioneered a development that remains one of the most desirable areas of Sacramento county today.

In 1929, when the map of Sierra Oaks was recorded, Sacramento had a population of 110,000. Believing that there was a need and demand for relaxed country living close by the city, the developers embarked on this experiment in suburban living. It was indeed a big step in subdivision development. Until that time there were no developments outside the city limits nor outside of the city's natural boundaries of the American and Sacramento Rivers.

An Eastern woman who had never seen the property agreed to sell this stretch of pasture land, located just west of the Sierra Oaks dairy which was operated by two Swiss farmers. One of the most prominent land planners in the nation from St. Louis, Missouri, was called on to create a prestigious setting. The first unit of Sierra Oaks opened in 1929, and included Crocker and Hopkins Roads, intersected by Mills Road with Stanford Park located at H Street Road, now known as Fair Oaks Boulevard. During the next 35 years, Jones & Brand & Hullin subdivided many residential units of Sierra oaks on the south side of Fair Oaks Boulevard.

Realizing the importance of a rural atmosphere, the planners of the original unity did not provide for sidewalks, except for connecting pathways between Crocker and Hopkins Roads that still remain today. Unique building restrictions were drafted to preserve the character of the area, including the 5—foot setbacks and provisions that all homes be built 40 feet apart. There was even a tennis court built for the use of early day residents.

A few at a time, many of Sacramento's prominent families left their homes in the city to settle in this new locale. The price restriction for the first unit ranged from $7,500 to $10,000. There were many questions to be asked. Where do we do our shopping? Will we be stranded unless we have two cars? Is there adequate fire and police protection out there? The answers to many of these questions were slow in coming. However, an optimistic Richfield Oil Company leased the corner across from Stanford Park on Fair Oaks Boulevard, and was used as a combination gas station and country grocery store.

The Sacramento Regional Office of Coldwell Banker now occupies this building.

Another Normandy style building built in 1929 across from Stanford Park at Millis Road was the real estate sales office for Sierra Oaks, and across the street from this building is a Normandy style building built in the 1960's. This was the home of Jones & Brand & Hullin for many years. Today, Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate Services with

about 40 sales agents occupies the first floor of the building on Drake Circle, and Jones & Brand & Hullin Insurance Services occupies the second floor of the building.

The only close-by elementary school was Arden School at Watt Avenue and Arden Way, and high school students had to travel back to the city to attend Sacramento Main High School.

While country living had its drawbacks, Sierra Oaks offered early residents natural beauty, a leisurely lifestyle, and a dedication toward quality living. Based on this philosophy, Sierra Oaks has grown into the lovely suburban area that we know today.

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Appendix II

The American River Parkway Preservation Society
Strategy & Implementation

Preserve, Protect & Strengthen the American River Parkway
For As Long As The River Runs Through It: (2009 – 2014)

Introduction

The leadership in our community has a responsibility to create a vision that preserves, protects and strengthens the treasured resource of the American River Parkway in perpetuity.

We invested our first five years—2003 to 2008—pursuing a strategy of organizational capacity building and conducting research in the practical approaches, emanating from our guiding principles we've determined can address the critical issues impacting the Parkway, and communicating with our members and the public those results.

Six Critical Issues & Corresponding Guiding Principle

1) Continuing depletion of public funding to provide vital ongoing maintenance, facility repair, law enforcement presence, invasive plant management, and fully restore a sense of safety for those using our priceless public resource.

Our Guiding Principle: Preserving the Parkway is not an option, it's a necessity.

2) Continuing pressure on the river, whether through flooding, illegal sewage discharge, or taking water for new development, hurts the salmon and other aquatic life.

Our Guiding Principle: What's good for the salmon is good for the river.

3) Continuing habitat devastation, fires, and pollution from widespread illegal camping by the homeless, primarily in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding illegal camping by the homeless in the North Sacramento area of the Parkway: Social and environmental justice calls upon us to help the poor and distressed person but not at the expense of the adjacent community to visit the Parkway safely.

4) Continuing development pressure to build large homes along the Parkway edges, intruding on the view space, and encroaching into the commons.

Our Guiding Principle: If it can be seen from the Parkway, it shouldn't be built along the Parkway.

5) Continuing exclusion of responsible usage by new Parkway user groups is contrary to the spirit upon which public ownership of a natural resource is predicated.

Our Guiding Principle: Regarding new parkway usages: Inclusion should be the operating principle rather than exclusion.

6) Continuing encasement of open space, restricting suburban community development upon which a sustainable tax base funding necessary public works is built, is contrary to sound future planning.

Our Guiding Principle: The suburban lifestyle—as surrounds the American River Parkway—which is imbued within the aspirational center of the California Dream and whose vision is woven into the heart of the American Dream, is a deeply loved way of life whose sustainability we all desire.

Our first five years also resulted in the creation of our first strategic plan—designed to guide our work from 2004 to 2009—a stable membership base of about 700, designation of an annual parkway advocate (six individuals have been acknowledged), and regular communications (letters, articles, daily blogging, monthly e-letters, quarterly newsletters, annual organizational reports, regular research reports covering the six critical issues, and periodic planning position papers).

All of this information is available on our website.

Strategic Summary

We will be investing the next five years—2009 to 2014) in two directions; one major, the other ongoing.

The major work will focus around trying to encourage local government to bring into reality the one idea from our research into approaches that can most significantly impact the major critical issues—funding and management—which is the creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to govern the Parkway.

The ongoing work will focus on continuing to help build a community knowledge base around the results of our five research reports, buttressed by new information that becomes available.

The American River Parkway is the most valuable natural resource in our community and one of the most valuable in the nation.

Because of this singular nature, it has the potential to be governed through a singular process, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), as other signature park areas in the country are governed.

This type of governance will give our Parkway the dedicated management and fund raising capability that are so necessary to retain and enhance its premier local and national status.

Implementation Summary

To help create an environment where the JPA policy concept we have presented become accepted public policy it is important to provide information about successful adaptations of the concept to other public park areas in the nation, to the public and public leadership through the following venues.

Community Information

- Daily blogging: The Parkway Blog at http://riverparkwayblog.wordpress.com/ is part of the ongoing work of ARPPS public education and advocacy around public policy issues that may be related to the Parkway and the adjacent communities along the American River in Sacramento, California. (365 blog postings annually)
- Daily letters to members of the public: We will be sending information to members of the public, concerning the advisability of creating a JPA to govern the Parkway. (1,100 letters annually)
- Monthly e-letters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the monthly e letters, with a focus, when possible, on JPA governance. (12 annually)
- Quarterly newsletters to membership and public leadership: We will continue the quarterly newsletters with a focus, when possible, on JPA governance. (4 annually)
- Regular letters to the editor: We will seek opportunities to send letters that focus on JPA governance. (4-10 annually)
- Occasional articles in local publications: We will seek to have articles published that look at governance by a JPA as a viable option for the Parkway. (1-3 annually)
- Occasional policy planning papers: We will, when possible, cover the viability of Parkway governance by a JPA. (1-3 annually)
- Organizational report (1 annually)

Public Forums

- Regular forums around Parkway issues: We will seek opportunities to conduct public forums around the issue of JPA governance. (1-2 annually)
- Presentations to local business and neighborhood organizations: We will seek the opportunity to present information about JPA governance. (1-2 annually)
- Meetings with public leadership: We will meet with public leadership to discuss the option of JPA governance. (4-6 annually)

Study Mission

- Advocate for a study mission to the San Dieguito River Park in San Diego, which is governed by a JPA.

Review & Update

This plan is subject to annual review and updating every five years.

SECTION TWO

Organizational Leadership: Roles & Duties

October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Act as Chief Executive Officer & Chair Board Meetings

Chief Financial Officer: Maintain Financial Records, Keep Meeting Agenda, Minutes & Corporate Records

Vice President: Act as Chief Executive Officer & Chair Board Meetings in President's Absence.

Director: Serve as at-large director.

POLICY DEPARTMENT

Senior Policy Director: Research, Policy Development, Communications, Knowledge Management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: EMERITUS

Chair: Chair Emeritus Board

ENDOWMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Chair: Advise Board on Endowment Issues

SLOBE PARKWAY ADVOCATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Honorees: Represent Dedicated Parkway Advocacy

Appendix III

JOHN UPDIKE: MEMORIALIST OF SUBURBIA, R.I.P.

by Kirk Rogers 01/28/2009

John Updike, the bard of the suburbs, died this week. He was one of the first great American writers to revel in the opportunity, beauty and convenience that the suburbs have long reflected. His voice, first found in the sixties, acted as a reasonable anchor in the tempest of radicalism that swept through the country. He empathized with the American dream rising in the raw suburbs being carved from agricultural land.

Where ancestors once had wrestled a living from the soil, Updike's generation found comfort, convenience and a dream. They found plenty where a generation previous only found enough to keep them alive. At a time when academics, avant-garde filmmakers and urban intellectuals scoffed at suburbia, Updike explained it. He understood the obvious reasons – "practical attractions: free parking for my car, public education for my children, a beach to tan my skin on, a church to attend without seeming too strange". That is still what draws people to the edge of town.

Updike viewed the miles of identical houses the middle class aspired to as the pinnacle of civilization. He was never condescending. He genuinely loved what the suburbs represented and what they offered the masses moving from the cramped quarters of the ghettos and slums of the pre-war cities. He himself knew firsthand the other source of suburban migrants – the hardscrabble rural environs where life was often both difficult and limited.

Updike wanted nothing more than the convenience and steady food and work that he could find in the suburbs of Boston. The cold, bleak, boring hell of rural life was not for him. He saw nature as something that his religious sensibilities told him it was: a chaotic force to be tamed for the benefit of man.

His novels described the lives of characters in the sixties and seventies, caught up in the whirlwind of suppressed and released human desires which challenged these suburban dreamers. His sex scenes were more biological than erotic. They showed the new morality that was being formed in the suburbs, the breaking down of the old structures of the village and the urban neighborhood, which in many essentials were the same thing.

In *Seek My Face* he talks of Manhattan by saying that each block represented a village in the old country. That was fine for the first generation, which needed that fabric of support and familiarity but that was not enough of a dream for the next generation. The Dream was the cheap Cape Cods that were being erected by the thousands over the Nassau County line by the Levitt brothers.

Updike presented the suburbs for what they were to his generation: an escape from the villages and suffocating urban neighborhoods that trapped the previous generation. The freedom they gained was that of the nuclear family structure – the end to the rule of elders, cousins and priests. He celebrated suburbia as it rarely has been – as a peculiarly American miracle. It did not need to be demeaned, but seen as the perfection of thousands of years of evolution, the home to thousands of hoping, dreaming members of the middle class. His description of the car is no less lyrical. It was the convenience but it was more than that. In one short story he describes the purchase of a new car. The rush of excitement associated with the purchase and the affection that forms between a family and a car. He then described the neglect that crept in as the car aged until it lies abandoned in the front yard waiting to be turned in for a newer car.

The mobility it represented is tempered with the ever present hope for the future that defines so much of what America is. The car is mobility; he describes the manner by which it frees passengers from the landscape just as it frees them from the tyranny of public transit. The car is the cocoon that is an extension of the owner's personality, a part of who he is. It is a symbol of power and prosperity. It is an object of love.

Then there was the chance to go to church without feeling like a freak. The multicultural downtowns are filled with houses of worship catering to all classes of people. There are numerous minority churches in Manhattan catering to different races and other houses of worship for the other sundry religions in the immigrant communities, but the middle class churches are being taken over, bought out and torn down in the center. The mainline churches and megachurches that most white middle class Americans call home are on the edge of town. Updike was a master at describing the religious experience of the suburbs. In *A Month of Sundays* Updike describes the breakdown of a Presbyterian pastor into a nymphomaniac. It is also filled with suburbs, sex and theology. Critics stated that the narrator's sermons are some of the most eloquent since John Donne and are a wonderful representation of the dichotomy in an America that separates church and state but can never quite get over the fact that the Pilgrim Fathers set up a Theocracy on the banks of the Charles River. The combination of the profane and the divine is apparent on the outskirts of any American city where Wal-Marts abut megachurches; some megachurches were even built in the massive husks of abandoned big box stores.

He was born in the depth of the depression to parents who dreamed of him being more and he described the quotidian with a lyricism that was an epiphany. The suburbs were a thing of beauty. He was a man who loved America for living in the future tense but constantly looking to the past for guidance. America lost one of its greatest voices in him.

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Appendix IV

Manhattan: The Greatest Grid

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

When I first saw the Commissioners' Map of 1811 many years ago while researching Manhattan history, my reaction was shock and disbelief. This was no charming antiquarian depiction of Old New York. It was a bold plan for the city's growth—a tight, rectilinear network of streets overriding natural terrain and private property, extending far beyond the small early settlement at the foot of the island into its wilder open reaches. It seemed ruthless and unreal, visionary or hallucinatory. Farms, homes, hills, valleys, woods and streams had disappeared under a relentless geometric overlay of right-angled streets: the famous Manhattan grid.

When I saw the map again in the current exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011," I still found it an unsettling combination of the visionary and the pragmatic. This amazing document, the centerpiece of a show celebrating its 200th anniversary, is responsible for the Manhattan street system and a city unlike any other in the world.

The exhibition opened quietly last December and has been so popular (who knew? a lot of old maps and photographs?) that its original April closing has been extended through July 15. Sponsored by the Office of the Borough President of Manhattan in collaboration with the museum, the New York Public Library and the Architectural League of New York, the show follows Manhattan's radical transformation through original documents from city archives and historical collections, beautifully researched and organized by its curator, Hilary Ballon, university professor of urban studies and architecture at New York University, and expertly installed by Wendy Evans Joseph. The excellent book-length catalog, edited by Prof. Ballon, is a surprising historical page-turner. A coda of eight proposals selected from a competition held by the Architectural League suggests where the grid could go from here.

It's a fair guess that New Yorkers want it to stay exactly the way it is. In a video at the entrance, people chosen at random state their home spot on the grid, confident that in their comfortable Cartesian world no one has to ask "Where?"

The miracle is that the plan actually got built. An explosion of wealth and population in early 19th-century New York prompted the Common (later City) Council to ask the State Legislature to establish a commission to "develop and choose a master plan to channel and direct" the city's future expansion. Three commissioners, Gouverneur Morris, Simeon De Witt and John Henderson, were appointed in 1807 with a mandate to complete the work in four years. The measuring and mapping was done by the commission's secretary and surveyor general, John Randel Jr., and the finished product was delivered slightly ahead of schedule in 1811.

The plan was accepted and implemented immediately as a massive public-works project employing armies of workers over the next 60 years. It was financed by assessments on adjoining property owners for the "improvements" of paved streets and utilities, a practice that met with violent resistance but proved profitable in the end. An early version of eminent domain allowed the city to take the land, reimbursing the owner at market rates, a cost made up for by assessments and sales.

The Commissioners' Plan, nearly nine feet long, is flanked by their seals and by impressive portraits of the three substantial, serious men who held the future of New York in their hands. A sampling of the 93 large "Farm Maps" Randel made later, at a scale of 100 feet to 1 inch, records the topography and property boundaries underlying the grid. His handwritten field notes show street by street calculations in "chain lengths," a painstaking process that used metal chains and heavy brass compasses, theodolytes and geodesic transits to reconcile the difference between true north and magnetic north readings. Most of Manhattan was measured in that way, an inconceivable feat in the age of Google.

No deviations from the grid were considered necessary. It ended at a nonexistent and hypothetical 155th Street, with everything neatly numbered; avenue names came later. The surrounding rivers and a few token spaces were expected to satisfy health and recreational needs. The commissioners were openly dismissive of ceremonial boulevards leading to monumental institutions like those being constructed in Washington according to Pierre l'Enfant's plan. Because no one was able to anticipate the automobile or the city's enormous future growth, the 1811 plan inevitably led to gridlock, New York's notorious addition to the English language.

The grid was denounced for its obliteration of the natural landscape and fought as a taking of private land; later criticism focused on the lack of open space and the way the division into standard lots turned the island into negotiable real estate. Surveyors were driven off as trespassers; temporary street markers were removed until stone posts replaced them. One remaining stone column stands unmoored in the show. The grid's unyielding regularity left an estimated 39% of existing houses in the middle of a proposed street. Many were demolished and about 900 buildings were moved. Clement Moore, whose large holdings were in what is now called Chelsea, denounced city officials as "men who would level the seven hills of Rome."

A standard 200-foot block-front was established for the avenues, with narrower side streets and wider cross streets at irregular intervals. The blocks were divided into 20- and 25-foot house lots with a 100-foot depth, a module that could be assembled for a variety of configurations. Vacant land was sold at public auction, and speculation, fraud and corruption flourished as buying and selling lots became the biggest game in town. In the 1830s, John Jacob Astor transferred his fortune in beaver pelts and international trade into real estate, to become New York's largest landholder and richest man.

It must have been hideous to live through. Workers dug and blasted earth and rock to reduce everything to street grade, leaving mounds of rubble behind. The process is recorded in surreal detail in photographs from the museum's collection. There are views

of new streets that seem to have been dropped from outer space. The Dakota, completed in 1884, stands in an uptown wilderness of streets to nowhere.

So what did we get besides gridlock? New York is a strange city of serendipitous side effects, where what seems wrong often turns out to be right. The first lesson of the grid is that scale is everything. The plan was scaled to 19th-century life and dimensions; it predated the automobile, which it accommodates badly. But what it gave us, with its short, 200-foot block lengths and small, 20- to 25-foot lot sizes, its direct and easy navigability, is a walkable, personal city at human scale, where every street is an endlessly varied and inviting series of visual experiences, of constantly changing shopfronts, restaurants and buildings of infinite styles and uses. When that scale and mix is threatened, we know it; if a revitalized, increasingly affluent area has an influx of look-alike chains demanding increased street frontage, we will use zoning restrictions to maintain scale and avoid what Manhattanites perceive as the mall-death of boring redundancy. Newness, novelty and the next thing are all encouraged by small-scale opportunities. This doesn't happen in big boxes. Or parking lots.

When land is scarce and expensive you build close and high, and Manhattan is an island of solid street walls and shoulder-to-shoulder skyscrapers. The streets that border them are public social space; they are full of life and activity and the promise of whatever lies around the corner. Urbanist Holly Whyte found that people instinctively gathered on the most crowded parts of sidewalks, bypassing plazas. The worst idea that architects and planners ever had (what were they thinking?) was the superblock; we are still trying to knit the streets of the grid back together. Some are being restored and reconnected in the rebuilt, sterile superblock of the World Trade Center site.

Because the grid is a total democratization of space, with no area designated as more important than any other, every neighborhood creates its own distinct identity, with the capability of reinventing itself, like people, and moving on. That flexibility is unique to the grid. It has also accommodated major incursions and amenities like Central Park. Twice yearly, an accident of solstice, orientation and geometry sends golden shafts of setting sun straight through the grid from river to river, west to east, an occasion that would be celebrated by people less in a hurry.

The architect Rem Koolhaas has defined New York as a "culture of congestion," and it is that close interaction of people and ideas that has produced one of the city's greatest strengths—call it a culture of creativity. There is much to celebrate about the grid.

Ms. Huxtable is the Journal's architecture critic.

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Appendix V

The City Beautiful Movement. William H. Wilson (1989) Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press. Book Review, *ARPPS Newsletter #19,* July 7, 2008

The goals of the City Beautiful movement grew out of the often compressed and harsh urban 19th century experiences of the large American cities; the reshaping of the religious visions of Fredrick Law Olmstead—the father of American landscape architecture—and the desire of its adherents to control the behavior of city dwellers in the direction they felt would be best for the 20th century city and its future. As Wilson writes:

> The heyday of the City Beautiful movement, from about 1900 to 1910, saw middle and upper-middle-class Americans attempt to refashion their cites into beautiful, functional entities. Their effort involved a cultural agenda, a middle-class environmentalism, and aesthetics expressed as beauty, order, system, and harmony. The ideal found physical realization in urban design. Public and semi-public buildings, civic centers, park and boulevard systems, or extensions and embellishments of them, were the tokens of the improved environment. So were ordinary street improvements, including good paving, attractive furniture such as lampposts, and carefully selected and maintained trees. The goal beyond the tangibles was to influence the heart, mind, and purse of the citizen. Physical change and institutional reformation would persuade urban dwellers to become more imbued with civic patriotism and better disposed towards community needs. Beautiful surroundings would enhance productivity and urban economics.
>
> In the broadest sense, then, the City Beautiful movement was a political movement, for it demanded a reorientation of public thought and action toward urban beauty. The environmental reorganization necessary to the City Beautiful and its immediate forebears required an altered political structure, including state enabling legislation, new public institutions such as park boards, and grants of power to private entities to build railroad stations and other semipublic buildings. The reorganized urban politics was remarkably flexible, encompassing both new or vitalized administrative agencies and expanded popular participation. Improvements of the City Beautiful type often required voter approval through bond issues, election campaigns, or other devices of participatory politics. The movement involved, too, a politics of accommodation between the expert planning professional and the enlightened citizens on the board or commission that set the basic planning goals and oversaw their construction. The political dimension of the City Beautiful movement went beyond structure and process to an element underlying much of the surface change: citizen agitation and activism on behalf of beautification. (p. 1)

Olmstead, whose religious groundings led to his belief that the well developed park landscape, such as that of his major work—Central Park in New York—had, as its primary purpose, to provide the human soul with sanctuary, spiritual refreshment, and

psychological regeneration from the negative effects of an often turbulent urban life, but that aspect of Olmsted was changed by the City Beautiful movement, as Wilson notes:

> City Beautiful environmentalism was not, however, a linear extension of Olmstead's. The impact of Darwinism separated it from the analysis of Olmstead, a man whose fundamental ideas were formed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Endorsers of the City Beautiful were late-nineteenth-or-twentieth-century people. They believed less in the Olmstedian view of beauty's restorative power and more in the shaping influence of beauty. Darwinism had compromised the old belief in man as a natural creature made in the image of God, who shared some of God's attributes and who required a beautified, naturalistic reprieve from his imprisonment in the artificial city. (p. 80)

What struck me most about the movement—specifically it's initial Olmstedian perspective—was the strategy of thinking of the development within the entire city through the lens of beauty, and their love of parks, as this excerpt notes:

> City Beautiful planners typically treated naturalistic parks and parkways as precious assets, not as relics to be tolerated or disfigured by the imposition of their own designs. (p. 87)

And though the movement was often accused of not appreciating the beauty of the natural world, it was untrue.

> ...The charge that City Beautiful plans scorned or devalued natural beauty fits nicely with models of conflict or dichotomy in city planning, but the charge is simply untrue. (p. 87)

To Olmstead the landscaped park was central to his work:

> While he was developing the park and boulevard system, the design mainstay of the City Beautiful, Olmstead was also formulating part of the movement's ideology. He argued that parks (and by later extension, all aesthetic improvements) raised surrounding land values, contributing to private enterprise and returning their costs through increased municipal real estate taxation. More fundamental to him, however, were the restorative, recreative influences of natural landscape on city-bound people. The park as a magnet for all urbanites and a benign instrument of class reconciliation and democratization. Olmstead's conception of the landscape park antedated the organicism and environmentalism of the City Beautiful era, but his conclusions were quite congenial to City Beautiful enthusiasts. They would replace his rationales with their own, yet their justifications would undergird the very same Olmstedian arguments. (p. 10)

And they were wonderful arguments indeed. (David H. Lukenbill, Senior Policy Director)

Appendix VI

PRESS RELEASE

August 8, 2011

AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY (ARPPS)

If you are living in suburban California, you are part of the Dream, the *California Dream*.

A central part of the birthing vision of the *American Dream* was the *California Dream* and all that America promised, as Kevin Starr notes: "In a very real sense, the California dream was the American dream undergoing one of its most significant variations." Americans and the California Dream 1850-1915. (1973). New York: Oxford University Press. (p.443)

The American River Parkway is surrounded by suburbs, which is appropriate being that a central axis of the California Dream is suburban single home ownership, and the American River running through it was where gold was first discovered, leading to one of the greatest migrations in history.

The suburban single home ownership aspect of the *California Dream* is under attack, as Joel Kotkin notes in a recent article, *California Wages War on Single Home Ownership*: "In California, the assault on the house has gained official sanction. Once the heartland of the American dream, the Golden State has begun implementing new planning laws designed to combat global warming. These draconian measures could lead to a ban on the construction of private residences, particularly on the suburban fringe." Retrieved July 26, 2011 from http://www.newgeography.com/content/002357-california-wages-war-on-single-family-homes

To help protect that vision, which we all hope to sustain, we have defined a sixth critical issue, shaped our approach, and formulated our sixth guiding principle.

Critical Issue #6) Continuing encasement of open space, restricting suburban community development upon which a sustainable tax base funding necessary public works is built, is contrary to sound future planning.

Our Approach: Suburban communities are where the overwhelming majority of American families wish to live, and the opportunity in our region for those communities to be built for the families who hope to live in them, is a shared supportive responsibility for those of us who presently enjoy our life in the suburbs and for those who hope to enjoy the suburban family lifestyle in the future.

***Our Guiding Principle*: The suburban lifestyle**—as surrounds the American River Parkway—which is imbued within the aspirational center of the *California Dream* **and whose vision is woven into the heart of the *American Dream*, is a deeply loved way of life whose sustainability we all desire**.

Organizational Leadership
American River Parkway Preservation Society
Sacramento, California
August 8, 2011

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