

**City Planning 642-001**  
Spring 2026, University of Pennsylvania  
Paul R. Levy

**Second Class**

<https://centercityphila.org/bidclass>

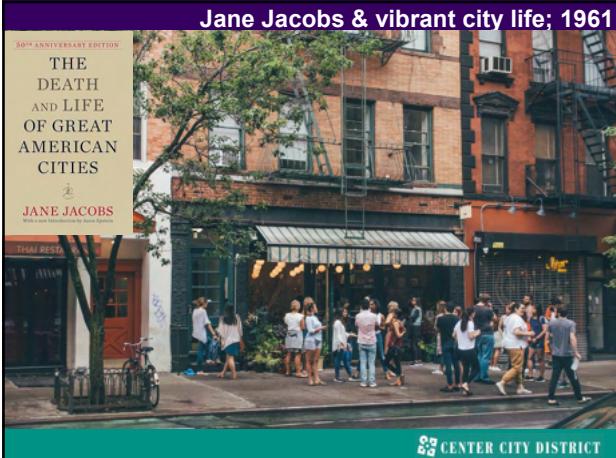
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**Urban design & development principles**  
(Readings & places that have shaped my thinking)

- (1) Get the ground floor right: frequent doors & openings
- (2) What's upstairs must be "mixed primary uses"
- (3) Density has an economic value in-itself
- (4) It takes surrounding density to create value in open space; open space creates RE value: symbiotic
- (5) Create places that attract a diversity of users
- (6) Don't get obsessed with only small-scale & incremental approaches to revival
- (7) Often need big money & big projects to overcome big money mistakes from the past

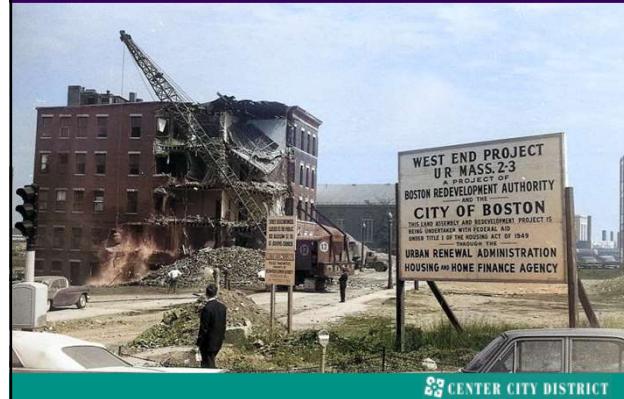
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**A reaction to 1950s federally funded urban renewal demolition**



7

**Style of architecture that replaced buildings & communities that were demolished**



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**The city experienced on sidewalks & in public places  
Observer not a trained designer or planner**



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How do you produce these conditions?  
(pre- and post-Covid)



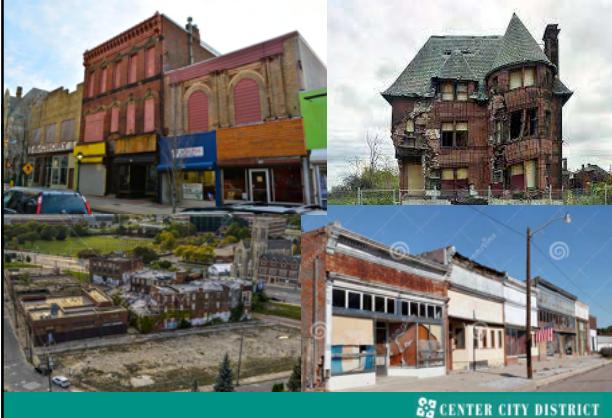
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As opposed to these conditions?



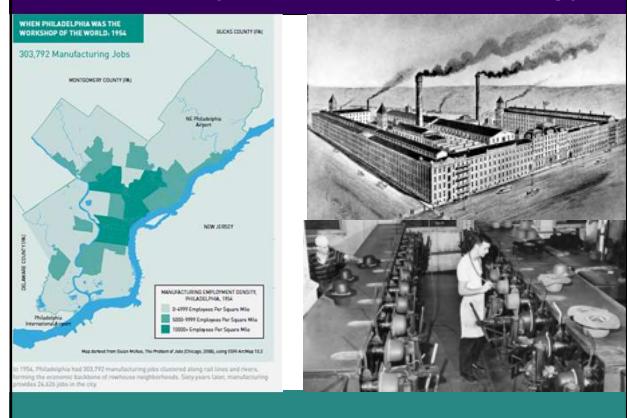
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Extreme problem in places abandoned economically



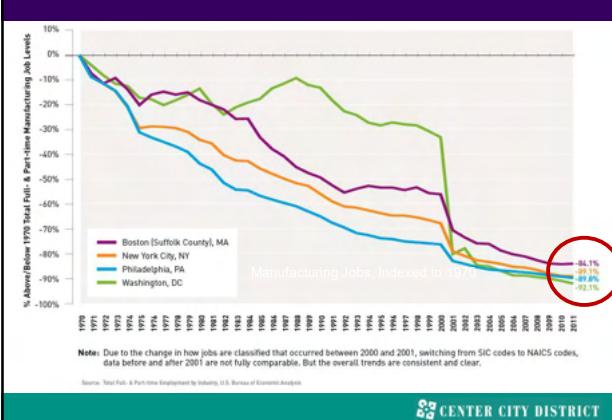
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As recently 1954: 304,000 manufacturing jobs



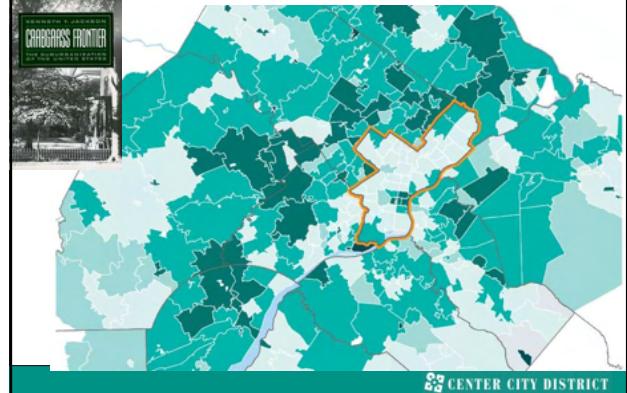
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Uniquely U.S. problem: De-industrialization +

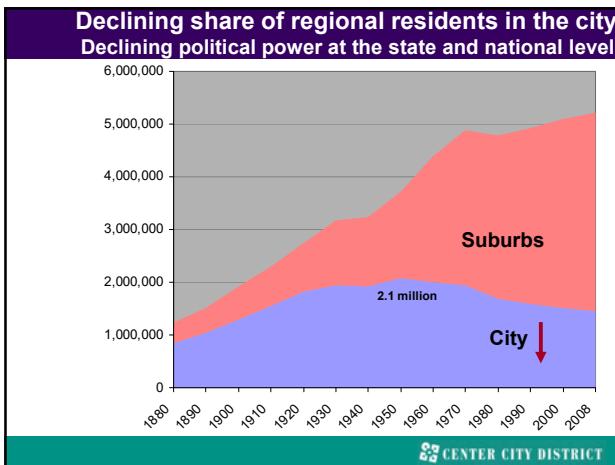


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Decentralization of post-industrial jobs out of cities  
Investment in highways, autos & suburbanization



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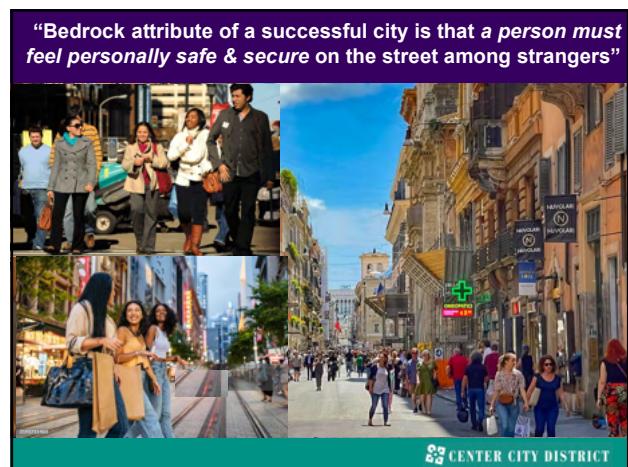
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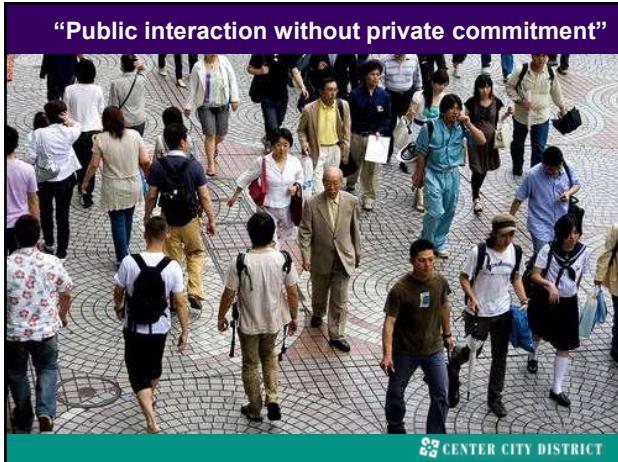
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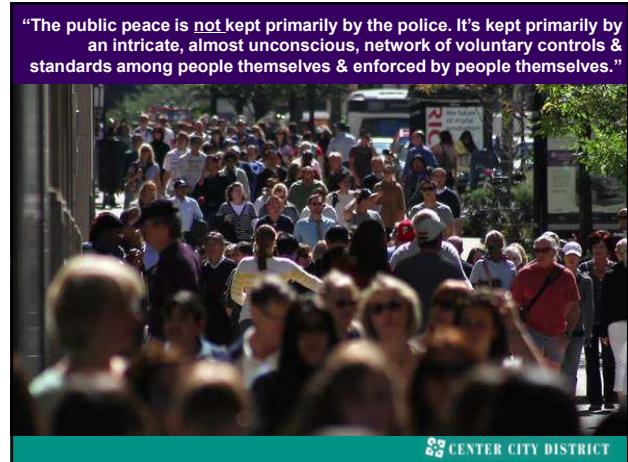
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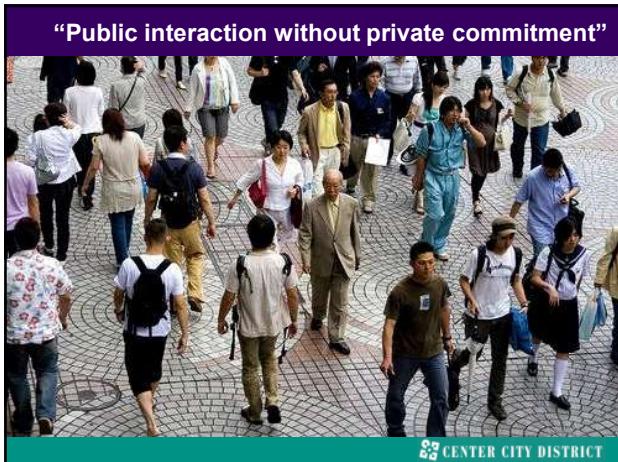
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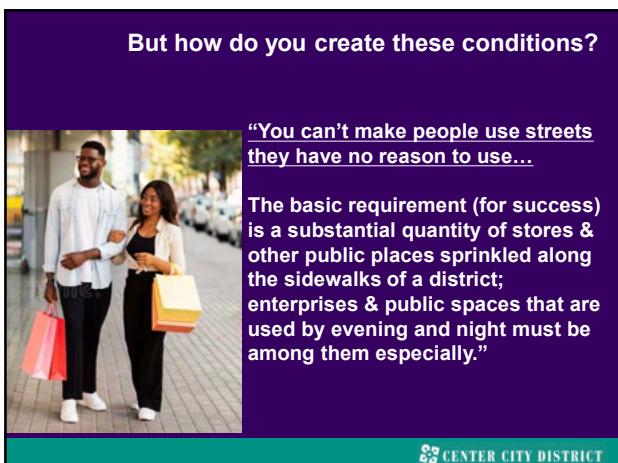
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Variety & continuity produce activity



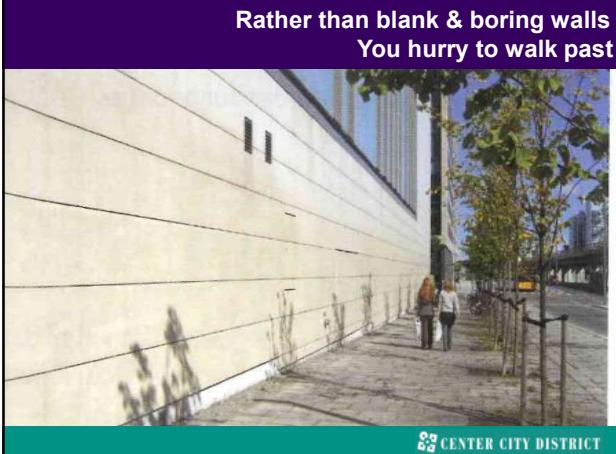
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Places of interest that attract, pull you along  
But also cause you to pause & look at store windows



29

Rather than blank & boring walls  
You hurry to walk past



30

Buildings designed to activate .....



31

Rather than deaden the street



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Uses that generate high volumes of pedestrians



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Chicago: buildings that spill out onto the sidewalk



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Nyhavn: buildings that spill out onto the sidewalk



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Chania, Crete during the daytime



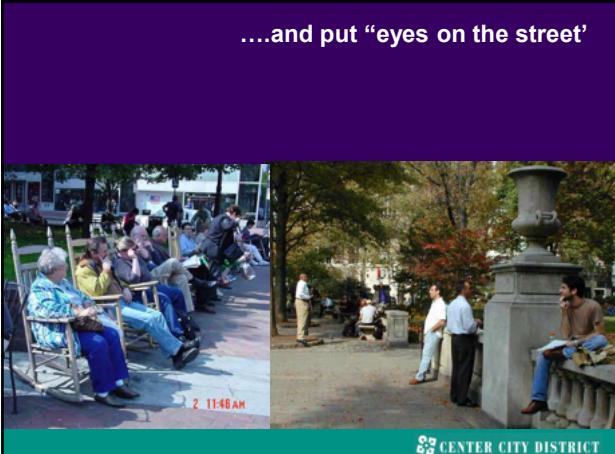
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& at night



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....and put "eyes on the street"



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Informal: shop owners who watch over the street



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Keep an eye on the sidewalk



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Celebrates formal role of NYC doorman



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Much easier at the scale of pre-highrise, pre-auto cities  
Visby, Gotland; Sweden



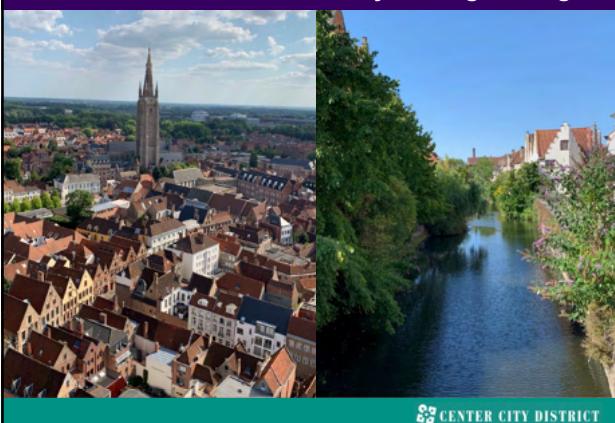
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16<sup>th</sup> century place thriving as tourist destination



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Preserved, medieval city of Bruges, Belgium



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Curving walkable, human-scale lanes



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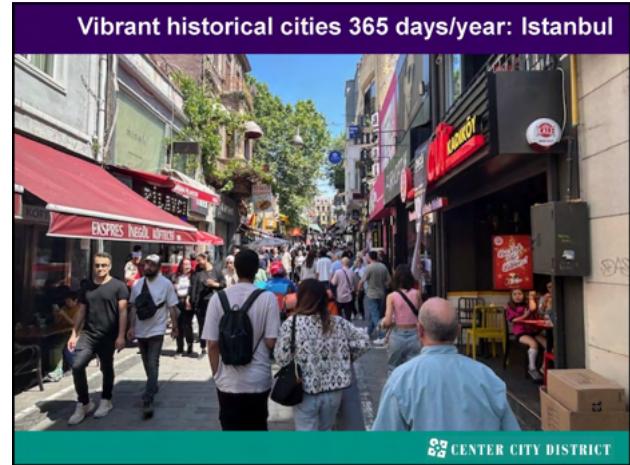
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In an historic setting



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How to preserve the human scale of historic city  
With frequent doors & openings? Ground floor design

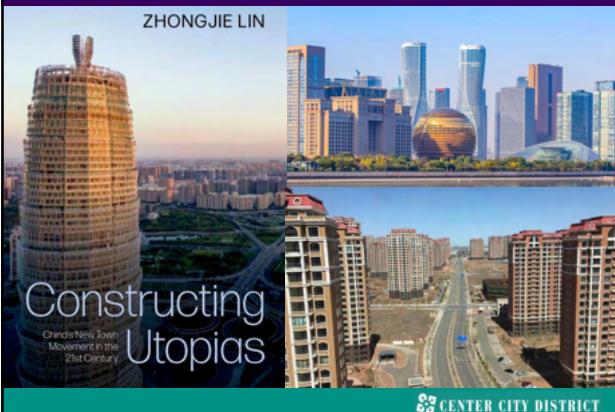


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New city development in China

ZHONGJIE LIN



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Constructing  
Utopias  
China's New Town Movement in the 21st Century

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#2: What's upstairs must be "mixed primary uses"



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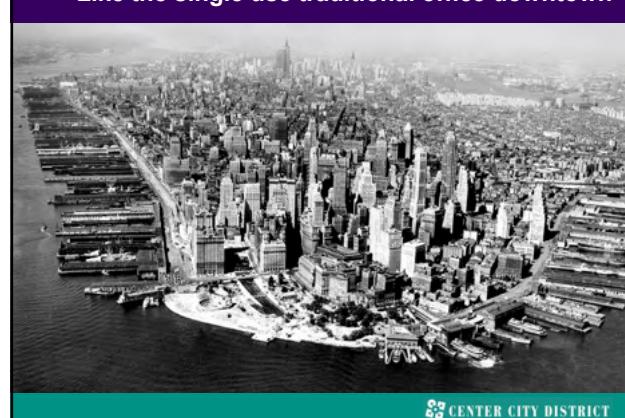
Uses that generate activity by day  
& not only at rush hour and lunchtime



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Like the single use traditional office downtown



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Uses that generate activity at night:  
Arts & entertainment



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Mixed primary uses: office, hotel & residential  
Create foot traffic at different times of day



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Add an outpatient medical building



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& a hospital & get even more diverse foot traffic



62

On campuses: classrooms, offices & dorms



63

Evening classes



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Add hotel & bookstore & there are more reasons for people to be on the street, more diverse hours



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The more mixed, the better, but all upper floor uses....



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Also need to get the ground floor right!  
Primary mixed uses + frequent doors & openings on ground floor



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It can be done in new buildings



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Done immediately across the street



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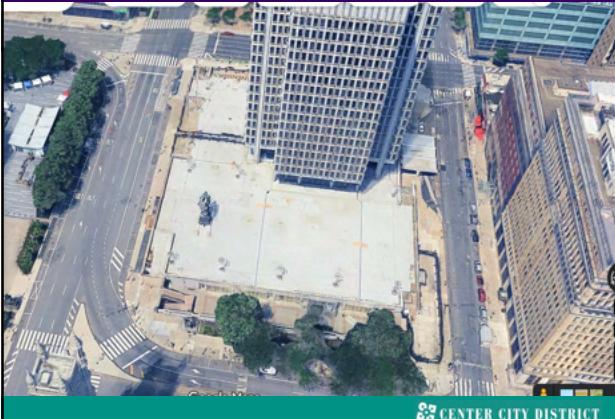
At the other extreme:  
High-rise buildings 1960s-1970s on podiums



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**Buildings separated from the street grid**



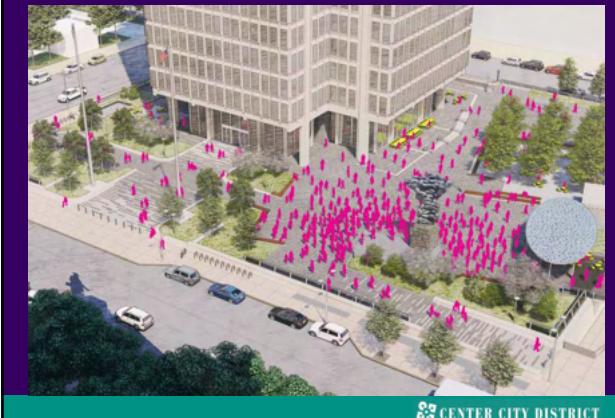
**Architecture as fortress**



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**City is working on an improvement plan**



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**But even buildings that touch the sidewalk...**



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**Often have minimal ground floor retail**



**How is the ground floor designed...**



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....and how is it leased? 16<sup>th</sup> & Market Street  
Banks on both corners



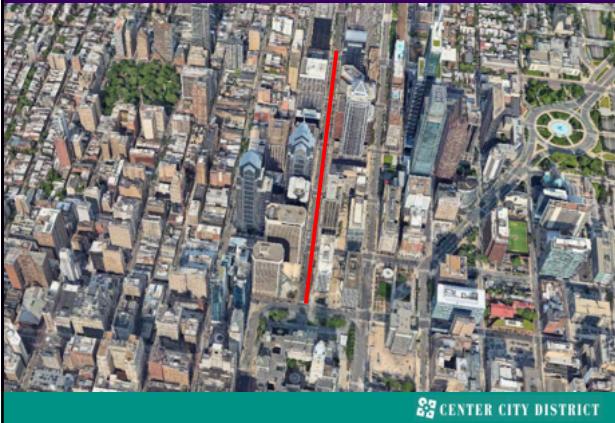
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Higher rent? More activity  
RE economics & sidewalk animation not always in sync



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Genesis of West Market office core



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1950s: Creation of new Office District



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Broad St Station: immediately west of City Hall



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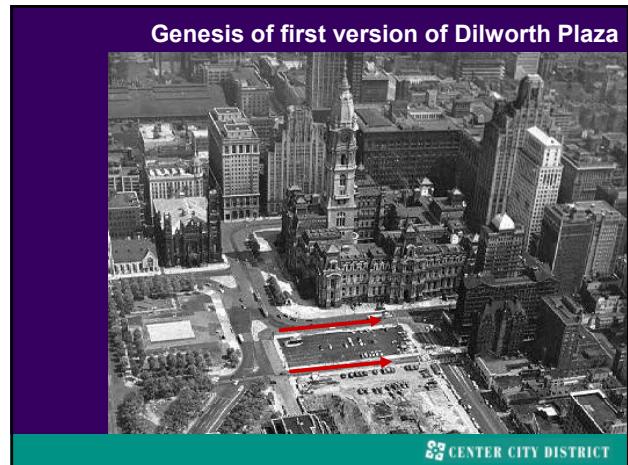
1953: the demolition of elevated railroad tracks



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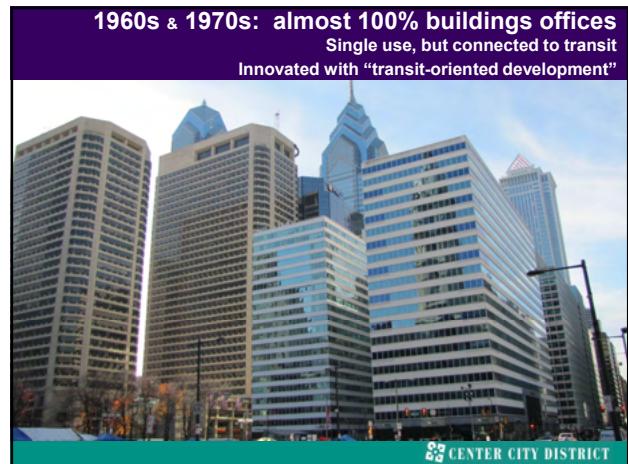
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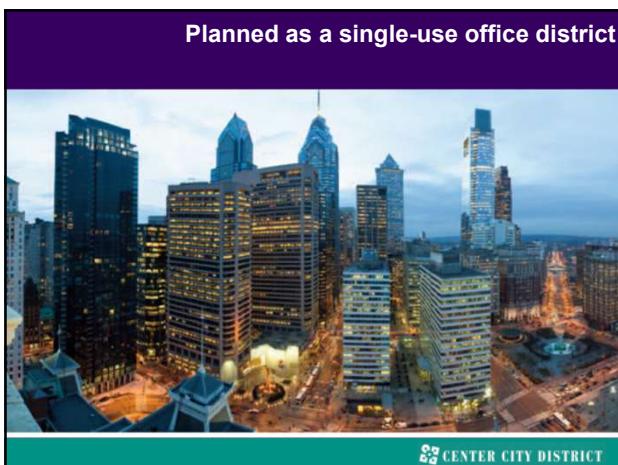
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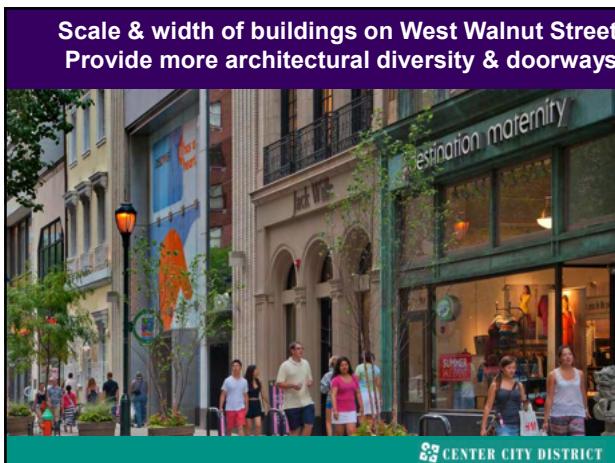
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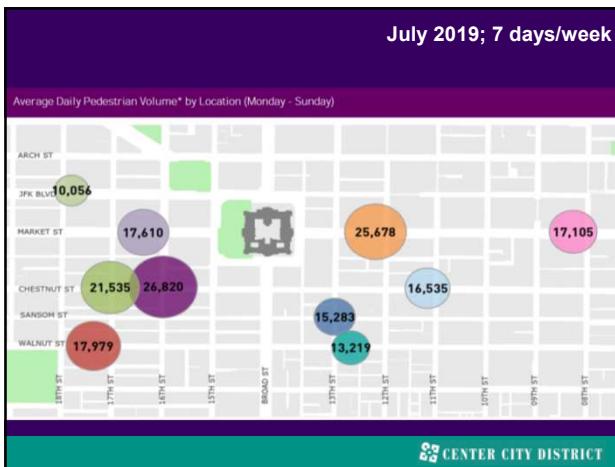
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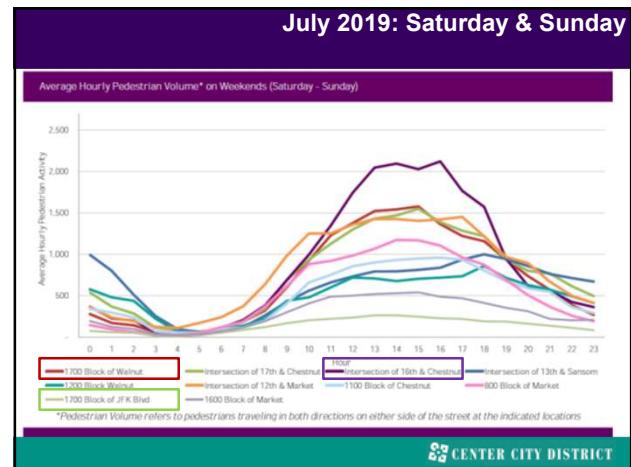
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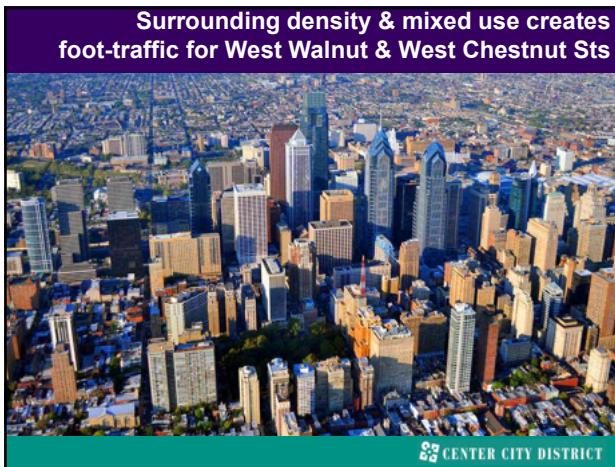
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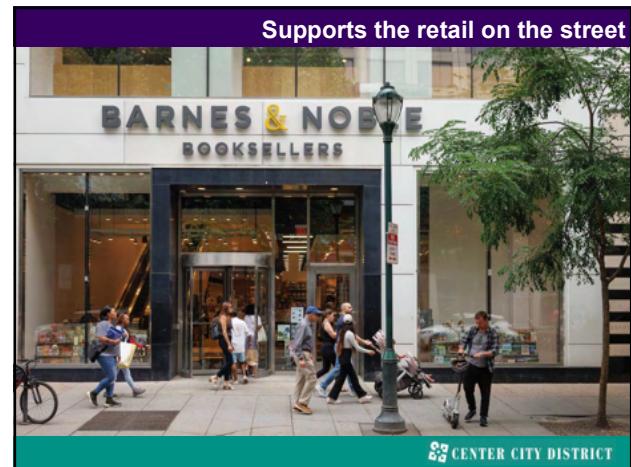
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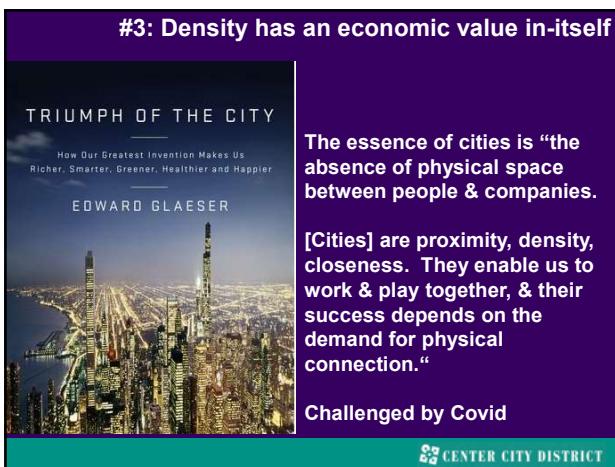
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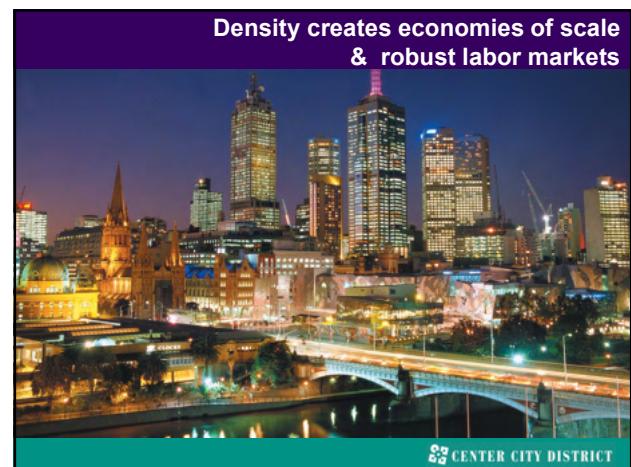
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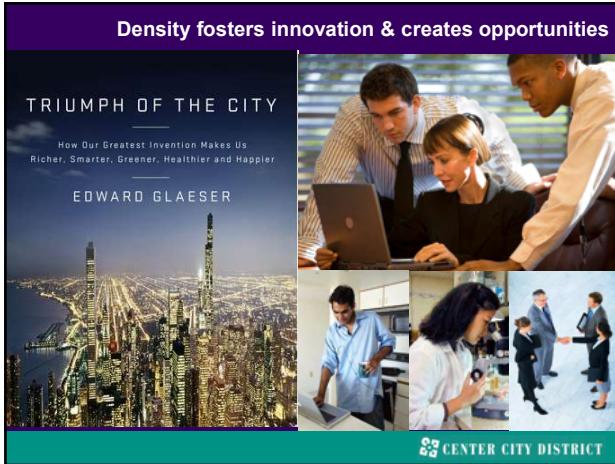
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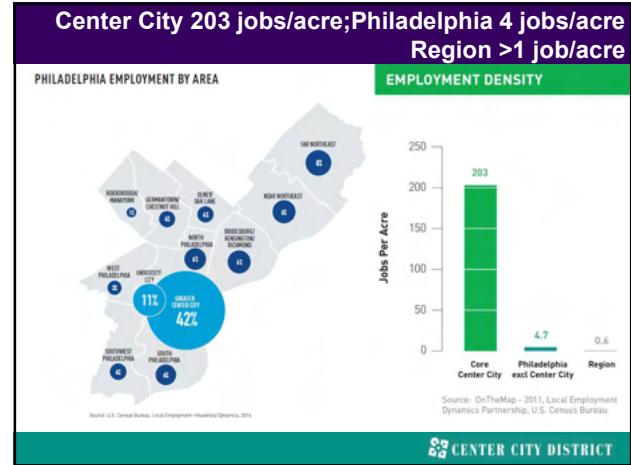
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**Offices: Densest containers of the most diverse jobs:  
Hold high-wage, mid-level & entry-level jobs**



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Many blue-collar urban jobs depend on the presence of office workers  
Put simply: *remote work* may not be consistent with *inclusive growth*



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**#4: It takes surrounding density to create value in open space  
Piazza Navona, Rome**



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**Surrounding density around Millennium Park**



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**Surrounding density around Central Park  
Symbiotic relationship between urban parks & real estate**



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**Rittenhouse Square: Density + diversity of land-use**



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NYC Highline: a public spaces can leverage  
Vitality & private development



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New housing



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The Whitney Museum



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Value capture: Brooklyn Bridge Park

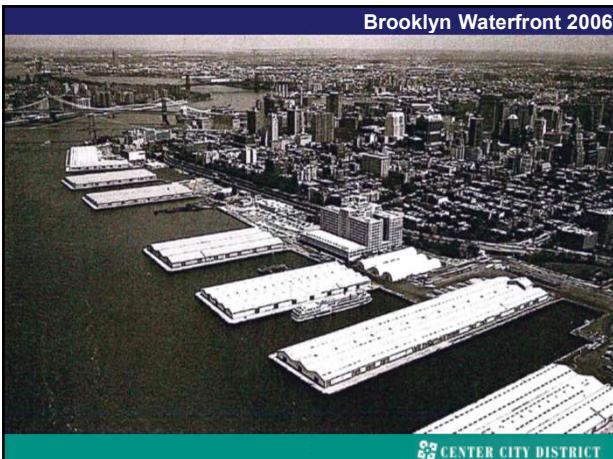


Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc

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Brooklyn Waterfront 2006



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All real estate developed along edge pays ground rent



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#5: How places can attract a diversity of users

The authoring interviewee: JULIEN COOK, author of *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life*

**THE COSMOPOLITAN  
CANOPY**  
**RACE AND CIVILITY  
IN EVERYDAY LIFE**  
ELIJAH ANDERSON



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Reading Terminal Market



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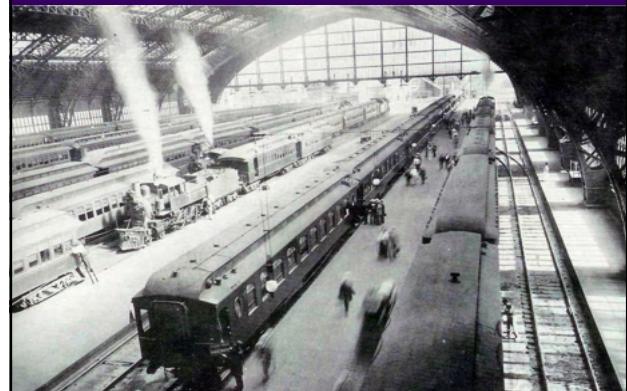
Reading railroad train station  
Market was a business enterprise for the railroad



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Passenger trains came into the train shed



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Operated on the ground floor



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New underground connections made it obsolete in 1984



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Converted to gateway to PA Convention Center



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Preserved when convention center created  
& now managed by non-profit corporation



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Similar to urban street grid



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Well-served by public transit  
10 separate entrances from the street



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Accessible, affordable & draws a diverse audience



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Partially driven by the diversity of merchants



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Part of a traditional global form  
Of pre automobile marketplaces



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Compare to Fashion District  
Also very accessible to transit



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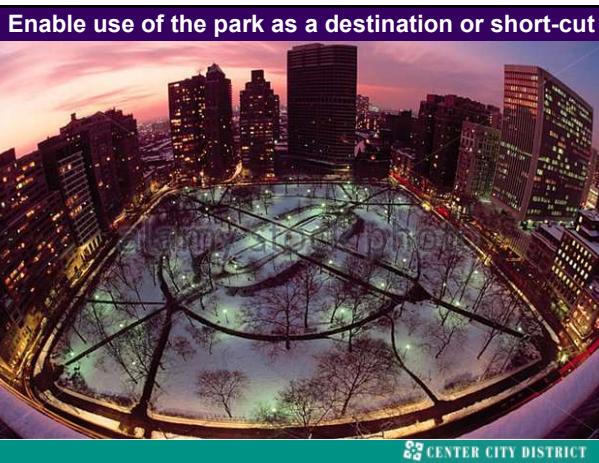
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Design of public places shapes their appeal  
Rittenhouse Square  
Multiple entrances provide ease of access



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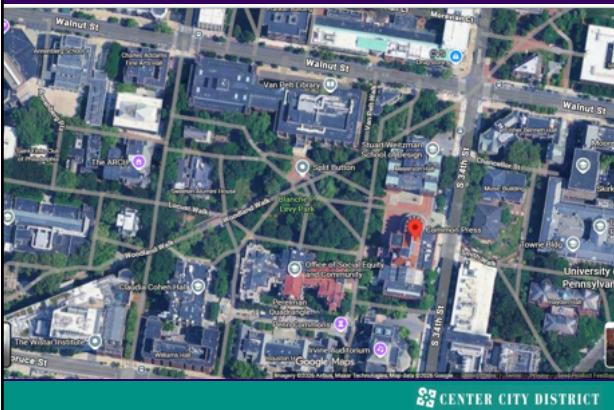
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**How the route of walking paths were determined**



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**Ease of entry at multiple points**



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**Because of diverse, adjacent land-use: office workers**



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**Bike messengers**



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**Construction workers & day-care providers**



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**Seniors & young children**



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College students



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People in very different phases of life



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Plenty of places from which to watch other people



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Or take a nap



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Surrounding restaurants.....



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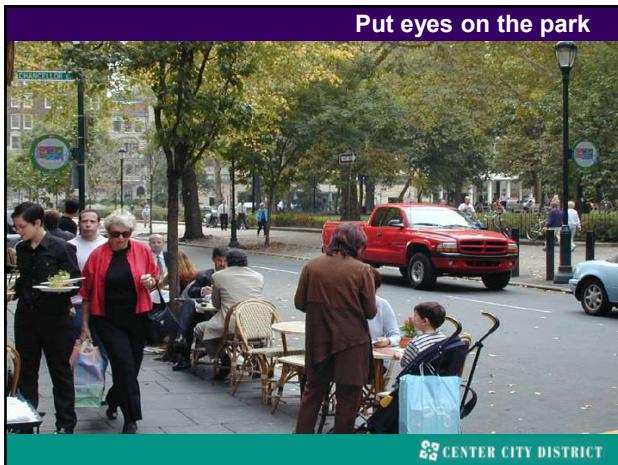
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Clear views into the park



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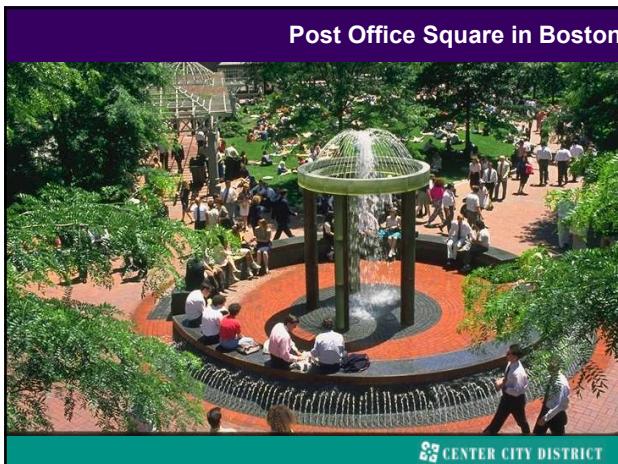
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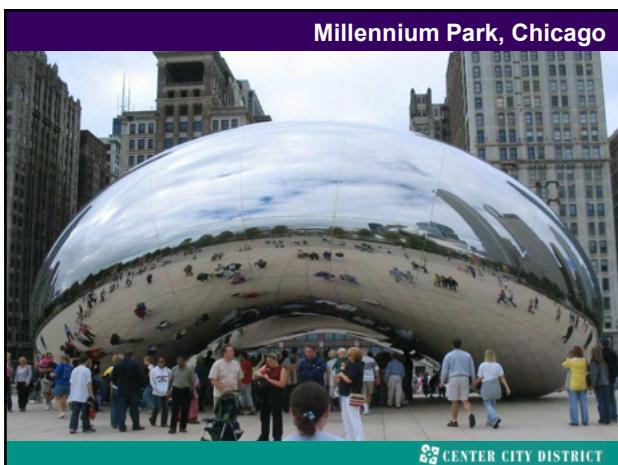
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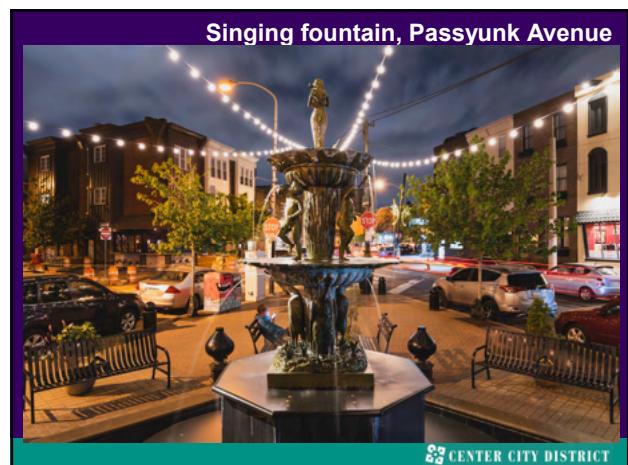
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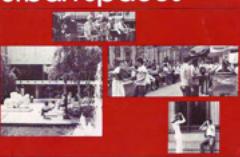
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Similar perspective:  
William Whyte focused attention on little details

**The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces**



*William H. Whyte*  
The Conservation Foundation

***"It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people ... what is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished."***

*William H. Whyte*  
Founder - Project for Public Spaces

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**Great streets & places are created by paying attention to small details**

**"You can't make people use streets they have no reason to use**



The basic requirement (for success) is a substantial quantity of stores & other public places sprinkled along the sidewalks of a district; enterprises & public spaces that are used by evening and night must be among them especially."

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961

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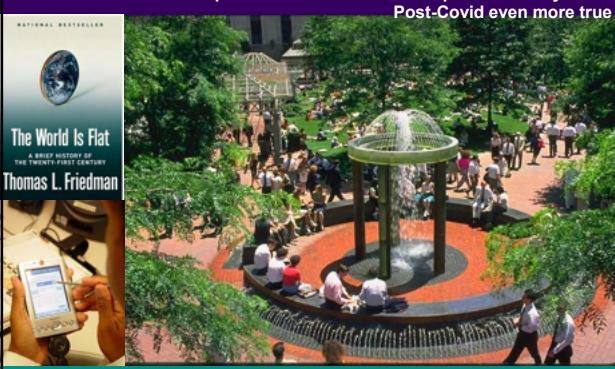
**Celebration of intimately scaled streets**

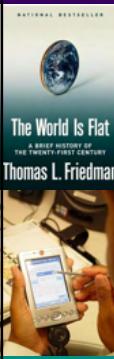


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**Key component of urban competitiveness**  
In global economy, digital technology provides mobility & choice; post-industrial work can be performed anywhere  
Post-Covid even more true





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**When people can work anyplace, the quality of a specific place defines its competitiveness**

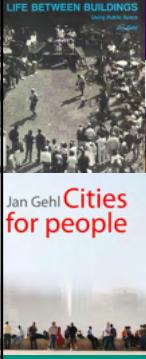


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**Jan Gehl: In the manufacturing city, People were in the street out of necessary**









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That's where a lot of work was performed



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Post-industrial city, they are outside by choice



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Only if we provide quality public spaces



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1900

1950

1965

2000



Main street Copenhagen in 100 years  
from necessary to optional activities

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The traditional city



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The invaded city



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**The abandoned city**



**The reconquered city**



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**Nyhavn, Copenhagen; 1908**



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**In a densely developed waterfront section of the city**



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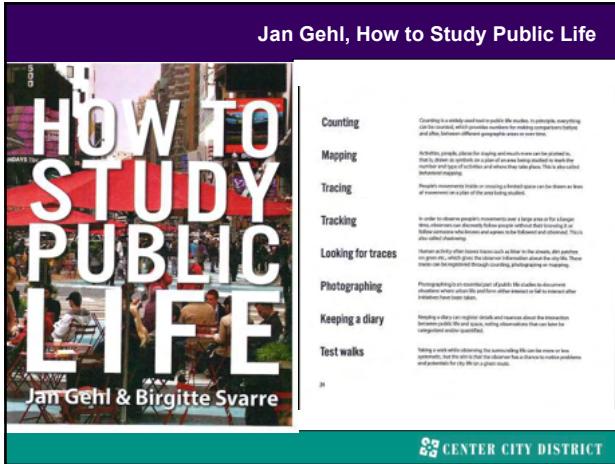
**Nyhavn, Copenhagen; 1960s**



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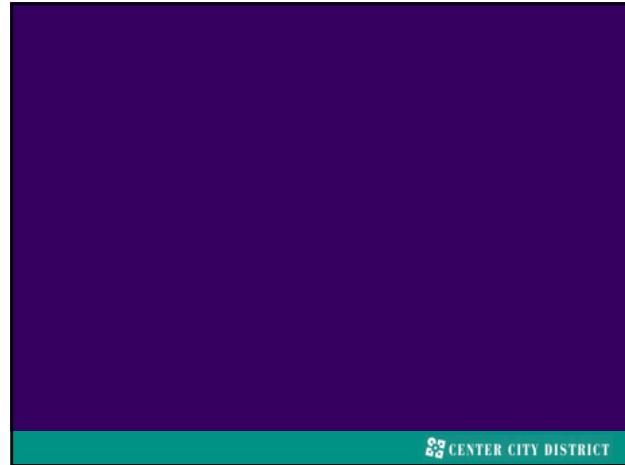
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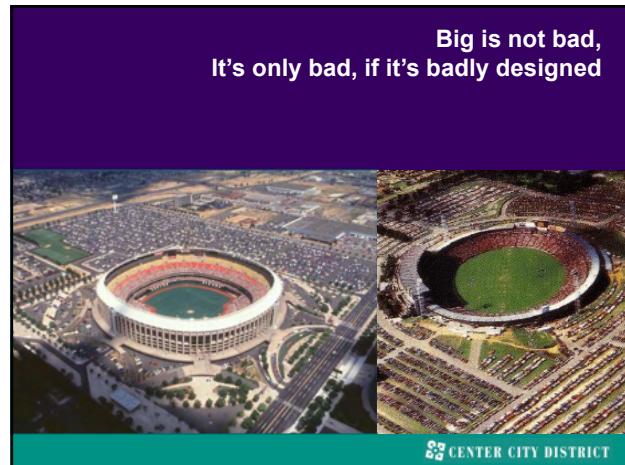
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Empire State Plaza, Albany



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Direct ramps from the expressway to the garage



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40,000 state office workers never have to walk in the plaza or on downtown streets



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Auto entry



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No surprise that the public spaces are devoid of people  
Combined with barren architecture



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Right across street: historic state capital



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Large buildings can transform image of a city



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Iconic Sydney Opera house



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Guggenheim in Bilbao



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Transformed the surrounding environment



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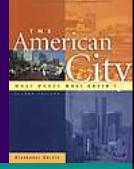
Large, but attentive to context

Any public facility can be successful as long as revenues exceed expenses.

But for a public facility to be *beneficial to the rest of the city*, it must attract a critical mass of customers and yet be located & designed so that their market requirements can not be fully accommodated within the facility.

Only then will customers have a reason to spend their money elsewhere.

Alexander Garvin,  
The American City: What works, What Doesn't



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That what well-designed downtown ballparks do



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Downtown convention centers  
Are supposed to achieve this



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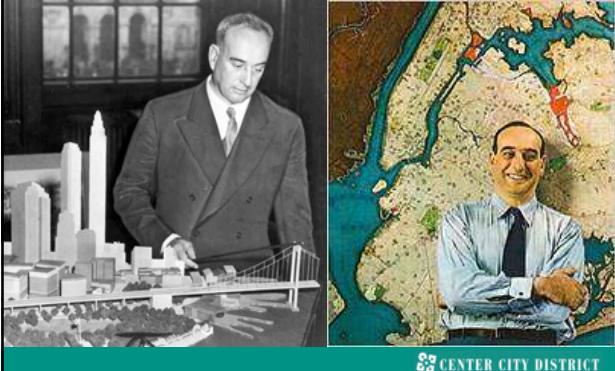
And successful concert halls



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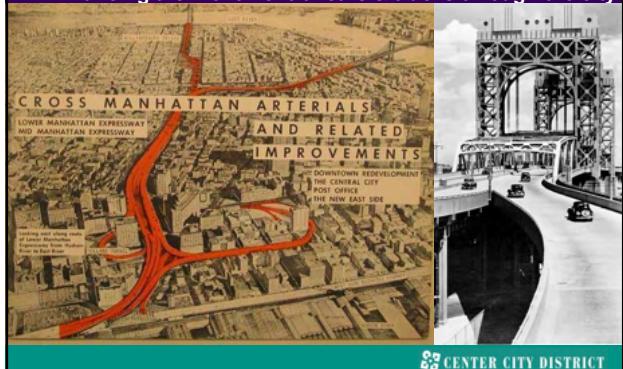
Putting urban design in historical context  
Jane Jacobs was a reaction to Robert Moses:  
NYC: Regional, top-down planning



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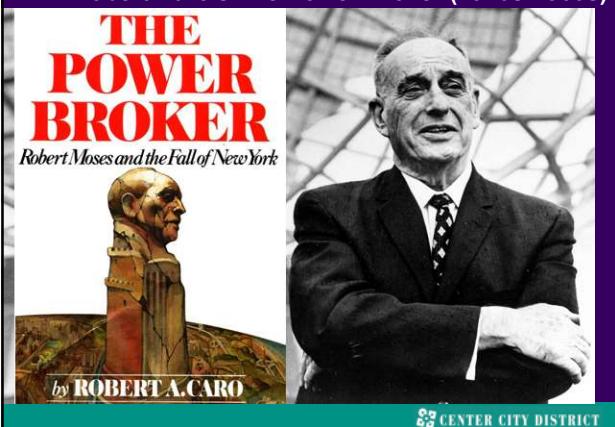
A focus that saw the prime purpose of planning as  
Clearing away the industrial city  
Enhancing the movement of cars & trucks through the city



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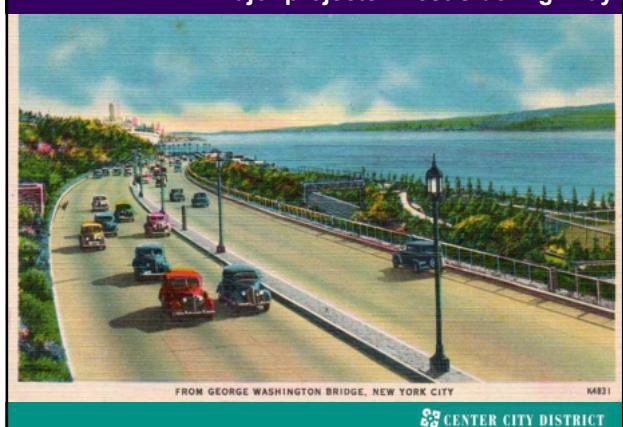
Robert Caro's The Power Broker (1920s-1960s)



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Major projects: West Side Highway

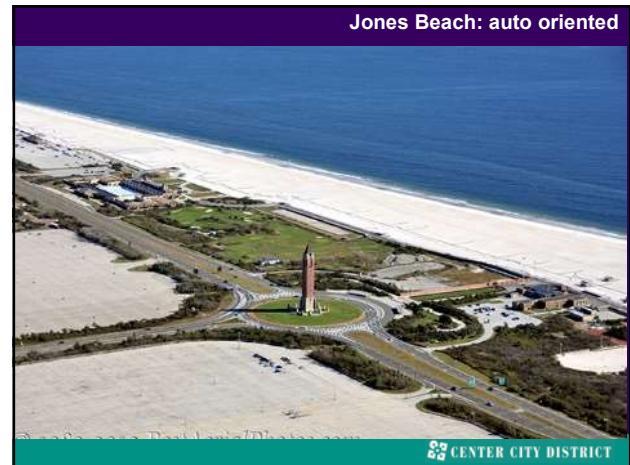


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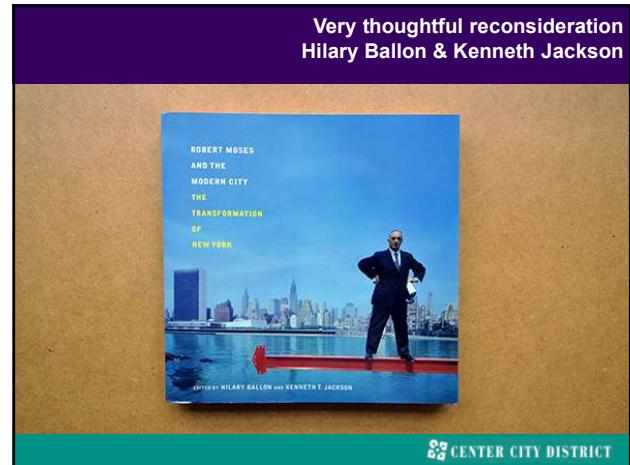
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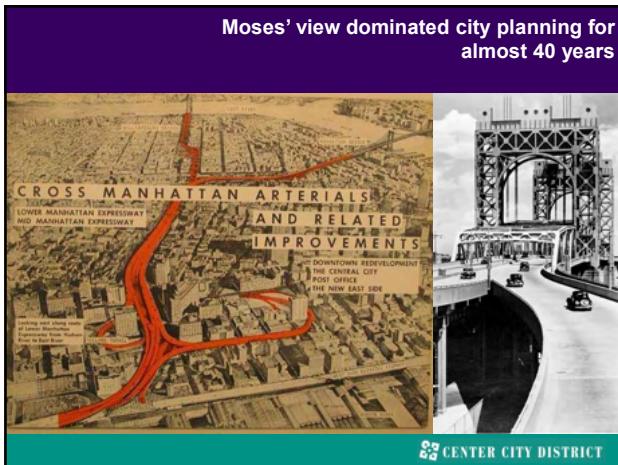
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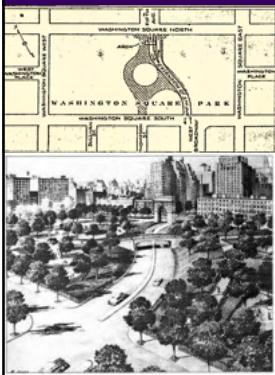


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### Washington Square park

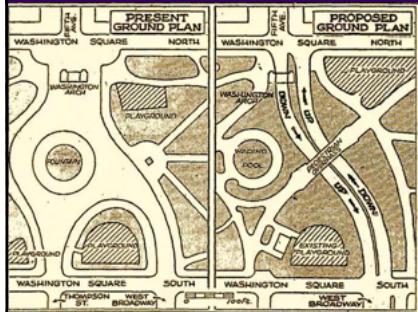


As Parks Commissioner in 1940, Robert Moses originally proposed to build a "double highway" through Washington Square Park

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### 1955 a new plan



In 1955, he proposed bisecting the park with a 48 ft wide highway.

"Mothers and children, New York University students would be able to cross from one half of the park to the other by a foot-bridge thirty-six feet wide."

NY Times

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### Where Jane Jacobs got her inspiration



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### Challenged the image of the city as a system of regional roadways to move goods



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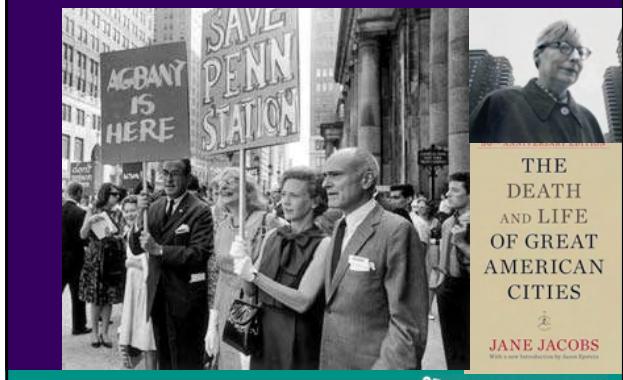
### City is about sidewalks; places not pathways 1968: the Park is permanently closed to traffic



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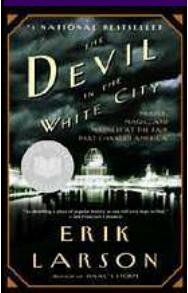
### Jane Jacobs became the bible for city revitalization



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Modern city planning in US began  
Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition



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Daniel Burnham's injunction: *"Make no little plans, for they have no power to stir men's minds."*



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City Beautiful was a response to the challenge of  
smog & filth of the industrial city



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City of industry & slaughter houses



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Benjamin Franklin Parkway: City Beautiful project



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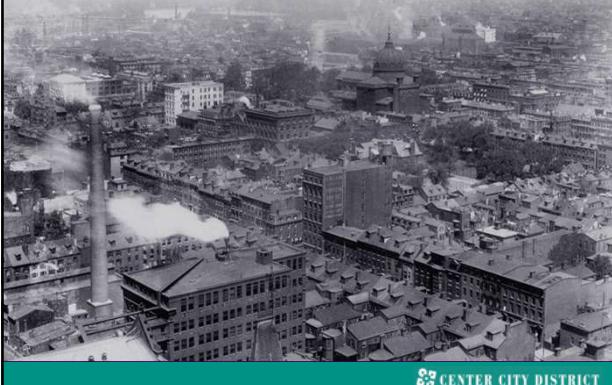
The Parkway is a 19<sup>th</sup> century idea: 1884



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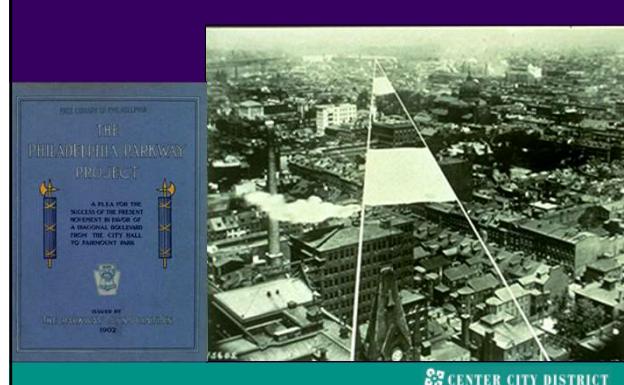
215

Alternative to smoke-filled messy density of the industrial city



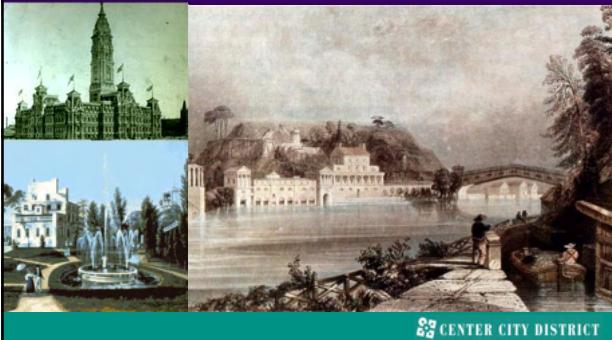
216

A line of desire through 1 mile of the city



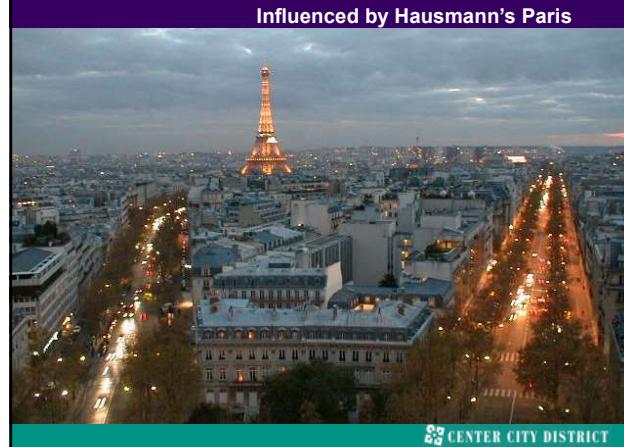
217

Connect the new City Hall to Fairmount Park



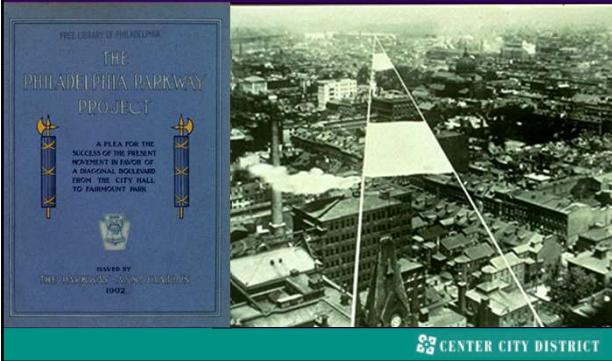
218

Influenced by Hausmann's Paris



219

Involved demolition of 1,300 properties



220

Large scenic boulevard; often devoid of sidewalk vitality



221

It takes surrounding density  
to create activity in open space



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Jane Jacobs a reaction to 1950s demolition



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Thinking Big was seen as the problem



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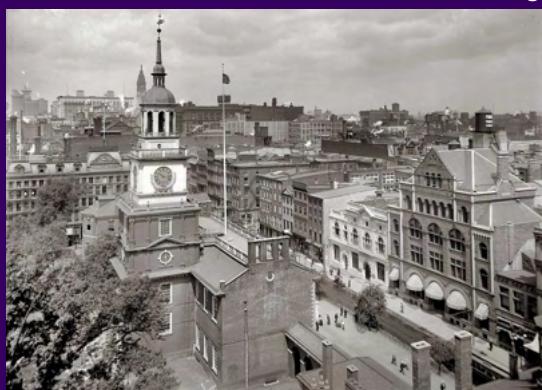
Discredited by destructive renewal projects



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Demolition of historic buildings



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Destruction of commercial areas



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Clearance of residential communities



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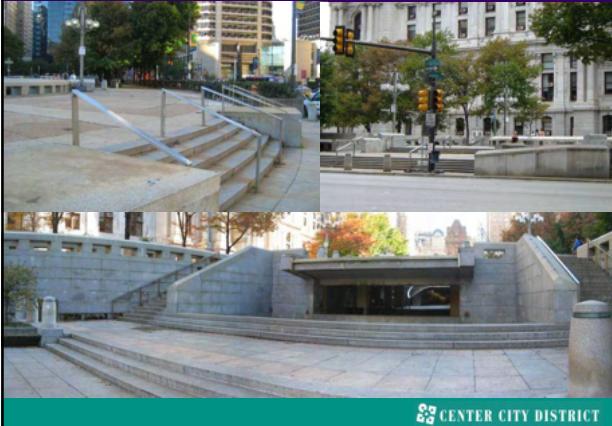
But a lot of what we have inherited in cities



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Is the result of bad design principals from the past



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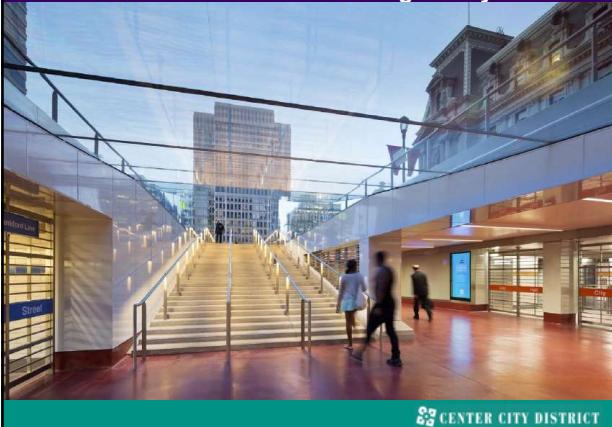
#7: Often need big money & big projects to overcome big money mistakes from the past: \$60 m



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2014: Create first-class gateway to transit



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To create intimate-scaled places



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Places programmed with activities



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Winter ice skating



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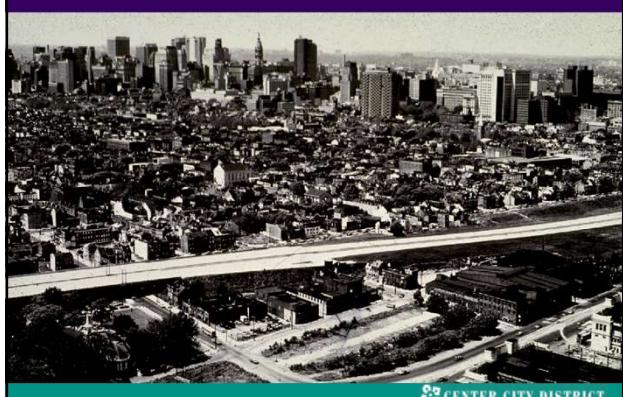
Restoring vitality to the city center



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To recover from the disruption of highway building



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It takes big money to reconnect to the riverfront  
U.S. challenge: absence of federal investment



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Major gap created by the Vine Street expressway



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Vine St Stitch has lost capital funding



240

That's a challenge of East Market Street



241

Market East: overly concentrated retail & hospitality



242

Sixers arena: a needed big project or a bad project?



243

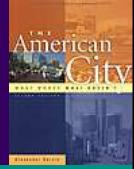
Large, but attentive to context

Any public facility can be successful as long as revenues exceed expenses.

But for a public facility to be *beneficial to the rest of the city*, it must attract a critical mass of customers and yet be located & designed so that their market requirements can not be fully accommodated within the facility.

Only then will customers have a reason to spend their money elsewhere.

Alexander Garvin,  
*The American City: What works, What Doesn't*



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Was it a badly designed big project  
That could have been better designed?



245

If not the arena, then what? From 6th Street to.....



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....to City Hall



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247

How to jump start revival?



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While there maybe “easy” first steps



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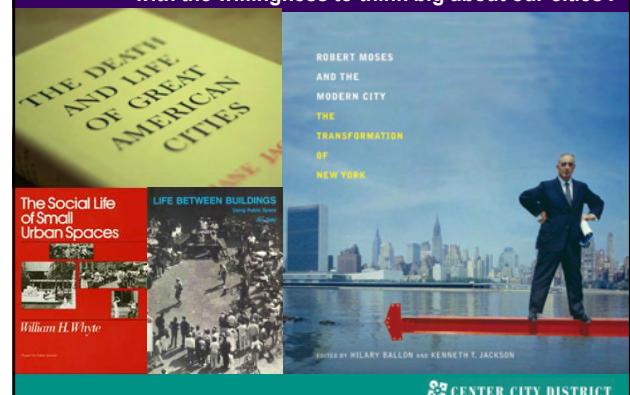
May require large scale intervention & creative new ways to fund locally



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How do we combine attention to pedestrian scale with the willingness to think big about our cities?

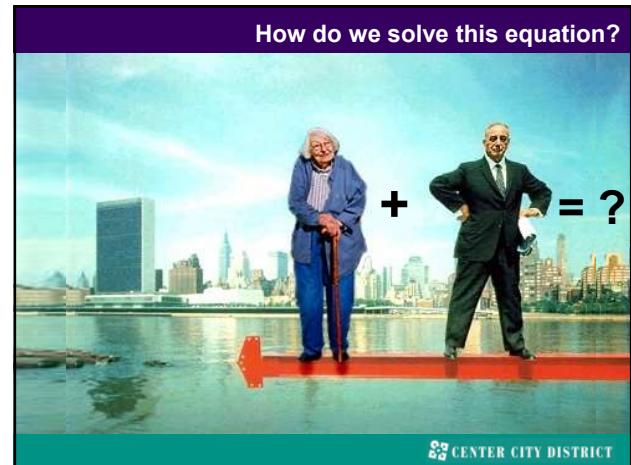


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