Urban Land Use, from Urban Expansion
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Article citation:
[Gaffney, Mason]. “Urban Land Use, from Urban Expansion.” No date. Notes.

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Urban Land Use, from Urban Expansion

1. Basic unit of area, the acre, is 90.75% of a football gridiron (43560/160 = 90.75).

Some common block sizes are rectangles based on factors of 43,560: 99 x 440; 125 x 350 (approx).

2. Front foot used in retail land esp. Edge effect. To make a more homogenous unit. Mnemonic rule of 4-3-2-1.

Other kinds of access are important, other land uses.

Industry needs rail sidings; freeways; airports; waterports.

Residential needs street frontage less, down to a certain minimum. Flag lots provide the min.; also, wedge lots around bulb at end of cul-de-sac. Without that min., cannot use lot at all.

Flag lots give essential access with max privacy. Not all good, however: must pay for laterals, drives. Case of Boyd Jensen. Farther from fire hydrants, higher insurance; remote from view of police, neighbors.

Offices need proximity to City Hall, County Records. Law firms, engineering firms, newspapers, title cos., office supplies and computers, printing, courts, bail bondsmen, hotels, convention centers, churches, museums, libraries, banks, appraisers, accountants, hospitals, dentists, theatres and entertainment, mass transit stations (bus, rail), auditoriums, metrodomes, boutiques, restaurants ...

3. Moral: CITIES EXIST TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. Access, location, are what you come to cities for. To get them, you pay top dollar.

Cities also harbor lots of undesirables. You also pay to avoid them.

4. Foretaste of urban values, 100% locations, 1988. L.A., $600; S.F., $1200; Chicago, $2,000; Manhattan, $2,000 (Chicago is more centralized).

Riverside, 10,000 s.f. lot @$2/sf, $20,000. Balboa Island, 10 times as much psf, more on water.

5. Scarcity of urban land

a. Natural setting. NYC; Chicago; Vancouver; L.A.; N. Orleans; St. Louis; Minneapolis. Natural monopolies.

Water power, early milltowns. E.g. Springfield, VT, still a machine tool capital. S. Londonderry, VT, picture-book town with millpond.

Fall line cities: head of navigation, plus water power. Georgetown; Richmond; Minneapolis; Fall-named cities (Chicopee Falls, Niagara Falls, Sioux Falls, Little and Great Falls (Georgetown), Fall River), Lowell, Pawtucket, Troy-Albany, Trenton, Raleigh, Columbia, Augusta, Louisville.

Amenities: Miami Beach, Fla's geriatric ghettos, Saratoga Springs, Vichy, Aspen, Manchester (VT), Palm Springs, Palm Beach, Hilton Head, Va. Beach, Atlantic City, Big Bear-L. Arrowhead, Tahoe City, Ely MN, Egg Harbor WI, etc.

Mines: not as a rule, not labor-intensive, too dirty. Oil as exception? Jo-burg as exception? Scranton?

Farms? Hardly any great city lacks its own nearby food supply, and food processing/exporting industry. Even L.A. and S.F. pack food, and dozens of small farmtowns do. Such towns die when big farms replace small ones: Verdigre case; Grapes of Wrath, major cause. Today it's far worse.

b. Man-made foci. Water supply of Riverside, L.A., San Francisco.

Improving water access. Ports of Milwaukee, L.A., NYC, Seattle, Cleveland, Buffalo, huge capital outlays. Merchant Marine: much of England's capital was in ships.

Canals: Erie, C&O, B&O, Welland, Soo, Panama, D&H,

Rail access, and lines. Chicago, 10% of land is railyards; Milwaukee, 5%. Plains and prairies, rails determined many locations. St. Louis as "gateway," with Miss. as fence (until Abe Lincoln won court case).

Roads, several stages.

Trails, traces, turnpikes

Highways, freeways. Modern jockeying for govt. funds.

Airports.

Man-made amenities: Lake Isabella; Lake of the Ozarks; Lake Perris; Lakes Powell and Mead; etc.

c. Internal circulation

People cluster around the initial attraction, then find they have access to each other, and to all the goods passing through, and stored there. Cities devote half their land to xptn.

Meaning of "competition for shelf space."

d. Man-made attractions.

Govt: Washington, D.C.; Sacto.; Madison, WI; Pierre, S.D.; Bismarck, N.D.; Springfield, IL; Jeff City, MO; Juneau, AK (attempted raid).

Military: Ft. Dearborn, Ft. Pitt, Ft. Wayne, Ft. Lauderdale.

Religion and govt: Salt Lake City; Rome; Mecca; Jerusalem; Loma Linda and La Sierra area of Riverside.

Gambling - from sacred to profane.

Culture: Ashland, OR. More generally, all big cities attract culture, and culture makes them bigger. E.g., Washington's Folger Library probably produces more Shakespeare than Ashland.

Riverside, medium city, has Mission Inn, UCR, Riv. Symphony, Riv. players, private colleges, library, museums, citrus heritage park, several bookstores, listed historical buildings, abortive civic opera, ...

Larger cities have more. Seattle Civic Center with Space Needle, Children's Museum, opera house, conference centers, etc.

Recreation: Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Medieval Knights, skiing, bowling, parks, concerts at the barn, visiting actors, musicians (no more recitals), etc. Stadia: Roman Coliseum; Kingdome, Astrodome, Chavez Ravine, Anaheim Stadium, etc. etc.

World's Fairs: occasional, promotional, risky. Vancouver, e.g., the fair per se was great, but the promotion

bombed, due to corrupt govt. Sold False Creek foreshorelands to a crooked speculator from Hong Kong, still vacant. The seamy side of one of the world's great cities.

Education: great universities are mostly in great cities.

Specialized shopping: Pike St. Market, Seattle; jewelry; Robsonstrasse, Vancouver; Govt. St., Victoria

Specialized production. Tin Pan Alley; Hollywood; Detroit; Silicon Valley; Mon Valley; 7th Ave rag trade; L.A. plastics; Rhine Valley chemicals; Milwaukee electrical machinery; Milanese grand opera; Wall Street banking; Minneapolis milling; etc.

6. Ecs. of scale

Many things could be duplicated, but they require scale, numbers. Buyers attract sellers, and sellers buyers, so one center grows at expense of No.2. Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. Seattle vs. Tacoma; San Fran vs. Oakland. Winners grow; losers wither, settle for mediocrity.

Also, is an ec. base effect. The bigger a city is, the more of what it consumes it produces internally. In a mining town, e.g., everything is imported, so one job is just one job. In N.Y., on the other hand, one export job means several import-competing jobs.

In Calif as a region, this was the El Dorado Effect: as the basics grew, demand-oriented industries came in even greater proportion.

7. Limits to scale

a. Cost of xptn, supply, esp of bulky things. E.g. water supply; garbage disposal; food; energy. Actually, simple economy would solve such problems, but it is often lacking, as in our case.

b. Congestion at core. This, too, is due to bad orgn, e.g. free street parking in N.Y.C. Still, given the level of orgn., it is a limit. Orgn is the real limit, and the character of the people.

c. The real limit is alienation. See case of missing middle class.