
JUNE 2025

HOW TO SAVE OUR URBAN CENTERS

JOEL KOTKIN



CHAPMAN
UNIVERSITY

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Trustees of Chapman University, President Daniele Struppa, Executive Vice President Matt Parlow, and the Center's long time backer Roger Hobbs for their continued steadfast support. We also would like to thank the School of Communications and acting Dean Keith Weber for hosting the Center.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Mahnaz Asghari who has been the primary enabler for this project. Without her dedication and organizational skills this project would never have been possible.

The Center also counts on a group of unique backers to keep our efforts afloat. These include Ambassador Ronald P. Spogli; Irv and Nancy Chase; Joel Farkas from Fruition California Housing and the Fieldstead Foundation.

Center for Demographics and Policy
Chapman University

Cover image credit: Los Angeles neighborhoods south of downtown, with the city downtown and Mount Baldy in the distance. Source: [Alek Leckzas](#), CC 4.0 License.

© 2025 by Center for Demographics and Policy. Center for Demographics and Policy, Chapman University. Excerpts from this document may be made with explicit attribution of the source.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
WHAT THE DATA TELLS US	3
PERIPHERY: THE RISE OF NEW CITIES	6
The Future of Downtowns	8
THE QUESTION OF GOVERNANCE	10
THE CURRENT OPPORTUNITY	13

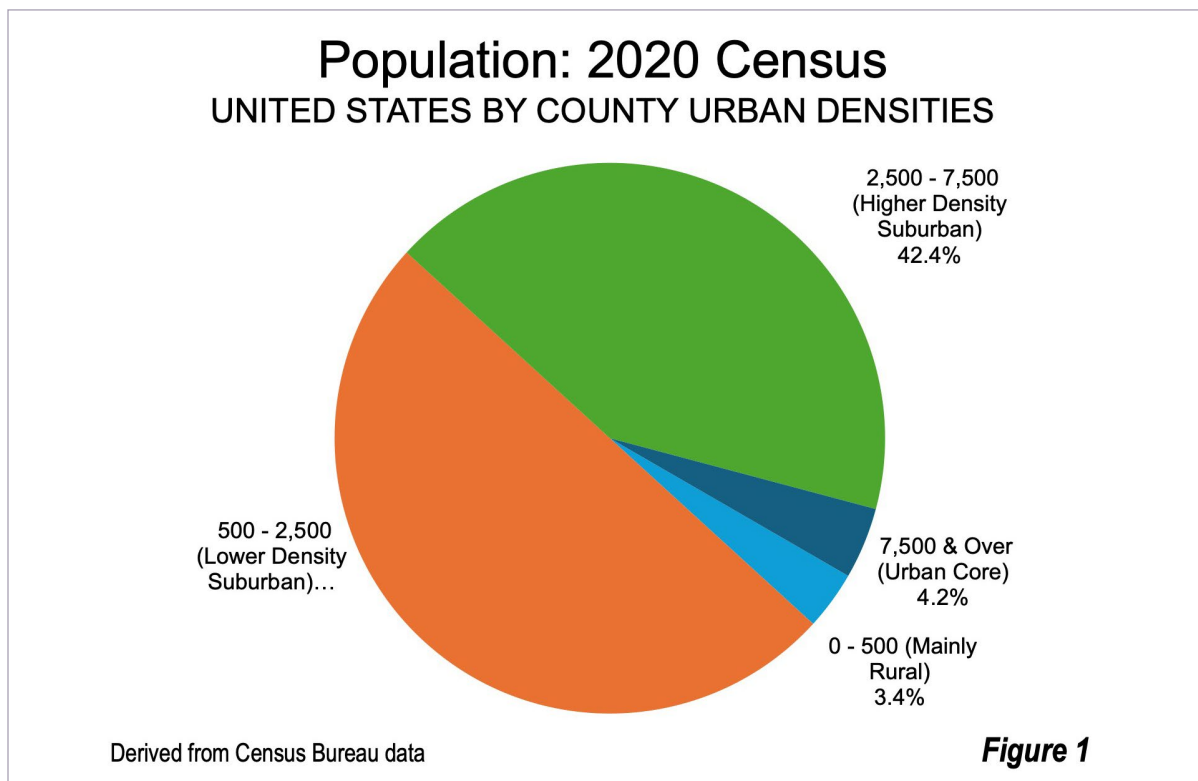
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A great city is not to be confounded with a populous one.

Aristotle

American cities face an existential choice. They can continue down their current path – adopting policies that work against the interests of local residents – or develop new approaches to make urban life work for the broad majority.

Today, many urban centers, particularly older cities, are in decline. The proportion of Americans living in core urban areas has been decreasing for generations, a trend that has only accelerated in the wake of the pandemic, rising crime, and increasingly radical politics.



Economic and sociological trends are driving these changes. Even before the pandemic, the “transactional city” conceived by Jean Gottman – center of exchange, not production - was already facing challenges.¹ Demographic and economic growth has shifted to less dense, often

newer communities. The cities most identified with the transactional model – San Francisco, Chicago, and New York – are among those suffering the most.

Yet, urbanity itself – the concept of people living in proximity within a defined place – is far from dead. We continue to see the emergence of new communities on the urban periphery, as well as the revitalization of older suburban communities that are developing their own successful urban centers. In some major cities, even as office demand declines, residential construction continues to grow – particularly for the childless, young and affluent.

Rather than dismiss the urban future entirely, this paper explores how urbanism is being redefined in communities across the country. Cities, from the earliest times, have long been the cornerstones of human civilization. They will remain so – but in new and oft unrecognized forms, if local communities can organize themselves successfully.



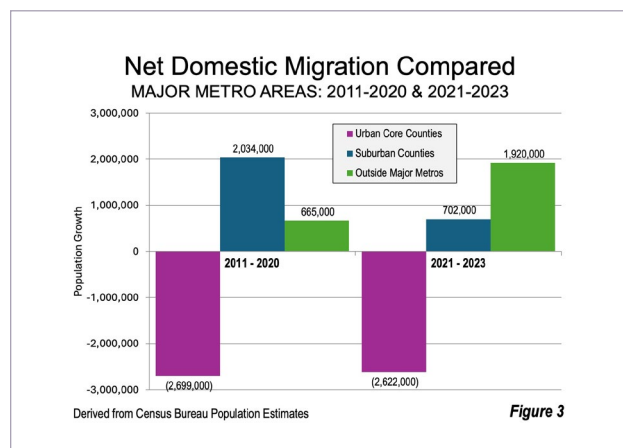
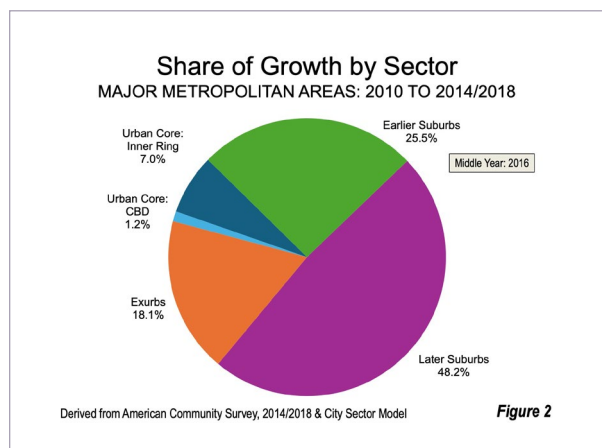
View of the ancient city of Mardin, showcasing its unique architecture and historical significance in the Mesopotamian region. Source: Picryl, Public Domain.

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

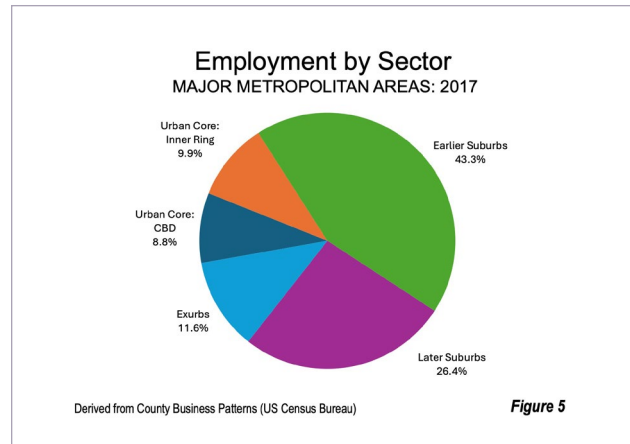
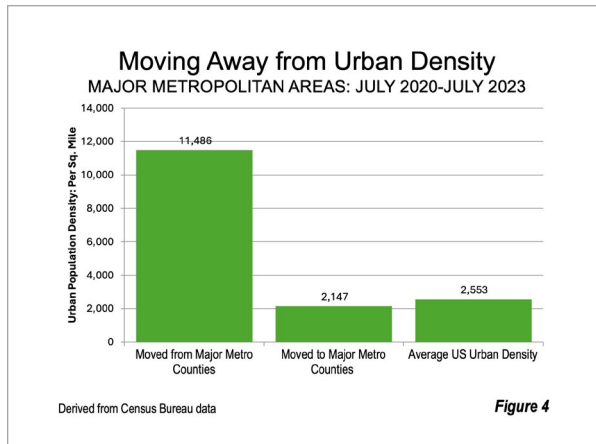
Over the past half century, media and academic sources have repeatedly suggested that dense urbanity would dominate the future. “Mayors” should “rule the world”, suggested enthusiasts.² It was routinely claimed that economic growth would cluster in a handful of superstar cities, like London, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. *The New York Times*’ Neil Irwin observed, “...a small number of superstar companies choose to locate in a handful of superstar cities.” The big winners were to the ‘skilled city’ – dense urban centers and college towns.³

Even amidst the pandemic, some analysts predicted a return to dense urban growth and greater office occupancy.⁴ They promoted visions of ‘smart cities’ that would be like catnip for potential residents.⁵ But traditional urban centers have continued to lose both people and economic influence – a trend evident for decades and further accelerated by the pandemic and rise of remote work.⁶

This has been a long-term trend. Since 1945, more than 90 percent of U.S. population growth has occurred in metropolitan areas.⁷ In 1950, core cities accounted for nearly 24% of the population; today, that share has dropped to 15%. Meanwhile, the suburbs and exurbs have seen explosive growth – rising from 13% of the metropolitan population in 1940 to 86% in 2017.⁸ Suburban, and especially exurban, dominance of metropolitan growth has only accelerated in recent years.⁹



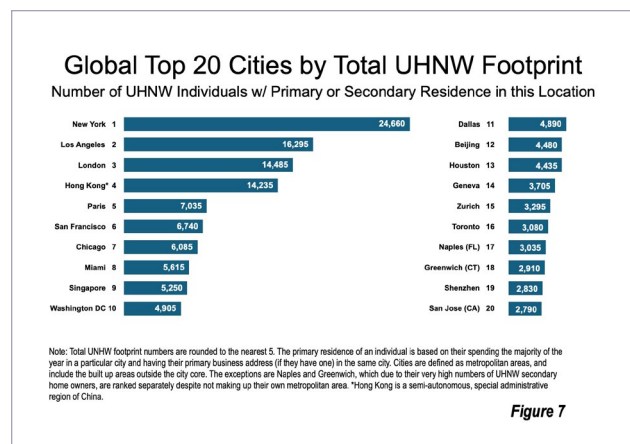
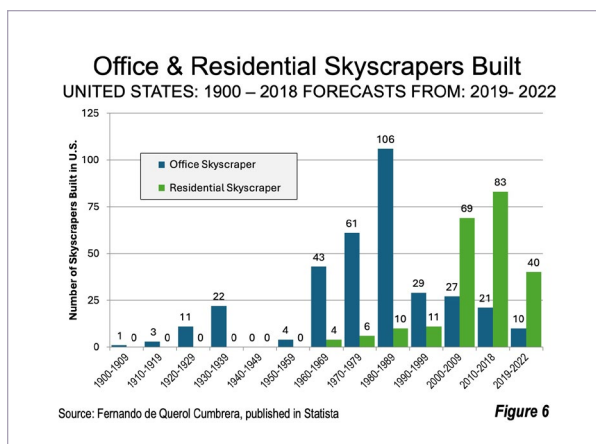
Even before the pandemic, two-thirds of millennials preferred suburban living.¹⁰ Increasingly, educated millennials have been leaving the larger coastal metros for the suburb-dominated Sun Belt, including smaller and mid-sized cities.¹¹ Fast growing counties – home to most of the planned communities discussed below – have seen substantial gains among households earning over \$75,000, particularly those between the ages of 30 and 44.¹² According to a recent MIT study, suburban and exurban lifestyles, which are built around cars, now constitute roughly 80% of the nation’s metropolitan population, while barely 8% live in the urban core and another 13% live in traditional transit-oriented suburbs.¹³



The outward movement of employment has also continued steadily since the 1950s. New research, including a recent report from Brown University, suggests that neither city size nor density strongly correlates with higher productivity.¹⁴ Among the major metropolitan areas, more than 75% of jobs have been outside downtown and larger commercial centers, such as ‘edge cities’ for at least two decades. Later data indicated that 91 percent of employment growth among major metropolitan areas was outside CBDs between 2010 and 2017.¹⁵

Simply put, the urban core has become less dominant. Office occupancy has been declining since the turn of the century, while building of new space has also fallen.¹⁶ In 2019, before the pandemic, construction was one-third the rate of 1985 and half that of 2000.¹⁷ Urban retail has also hit a rough spot, with strip malls – the suburban bête noire of planners – emerging as the most resilient sector. From 2010 to 2017, over 80% of all job growth was in the suburbs and exurbs. The 50 highest growth counties had an employment increase of more than 2.5 times that of other counties in 2019.¹⁸

The decline in office occupancy and commercial property – whose taxes account for roughly one-third of New York City’s budget – poses a serious threat to the already beleaguered finances of many cities.¹⁹ Yet, as we discuss below, there is still a dynamic market for high-end residential centers. While US office construction has plummeted from 106 in the 1990s to 27 in the 2000s and a projected 10 since 2019, the number of residential high-rises, just 11 in the 1990s, has soared to 83 in the last decade and a projected 40 since 2019.²⁰



The core city may no longer be the epicenter of economic life, it continues to serve a distinct role as a hub for young professionals, globe-trotting elites, and cultural creators. In New York, for example, while the overall population has declined, the number of ultra-wealthy residents has continued to grow.²¹ Increasingly, global cities like New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Miami are functioning as showcases for luxury brands such as LVMH, which continue to invest heavily in these markets.²² Even landmarks like Rockefeller Center are actively reinventing themselves as destinations for recreation, tourism, and the arts.²³

PERIPHERY: THE RISE OF NEW CITIES

For generations, urbanists have sought to slow or reverse the migration shift to the periphery. The fashion among progressive intellectuals at publications like *The Atlantic* has been to paint suburbs as a failing “Ponzi scheme”.²⁴ Suburbs have long been a particular target for cultural elites, who have historically shown disdain for them and largely continue to do so.²⁵

This contempt for suburbs reached a peak following the 2008 global economic crisis. Mainstream media asserted that “America’s suburban dream” was “collapsing into a nightmare”.²⁶ One prominent urbanist wrote that the exurbs would become “the next slums”, the equivalent of “roadkill” doomed by changing economics and demographics and the only future for “fringe suburbs” would be “death”.²⁷

The reality is that many suburbs and exurbs are thriving. They are riding the wave of the information economy, which does not need a dense urban core. The leading tech centers in the country, like Silicon Valley, Orange County, North San Diego County, as well as Austin and Raleigh are primarily suburban in nature.²⁸ Traditional tech centers like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco have been losing educated young people to cities like Sarasota, Nashville, Jacksonville, Las Vegas and Austin.²⁹

While these areas are largely car-dependent, many have built a distinctly urban infrastructure. Carmel, Indiana, for example, has transformed itself into a vital cultural and business hub.³⁰ There have been significant downtown revivals in Orange and Fullerton, in Southern California, but also small towns in Middle America.³¹

One prominent urbanist wrote that the exurbs would become “the next slums”, the equivalent of “roadkill” doomed by changing economics and demographics and the only future for “fringe suburbs” would be “death”



We could be on the verge of birthing new cities in a way that has characterized the American since the founding, with many cities, like Chicago, arising out of the wilderness in rapid order. Today we see new cities, with town centers, are being planned by developers. This also includes efforts notably by Elon Musk in Texas, Bill Gates in Arizona and by a gaggle of California oligarchs in the rural reaches of Solano County.³²

But we do not have to wait for tech oligarchs to know this model works. For a generation we have seen successful examples like Columbia and Reston outside Washington, DC, Irvine in Southern California, the Woodlands and Cinco Ranch outside Houston, New Albany in metro Columbus, and the Domain just outside Austin. These communities reflect the promise of “garden cities”, as proposed by the British visionary Ebenezer Howard, with their own or nearby offices, recreational facilities, and cultural amenities.³³



Philcomanforterie, Office Buildings in The Woodlands, Texas CC 4.0License

As envisioned by Howard, these new communities allow people to live closer to nature, often with hiking and biking trails amidst extensive woodland. “This field is just exploding,” says Gretchen Daily, a professor of environmental science at Stanford University.³⁴ The pandemic-induced acceleration of remote work has reduced the importance of urban cores. These trends may also be a win for the environment, as fewer people spend energy going into dense cities, where the “heat island” effect impacts their level of emissions.³⁵

Frank Lloyd Wright describes these type of communities as “a means of liberation” for families because it allows them to work at home or nearby, while also being close to the blessings of

nature. Rather than an abandonment of the city, they are a sign of its continuing reinvention. As Wright advocated, “After all is said and done, he – the citizen – is really the city. The city is going wherever he goes.”³⁶

THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWNS

Along the slow-moving shores of the Colorado River, the Waterline Apartments stand as the tallest building in Texas. At 74 stories, they surpass Houston’s JP Morgan Chase Tower by nearly 20 feet.³⁷ In many ways, Austin’s evolving residential skyline represents the future of older downtowns. It reflects an emerging urban reality that H.G. Wells envisioned over a century ago. Rather than the centers of metropolitan life and economy, he saw cities as largely childless “places of concourse and rendezvous”. In contrast, he saw families clustering in the suburban periphery over an ever-expanding terrain.³⁸ This analysis has been further developed by the University of Chicago’s Terry Nicholas Clark who described downtowns as “entertainment machines”.³⁹



Waterline building & river, Austin (Bryan Roschetzky / iStockphoto)

Futurists have long debated about how remote work and the growth of the information economy would reshape urban geographies. While some predicted the dominance of major metropolitan centers, many workers now prefer to work from home at least part of the time.⁴⁰ Even large multinational firms, historically anchored in cities like New York and Chicago, are rethinking their real estate strategies. According to the Financial Times, many companies are planning to reduce their office footprints by 10 to 20 percent. A study from the University of Chicago found that as much as one-third of the workforce could operate remotely, and up to 50 percent in Silicon Valley.⁴¹

The New York Times warns of an “urban doom loop”, however, there are ways to revitalize the assets of traditional cities.⁴² The key lies in supporting and appealing to diverse lifestyle choices. Places like New York’s “pencil towers” as well as downtown Milwaukee and the nation’s largest conversion program at Detroit’s Renaissance Center offer a contained and attractive urbanity. They offer amenities like waterfront parks and entertainment venues. In areas like Manhattan there could be large-scale office conversions. CBRE expects office conversion projections to double in 2024 compared to 2023.⁴³

The modern downtown appeal(s) to young professionals who do not feel sufficiently stimulated by life in the suburbs.

In Austin, developer and real estate agent Kevin Burns sees the modern downtown appealing to young professionals who do not feel sufficiently stimulated by life in the suburbs. There is clearly an appeal. Since 2000, the area’s population has tripled to 15,000 but has far fewer children per capita than in the region – under 3 percent compared to over 21 percent. Its residents are also whiter, nearly 50 percent wealthier, better educated and their homes are \$170,000 more expensive than the regional average.⁴⁴ The future of downtowns largely depends on offering a wealth of amenities to attract professionals and those who support them.

THE QUESTION OF GOVERNANCE

Already some cities once seen as models for urban density, like Chicago, Portland, Oakland and San Francisco have suffered due to disorder on the streets, including in the loss of affluent residents and key businesses.⁴⁵ Successful cities are not born successful; to thrive they must be nurtured.

In Los Angeles's South Side, we see clear evidence of what effective, localized governance can accomplish. A sharp contrast is visible between a cluster of independent cities and the surrounding areas governed by the progressive-led city. In some city-controlled areas, for example, an unfinished high-rise has become a canvas for graffiti, while a rash of copper thefts from city streetlights have left neighborhoods literally in the dark.⁴⁶

Paramount is a predominantly Latino city of over 50,000 residents located just 18 miles from downtown Los Angeles. Once described as "an urban disaster area", Paramount was hit hard by the economic downturn of the 1980s, when aerospace and automobile manufacturers pulled out of the region.⁴⁷ But today, Paramount and other South LA towns like Downey, Southgate, Bellflower, and Cerritos stand as testaments to effective local governance and resilience. They boast thriving downtowns, with attractive restaurants and shops.



Downey (Matt Gush / iStockphoto)

The change revolved around the election of often younger, reform-oriented city councils. "The people who turned the city

Growing Up in Lynwood

by M. Andrew Moshier

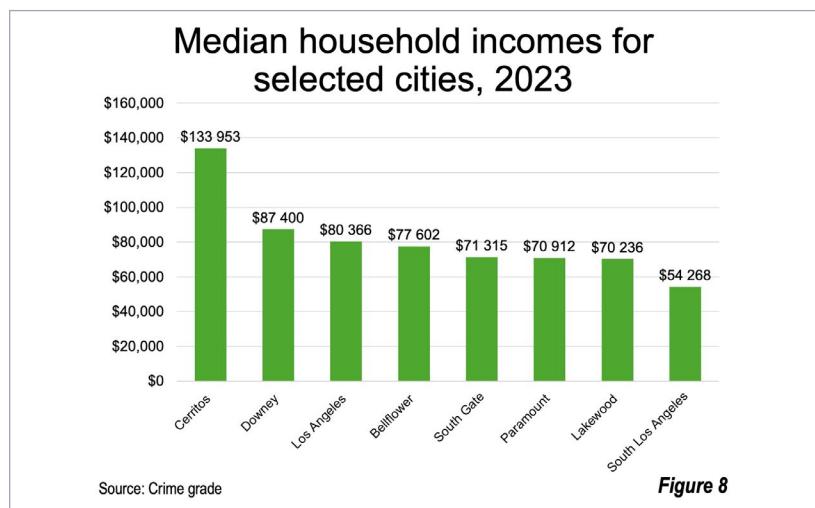
Growing up in Lynwood, CA and later moving to Downey, we lived in places that few outside our local towns even knew existed. We were not LA, Long Beach or Orange County. There was even less there than in Gertude Stein's Oakland.

Do not mistake this characterization as depreciation. Life (as least for the kids) was really good. Lynwood attracted families for its quality schools, as did Downey and other cities. Good sports, school music programs, a remarkably kid-friendly municipal art museum, all were valuable parts of my childhood.

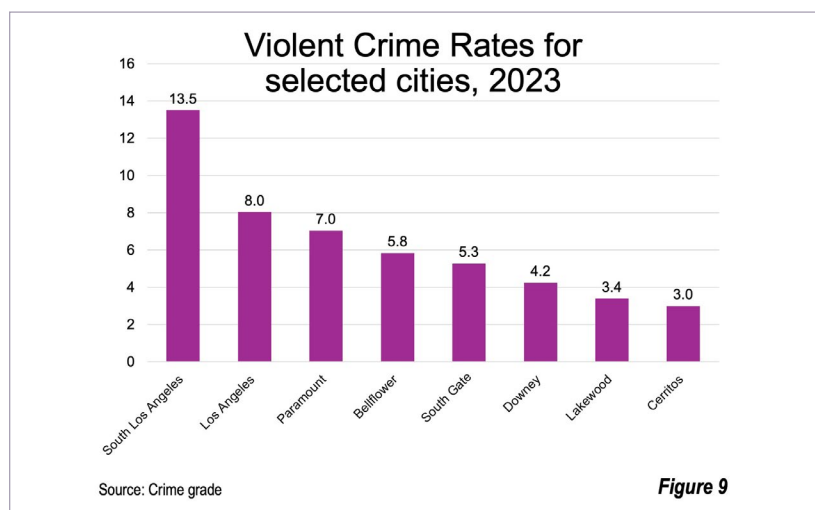
Things got worse from the later 70s through the 90s. As newlyweds in 1981, my wife and I moved just outside the city limits of Paramount. That same year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development declared Paramount one of the worst urban environments in the country. Other cities in the area were faring better but were in noticeable decline, including some serious problems of local corruption.

A few months ago, my wife and I decided on a whim to take a drive through some of our old haunts in Paramount and south Downey. We were struck by how much nicer the commercial districts and the residential

around come from here,” notes Bellflower City Councilman Victor Sanchez as we walked down Bellflower Blvd.



Rather than duplicate the already existing array of malls, they worked on sparking new businesses, from furniture and upholstery making, to a comedy club, coffee shops and unique eateries. Some are housed in 1930s era buildings. The people who Bellflower around focused on the critical basics of urban life. “What we needed was to create something local, and special” Sanchez explains. “Local businesses and residents knew what we were doing before was not working. We are taking control of the city and getting stuff done.”



Clean-ups and graffiti removal have spurred new downtown developments. Most of the cities have programs that allow citizens to report graffiti, which is then removed within 24 hours. Locally grounded leadership that deals with common urban problems has led to positive results. Clean-ups and graffiti

neighborhoods seemed. Maybe this was just reverse nostalgia – we were poor newlyweds back then, so maybe we just were just projecting a bad contrast to where we are today.

But after a few more visits we became convinced that something interesting and encouraging was happening. It seemed to us there had been more vacant stores, more messy front yards, and more graffiti back when we lived there. So, my colleagues and I at Chapman’s Center for Demographics and Policy started looking at concrete economic metrics and interviewing local leaders. It has turned out the news from these once obscure towns was more than just a modest improvement.

In recent years, the region has really begun to thrive, thanks it seems to a remarkable revival of good local governance (with some sad recent exceptions). Several of the cities there, including formerly distressed Paramount, are growing economically under sound civic leadership. Crime, including gang activity, is much reduced. Schools are improving and are taken seriously by community leaders. Home ownership rates are going up. Commercial occupancy is up. Moreover, this is not a gentrification story. The area has become more Latino but at the same time more vibrant, safe and prosperous – a very livable region.

removal have spurred new developments along the city's downtowns. Most have programs that allow citizens to report graffiti, which is then removed within 24 hours. "In places like Paramount, people get things done because that's where they live," jokes former Paramount City Manager Pat West, "In LA they have meetings."

Most of this success stems from a focus on the fundamentals. Cities like Paramount prioritize core urban services such as parks, public spaces, and landscaping. Neighborhood beautification initiatives, like subsidizing flower beds and white picket

We went from being a place with shootings and murders to one that attracts young families who see this as an up-and-coming place...."

John Moreno,
Paramount City Manager

murders to one that attracts young families who see this as an up-and-coming place," suggests Moreno. "We had a lot of blight but the citizens, the churches brought it back." He adds, "When I go to LA I am amazed how they are not doing these basic things."

Though the region remains obscure to the national or local press, the contrast with Los Angeles remains highly positive as it has become, against the odds, a economic gateway for upwardly mobile families.

fences, have helped improve curb appeal. In stark contrast to the dysfunction plaguing Los Angeles public schools, Paramount's local school district has seen remarkable improvement. As current City Manager John Moreno notes, graduation rates have risen from 71% to over 90%, a success he attributes to strong community spirit and active collaboration between city government, local businesses, and the independent school district. Los Angeles, by comparison, suffers from a more "siloed" administration.⁴⁸

These improvements, Moreno explains, are a direct result of a tight-knit community, increasingly led by young families that are either homeowners or hope to be. "We went from being a place with shootings and

THE CURRENT OPPORTUNITY

The return of Donald Trump to the presidency is being met by many urban leaders with about as much enthusiasm as a reprise of the bubonic plague. The National Urban League warns of an “extreme right” administration that will ban abortion, threaten the civil service, and roll back immigration and racial quotas.⁴⁹ Trump has even proposed building new planned cities – so called freedom cities – that could compete with the existing urban landscape.⁵⁰

It is clear that the GOP-led Congress will not fund much more mass transit or other city services.⁵¹ Given the GOP’s meager support in big cities, some progressives fear Trump’s actions will force them to “go it alone.”⁵² However, given that many cities have declined over the past five years under Democratic leadership, a reduction in federal support may actually spur much-needed reforms. As cities like Los Angeles struggle, others are shifting to a more pragmatic approach.

Emerging from this new wave of mayors are Houston’s John Whitmire, Fort Worth’s Mattie Parker, and San Francisco’s newly elected mayor, Dan Lurie. Rather than assume that power and money will head their way, these mayors – like their counterparts in South LA – wish to compete with much faster-growing suburbs and exurbs.⁵³

Dan Lurie represents a break from San Francisco’s entrenched political machine. While occasionally producing bright lights like Willie Brown, it has more often delivered mediocrities like Gavin Newsom, Kamala Harris and the now deposed London Breed.⁵⁴ In 2024, Wallet Hub credited it as the country’s worst run city with high crime rates, immovable bureaucracy, accompanied by virtue signaling on race, gender and climate.⁵⁵



Homeless person sleeping on the street in San Francisco
Source: Christopher Beland; Public Domain license

Mayors like Lurie could draw on successes from the 1990s and early 2000s, when effective governance restored urban vitality. Reform-minded leaders – Democrat and Republican – such as New York’s Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg, Houston’s Bob Lanier, Indianapolis’ Steven Goldsmith, Philadelphia’s Ed Rendell, and Los Angeles’ Richard Riordan demonstrated that pragmatic leadership could drive meaningful change. Their administrations prioritized regulatory reform, tax restraint, and most importantly, improvements in public safety.

However, the reform successes were often replaced by progressive mayors like Bill DeBlasio in New York, who dismantled law enforcement reforms.

This trend continues today with leaders like Chicago's Brandon Johnson, whose policies are accelerating the decline of what was once the nation's third-largest economic powerhouse. Chicago now has the highest pension debt per capita among major U.S. major cities. His formula for destruction – big raises for this teacher union funders while losing many of his most productive citizens. A similar trajectory is unfolding in far weaker, less favored St. Louis.⁵⁶

Rather than seek help from Washington, the new urban reformers follow the old gospel dictum, "cure themselves." As cities vie for high-value industries, they must also attract the educated workforce that is increasingly relocating to states like Florida, Arizona, and Texas.⁵⁷ These qualitative issues – safety, livability, and cultural vitality – are central to the emerging urban agenda. In today's highly competitive landscape, cities must enhance their appeal with safe streets, walkable downtowns, and cultural attractions.

Everything starts with
addressing urban crime

Everything starts with addressing urban crime, still greatly elevated from pre-pandemic levels, particularly once the drop in arrests and convictions is considered.⁵⁸ Recent murders on New York's subways, random attacks on the street, decline of a half million people,

and proliferating rat populations have heightened these concerns. In DC, police warn pedestrians not to wear expensive jewelry or designer sneakers in public.⁵⁹

Fortunately, many cities are refocusing their efforts on reducing crime. There is growing momentum to replace progressive district attorneys whose lenient policies have been linked to rising lawlessness. A dozen Soros-funded DAs, in Portland, Los Angeles, San Fransico, Seattle and St. Louis, were turfed out. In New York, a tough new Police Commissioner, Jessica Tisch, has started to roll back the disorder that has plagued the city.⁶⁰

Under better leaders, cities do not need to fall into a "doom loop". Urban dysfunction is not inevitable, but a choice. Fortunately, there are signs that common sense is making a comeback. City residents are increasingly unwilling to be passive witnesses to their city's deterioration.

American urbanism, in all its increasingly diverse forms, is far from a lost cause. What is needed now is a renewed commitment to realistic, responsive leadership – and a willingness to meet the challenges of today with clear eyes and practical solutions, from the exurbs to the heart of the inner city. ✱

American urbanism,
in all its increasingly
diverse forms, is far from a
lost cause.

AUTHOR



Joel Kotkin is the Roger Hobbs Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures and author of eleven books, including *The City: A Global History*, *The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us* and, most recently, *The Coming of Neo-Feudalism: A Warning to the Global Middle Class*. He writes a regular column for *Quillette*, the *American Mind*, the *National Post* (Canada) and *Spiked*. He also writes for *Unherd*, *National Review*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Spectator*. He has written extensively on issues of class and housing in Europe, North America, and East Asia.

RESEARCH TEAM



M. Andrew Moshier is a native of Southern California. He earned a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Michigan in 1988, and has since then been involved in research in several areas of mathematics and computer science, including energy modeling for the Department of Energy, computational linguistics, cryptographic algorithms, and mostly in recent years, in areas of logic and topology. He is a Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Chapman University, where he has been on the faculty since 1994. In his tenure at Chapman he has served as chair of the mathematics and computer science department, and recently was dean of the School of Communication.



Bheki Mahlobo was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is a senior analyst at the Centre for Risk Analysis (CRA), a South African think tank with a global perspective. Mahlobo is a regular speaker and media commentator, providing analysis of the political and economic trends in South Africa and global markets. With John Endres, he is the coauthor of the CRA's client Risk Alert, a weekly bulletin that identifies the key risks in South Africa and the world. He also contributes research to the Socio-Economic Survey of South Africa, the CRA's flagship reference guide.



Alicia Kurimska has worked as a research associate at Chapman University's Center for Demographics and Policy and the Urban Reform Institute. She is the co-author, with Anne Snyder Brooks, of *The Millennial Dilemma: A Generation Searches for Home... On Their Terms*. She has lived in Stockholm, Prague, Slovakia, and California.

Rhonda Howard is a graphic designer based in Southern California

Endnotes

- 1 Jean Gottman, *The Coming of the Transactional City* (College Park, Maryland: University of Maryland Institute for Urban Studies, 1983).
- 2 Benjamin Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), <https://www.amazon.com/If-Mayors-Ruled-World-Dysfunctional/dp/030016467X>
- 3 Edward L. Glaeser and Albert Saiz, "The Rise of the Skilled City," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, NBER Working Paper 10191, December 2003, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w10191>; Neil Irwin, "The Biggest, Richest Cities Won Amazon and Everything Else. What Now for the Rest?" *The New York Times*, November 19, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/19/upshot/the-biggest-richest-cities-won-amazon-and-everything-else-what-now-for-the-rest.html>.
- 4 Mario Polese, "Urban Growth Will Continue," *City Journal*, Spring 2021, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/urban-growth-will-continue>.
- 5 Michael Totty, "The Rise of the Smart City," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-rise-of-the-smart-city-1492395120>.
- 6 Jed Kolko, "Cities aren't back," *Slow Boring*, March 13, 2025, <https://www.slowboring.com/p/cities-arent-back>.
- 7 There have been changes in urban criteria and precisely comparable data are not available.
- 8 Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese, "Suburbanization in the United States after 1945," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, April 26, 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-64>.
- 9 Philippa Maister, "Exurbs Emerge as America's Fastest Growing Communities," *Globe Street*, November 19, 2024, <https://www.globest.com/2024/11/19/exurbs-emerge-as-americas-fastest-growing-communities/>.
- 10 Kris Hudson, "Generation Y Prefers Suburban Home Over City Condo," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/millennials-prefer-single-family-homes-in-the-suburbs-1421896797>.
- 11 Emily Badger, Robert Gebeloff, and Josh Katz, "Coastal Cities Priced Out Low-Wage Workers. Now College Graduates are Leaving Too," *The New York Times*, May 13, 2023,
- 12 Joel Kotkin, et al., "The Next American Cities," *Urban Reform Institute*, January 2022, <https://urban-reforminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/The-Next-American-Cities.pdf>; "Are big cities overrated?" *The Economist*, January 16, 2025, <https://archive.ph/o1En7>; Wendell Cox, "Pervasive Suburbanization: The 2017 Data," *New Geography*, May 22, 2018, <https://www.newgeography.com/content/005981-pervasive-suburbanization-the-2017-data>.
- 13 Alan M. Berger, et al., "Next Generation American Suburbs," *Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism*, 2019, <https://lcau.mit.edu/research/next-generation-american-suburbs>.
- 14 Gerald A. Carlino, "From centralization to deconcentration: people and jobs spread out," *Business Review*, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Issue Nov, pages 15 – 27, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/fip/fedpbr/y2000inovp15-27.html>.
- 15 Wendell Cox, "Employment by City Sector, Challenges Ahead for Downtowns," *New Geography*, June 19, 2020, <https://www.newgeography.com/content/006688-employment-city-sector-challenges-ahead-downtowns>.
- 16 Konrad Putizer, "Office Owners Reeling from Remote Work Now Fret About Recession," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 5, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/office-owners-reeling-from-remote-work-now-fret-about-recession-11657022402>; Konrad Putzier, "America's Office Glut Started Decades Before Pandemic," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 23, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/americas-office-glut-started-decades-before-pandemic-11661210031>.
- 17 "Office Owners Reeling From Remote Work Now Fret About Recession".

- 18 "The Next American Cities," <https://urbanreforminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/The-Next-American-Cities.pdf>; Da Lin, "Many Oakland residents hope new leadership will bring change after Mayor Sheng Thao concedes," CBS News, November 9, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/many-oakland-residents-hope-new-leadership-will-bring-change-after-mayor-sheng-thao/>.
- 19 Erik Sherman, "Billions in Potential Revenue Vanish as Office Spaces Sit Empty," *Globe Street*, October 21, 2024, <https://www.globest.com/2024/10/21/billions-in-potential-revenue-vanish-as-office-spaces-sit-empty/>; Kristen Smithberg, "Real Estate Taxes Fund One Third of NYC's Budget and Drive Transportation Projects," *Globe Street*, April 1, 2025.
- 20 Fernando de Querol Cumbreira, "Number of office and residential skyscrapers built in the United States from 1900 to 2018, with forecasts from 2019 to 2022," Statista, September 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/952752/office-residential-skyscrapers-built-usa/>.
- 21 Max Rivera, et al., "What Living in New York City Is Like Now: From Rent to Rats," Bloomberg, March 21, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2025-nyc-statistics-jobs-rent-crime/>; John Muscat, "Rise of Luxury Urbanity as a System: Sydney CBD," *The New City Journal*, August 2024, https://www.thenewcityjournal.net/Rise_of_Luxury_Urbanity.pdf.
- 22 Deborah Acosta and Kate King, "You Know LVMH for Its Luxury Bags. It's Also a Titan of Real Estate," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 26, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/real-estate/commercial/louis-vuitton-lvmh-real-estate-communities-47aa1d55>.
- 23 Kate King, "Rockefeller Center Reinvention Aims to Buck Midtown Malaise," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/real-estate/commercial/rockefeller-center-reinvention-aims-to-buck-midtown-malaise-64b986b8>.
- 24 Alex Kotlowitz, "The Suburbs Have Become a Ponzi Scheme," *The Atlantic*, January 24, 2024, <https://www.theatlantic.com/books/archive/2024/01/benjamin-herold-disillusioned-suburbs/677229/>.
- 25 Jo Livingstone, "The Suburbs Are Still Hell," *The New Republic*, September 2, 2020, <https://newrepublic.com/article/159193/suburbs-hell-eula-biss-jason-diamond-review>.
- 26 Lara Farrar, "Is America's suburban dream collapsing into a nightmare?" *CNN*, 2008, <https://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/06/16/suburb.city/index.html>.
- 27 Christopher B. Leinberger, "The Next Slum?" *The Atlantic*, March 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/03/the-next-slum/306653/>; "Sprawl has passed into history," *Houston Tomorrow*, November 23, 2009; John Timpane, "Driving us back to the way we were," *Resilience*, September 25, 2005, <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2005-09-25/driving-us-back-way-we-were/>; Christopher B. Leinberger, "The Death of the Fringe Suburb," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/26/opinion/the-death-of-the-fringe-suburb.html>.
- 28 Ivonne Audirac, "Information Technology and Urban Form: Challenges to Smart Growth," *International Regional Science Review*, April 2005, Vol. 28(2), 119-145, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/sae/insre/v28y2005i2p119-145.html>; "Cities With the Most Technology Jobs Per Capita," *Spanning*, January 11, 2021, <https://www.spanning.com/resources/cities-with-most-technology-jobs-per-capita/>; Margaret O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton University Press, 2005), https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691117164/cities-of-knowledge?srsId=AfmBOoq3qPAKwP-vWU3jadd_fpBAARJHEXK7-8_Gjk_1WYhqRUOGJzb.
- 29 "Why is New York Shrinking?"; "2024 Study: 'Brain Drain'? The States With the Largest Net Gains and Losses of College-Educated Americans".
- 30 Aaron M. Renn, "Carmeltopia," *City Journal*, Summer 2024, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/carmeltopia>.
- 31 Lori Ioannou, "The Death of Main Streets Across America – and the People Trying to Save Them," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 16, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/business/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurship-small-towns-711f5dfd>.

- 32 Lori Ioannou, "The Death of Main Streets Across America – and the People Trying to Save Them," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 16, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/business/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurship-small-towns-711f5dfd>.
- 33 "Sir Ebenezer Howard," *Britannica*, April 27, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ebenezer-Howard>.
- 34 Betsy Morris, "For Better Health During the Pandemic, Is Two Hours Outdoors the New 10,000 Steps?" *The Wall Street Journal*, February 14, 2021, https://www.wsj.com/articles/for-better-health-during-the-pandemic-is-two-hours-outdoors-the-new-10-000-steps-11613304002?mod=searchresults_pos1&page=1; Eric W. Dolan, "Psychopathic tendencies linked to reduced connectedness to nature and a preference for city-living," *PsyPost*, May 5, 2021, <https://www.psypost.org/2021/05/psychopathic-tendencies-linked-to-reduced-connectedness-to-nature-and-a-preference-for-city-living-60675>.
- 35 Maria Zidaru, "The Green Side of WFH: Top U.S. Cities Where Remote Work Positively Influences the Environment," *Coworking Mag*, 2024, <https://coworkingmag.com/blog/work-from-home-and-the-environment/>; Lloyd Alter, "The Goldilocks Density Delivers the Lowest Life Cycle Carbon Emissions," *Treehugger*, August 31, 2021, <https://www.treehugger.com/goldilocks-density-delivers-lowest-lifecycle-carbon-emissions-5199458>; Curtis Heinzl, "Dense Cities with Low Emissions Suffer Most From Air Pollution, Study Finds," *Bloomberg*, August 29, 2024, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-08-29/denser-european-cities-have-higher-air-pollution-heat-island-effect?cmpid=BBD082924_CITYLAB.
- 36 Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Living City* (New York: Horizon Publishers, 1958), 83, 87, 231.
- 37 Joel Kotkin, "Tech bros have stolen Austin's soul," *UnHerd*, February 28, 2025, <https://unherd.com/2025/02/tech-bros-have-stolen-austins-soul/>.
- 38 H.G. Wells, "The Probable Diffusion of Great Cities," in *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought*, 1902, *American Literature*, <https://americanliterature.com/author/hg-wells/essay/the-probable-diffusion-of-great-cities>.
- 39 Anne Bartlett, et al., *The City as an Entertainment Machine* (Lexington Books, 2011), <https://www.amazon.com/City-as-Entertainment-Machine/dp/0739124226>.
- 40 Joanne Lipman, "Return to the Office Mandates are a Disaster for Working Mothers," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/lifestyle/careers/return-to-the-office-mandates-are-a-disaster-for-working-mothers-bf57a071>; Tomas Diez, "How the Digital Revolution Will Make Cities Produce Everything They Consume Again," *Arch Daily*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.archdaily.com/897842/how-the-digital-revolution-will-make-cities-produce-everything-they-consume-again>.
- 41 Amber Heckler, "Austin Ranks No. 4 in U.S. for highest office vacancy rate, per report," *Culture Map Austin*, August 27, 2024, <https://austin.culturemap.com/news/real-estate/remote-jobs-office-vacancy/>; Florian Zandt, "These Industries Allow Working from Home," *Statista*, July 12, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/chart/32599/industries-with-the-highest-share-of-new-job-postings-allowing-remote-hybrid-work-in-the-us/>; E.J. McMahon, "What's behind New York's Population Swings," *City Journal*, December 20, 2024, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/new-york-population-immigration-census-bureau>; "Half of big multinationals plan to cut office space in next three years," *Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/276c26f2-889c-4e08-8f33-ce170890765b?emailId=83bb7https://news.uchicago.edu/story/much-us-staying-home-how-many-jobs-can-be-done-remotely23b-6ec7-4efa-b155-0b7202a2a6cb&segmentId=13b7e341-ed02-2b53-e8c0-d9cb59be8b3b>.
- 42 Thomas B. Edsall, "How a 'Golden Era for Large Cities' Might be Turning Into an 'Urban Doom Loop'," *The New York Times*, November 30, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/30/opinion/covid-pandemic-cities-future.html>

- 43 Han Lung, "GM's \$1.6 Billion Renaissance Center Redevelopment Under Scrutiny," *CRE Daily*, December 19, 2024, <https://www.credaily.com/briefs/gms-1-6b-renaissance-center-redevelopment-under-scrutiny/>; John Leland, "The Prophet of Urban Doom Says New York Still Has a Chance," *The New York Times*, June 20, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/08/nyregion/doom-loop-remote-work-pandemic-nyc.html>; Pete Saunders, "The Corner Side Yard Guest Correspondent Series – Welcome to Milwaukee," *The Corner Side Yard*, January 16, 2025, <https://petesaunders.substack.com/p/the-corner-side-yard-guest>; Richard Berger, "Office Conversion Projects to Double This Year," *GlobeSt*, April 15, 2024, <https://www.globest.com/2024/04/15/office-conversion-projects-to-double-this-year/>.
- 44 "Kevin Burns, Broker & CEO," Urban Space Realtors, 2025, <https://www.urbanspacerealtors.com/team/kevin-burns/>; "Downtown Austin Profile," Downtown Austin Alliance, 2025, <https://downtownaustin.com/what-we-do/research/reports/downtown-austin-profile/>; "Downtown Residents," *Niche*, <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/n/downtown-austin-tx/residents/>.
- 45 Metro Districts: Building Communities with Amenities People Love," Metro District Education Coalition, 2024, <https://metrodistricteducation.com/>.
- 46 Roger Vincent, "Graffitied skyscraper in downtown Los Angeles poised for sale," *Yahoo Finance*, May 8, 2024, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/graffitied-skyscraper-downtown-los-angeles-203901547.html>; Travis Schlepp, "Dark streets linked to thousands of copper thefts in LA: report," *KTLA*, May 3, 2024, <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/dark-streets-linked-to-los-angeles-copper-thefts-report/>.
- 47 "City Profile/History," City of Paramount, 2025, <https://www.paramountcity.gov/community/city-profile/>.
- 48 "The Revitalization of Paramount: How One City Turned Itself Around," City of Paramount, 2007, https://www.paramountcity.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/revital_book.pdf.
- 49 "Donald Trump And Project 2025; Will The Future of America Be a Return To The Ugly Past?," National Urban League, May 15, 2025, <https://nul.org/node/6770>.
- 50 Mark Lutter and Nick Allen, "Building Freedom Cities," *City Journal*, December 6, 2024, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/building-freedom-cities>.
- 51 Connor Harris, "The Sunbelt's Transportation Priorities Are Going the Wrong Way," *Bloomberg*, June 21, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-21/what-s-wrong-with-sunbelt-transportation-spending>.
- 52 Bill Lindeke, "Four years of uncertainty ahead for American cities under Trump," *MinnPost*, November 11, 2024, <https://www.minnpost.com/cityscape/2024/11/four-years-of-uncertainty-ahead-for-american-cities-under-trump/>.
- 53 Phillippa Maister, "Exurbs Emerge as America's Fastest Growing Communities," *GlobeSt*, November 19, 2024, <https://www.globest.com/2024/11/19/exurbs-emerge-as-americas-fastest-growing-communities/>.
- 54 Sydney Johnson and Ayesha Rascoe, "San Francisco's incoming mayor has never held public office. That's part of his appeal," *NPR*, November 24, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/11/24/nx-s1-5190796/san-franciscos-incoming-mayor-has-never-held-public-office-thats-part-of-his-appeal>.
- 55 Adam McCann, "Best & Worst Run Cities in America," *WalletHub*, June 18, 2024, <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-run-cities/22869>.
- 56 Christopher F. Rufo, "The Rise of the New Left Urbanists," *City Journal*, Summer 2019, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/the-rise-of-the-new-left-urbanists>; Andrew Stein and Douglas E. Schoen, "The Seeds of New York's Disorder Were Planted in 1989," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/the-seeds-of-new-yorks-disorder-were-planted-in-1989-public-advocate-mayor-f125ba17>; "A Chicago Machine Meltdown," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 22, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/a-chicago-machine-meltdown-a-chicago-machine-meltdown-teachers-union-ac3d28ae>; Heather Gillers, "Battle Over Chicago School Funding Descends Into Name-Calling, Resignations," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 23, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/battle-over-chicago-school-funding-descends-into-name-calling-resignations-1c88e5ff>; "It's Not Just Ken Griffin. Rich Chicago Residents Are Losing Their Shirts on Real Estate."; Jordan Duecker, "The Shambles of St. Louis," *City Journal*, February 28, 2025, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/st-louis-mayor-tishaura-jones>.

- 57 Volodymyr Kupriyanov, "2024 Study: 'Brain Drain?' The States With the Largest Net Gains and Losses of College-Educated Americans," *Hire a Helper Blog*, April 17, 2024, <https://blog.hireahelper.com/2024-study-brain-drain-the-states-with-the-largest-net-gains-and-losses-of-college-educated-americans/>.
- 58 John R. Lott Jr., "Law Enforcement Collapse Masks Rising Crime Rates," Real Clear Politics, August 28, 2024, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2024/08/28/law_enforcement_collapse_masks_rising_crime_rates_151529.html.
- 59 Aziz Sunderji, "Why is New York shrinking?" *Financial Times*, August 19, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/6c490381-d2f0-4691-a65f-219fab2a2202>; "Police Warning: Don't Wear Anything Valuable in DC," Unleash Property, October 25, 2024, <https://committeetounleashprosperity.com/hotlines/police-warning-dont-wear-anything-valuable-in-dc/>.
- 60 Michael Dorgan, "Soros Das suffer 12 big defeats, billionaire's agenda faces uncertain future," Fox News, November 9, 2024, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/soros-das-suffer-12-big-defeats-billionaires-agenda-faces-uncertain-future>; Tunku Varadarajan, "Can Democrats Govern Big Cities?" *The Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/new-yorks-top-cop-has-what-democrats-need-policing-public-safety-crime-edf10604>.



CHAPMAN
UNIVERSITY