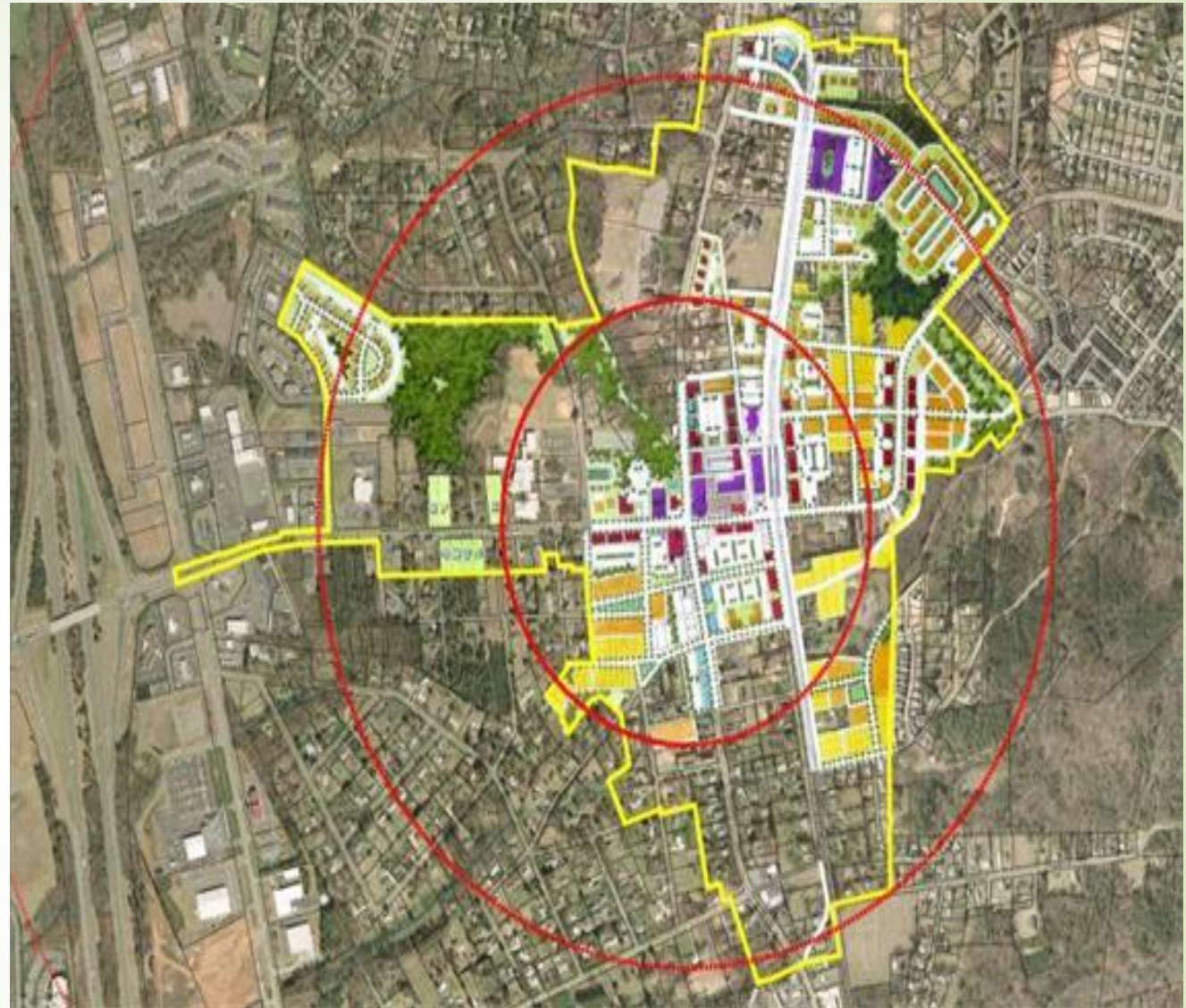**7ᵗʰ Lecture**

Development Towards Existing Communities

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The Concept

- Developing within existing communities—rather than building on previously undeveloped land—

1. Get the most out of the investments we've already made in roads, bridges, water pipes and other infrastructure,

2. Strengthening local tax bases

3. Protecting open space.

- Regulations, zoning, and other public policies sometimes make this approach unnecessarily difficult for developers, however.

- Local leaders can and should change policy to encourage development within existing neighborhoods.

This 14-acre mixed-use development in the neighborhood was built on the site of an abandoned department store and parking lot

importance of the the concept

- Urban communities which experience rapid growth at their edges often **witness disinvestments in their urban core** and first ring suburbs as these were abandoned for newer, lower-density, detached developments on the urban fringe.

- This pattern of development, which occurred after World War II, had studied effects on the social and economic feasibility of many core powers.

- It also led to **significant impacts on the natural environment** by developing on formerly open lands, which:

1. reduce animal habitats,

2. degraded water resources and water quality,

3. and influenced transportation choices that over time degraded air quality and increased the threat of global climate change.

- Communities are now questioning the economic and environmental rationale of abandoning neighborhoods, sidewalks, and water and sewer services in the urban center and older suburbs, only to **rebuild them further out**.

Why is strengthening and directing development toward existing communities needed?

- Directing development contributes to a **more compact** form of development which is less consumptive of land and resources.

- Directing development offers **increased mobility** for those who can't drive or prefer not to drive. **ensuring shorter travel times of services** and **allowing for multiple modes** of travel including walking and cycling.

- It is also an important part of the formula for **minimizing traffic congestion**

- Fully utilizing existing facilities and service before considering costly service extensions to outlying areas offers **saving for local government budgets**.   Reduces **infrastructure costs** and improves the town's economy and vitality.

- Investment in our central cities is crucial to the overall **economic health** of the surrounding regions. Reduces **costs for providing services** such as fire, police and infrastructure maintenance.

- It can bring **new opportunity and improved quality** of life for in-city resident

- In-city neighborhoods, which provide central gathering places within ready walking distance, can **facilitate interaction between neighbors**.

- **Meaningful rural open space** is protected.

practices of development toward existing communities

1. **Infill development**

2. **Brownfields redevelopment/ revitalization**.

Urban Revitalization refers to a set of creativities aimed at reorganizing an existing city structure, particularly in neighborhoods in decline due to economic or social reasons.

1. Infill development

<mark>Definition</mark>

It is the **process** of developing vacant or under-used land within existing urban areas that are already largely developed.

❖ Most communities have significant vacant land within city limits, which, for various reasons, has been passed over in the normal course of urbanization.

❖ A successful infill development program focuses on the completion of the existing community fabric. It focuses on filling gaps in existing neighborhoods.

An example of infill development. Denver, CO

What is Infill Development?

- Occurs in **already built-up areas** with existing transportation and utility infrastructure.

- Often **repurposes or replaces** existing buildings, parking lots, or other impervious areas.

- **Adds** homes and/or businesses near the center of cities and towns.

- Infill **revitalizes** communities by breathing new life into empty buildings, vacant lots, and unused parcels.

- It's typically practiced in urban areas but is not limited to urban development.

Liberty Center , Liberty Township, Ohio
brings together complementary urban functions: entertainment, shopping, office/ workspace, and apartments and townhomes. There's an entertainment square anchored by a hotel, a 16-screen cinema, shopping, dining, and a comedy club. Close to the apartments and townhouses is a landscaped park with gathering spaces.

Example

- Infill development includes large scale redevelopments in urban or suburban areas, such as Main Street at Exton.

Example

- Infill development can also include small scale residential or commercial development in existing neighborhoods.
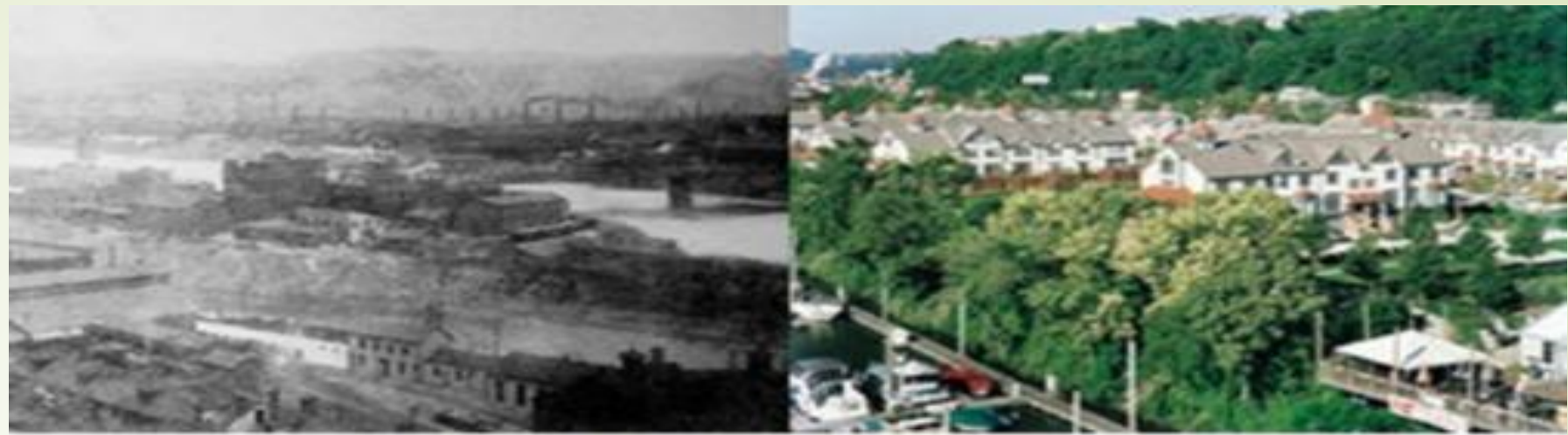
2. Redevelopment of Brownfields

- **Brownfields Definition:**

- Brownfields are generally defined as **abandoned or underused** industrial or commercial properties where redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental pollution.

- Brownfields vary in size, location, age and past use;

- They can range from a small, abandoned corner gas station to a large, multi-acre former manufacturing plant that has been closed for years.

Redevelopment of Brownfields

An example of brownfield redevelopment
Right – 1940's Steel Mill Left – Current Mixed Used Development
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

Redevelopment of brownfields-sites where reuse is complicated by real or perceived contamination-removes environmental hazards from communities and provides new investment opportunities in areas already well served by infrastructure.
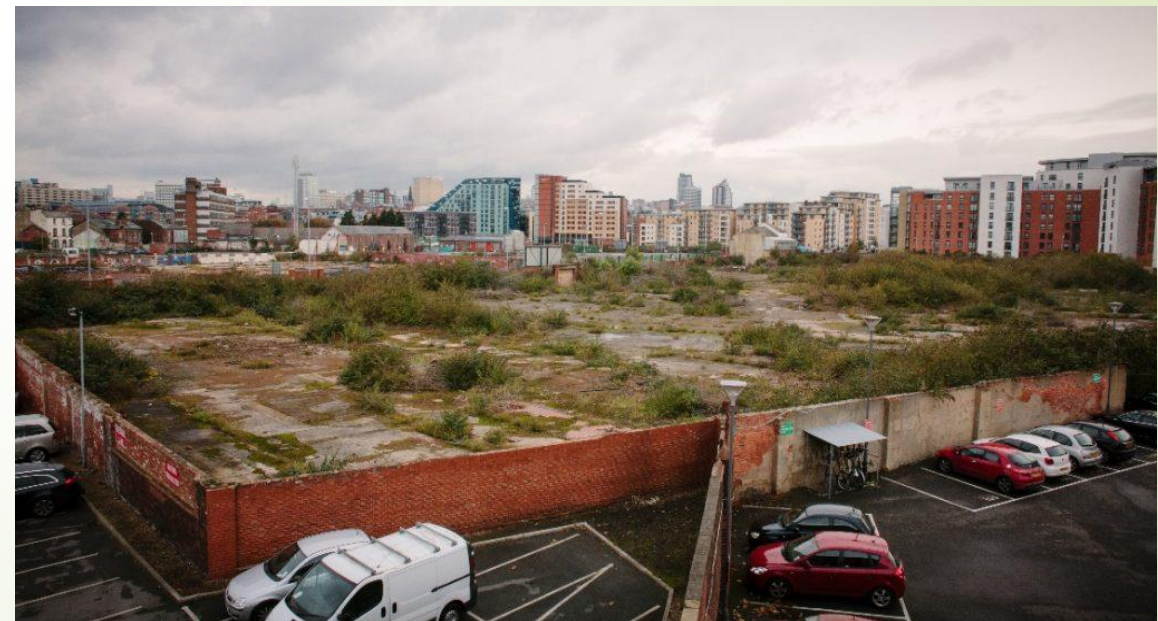
Characteristics and benefits of directing development towards existing:

❖ **Characteristics:**

❖ **Directing development to established and targeted areas through infill development provides an alternative to sprawl development (smart growth),**

❖ **Infill development can result in cost savings to municipalities by using existing infrastructure, public facilities, and services.**

❖ **Returning vacant properties to a useful state.**

❖ **Contributes to a healthy mix of uses that provides added vitality and convenience for residents.**

❖ **Benefits:**

❖ **Reducing development pressure in natural resource protection, "greenfield," or rural areas.**

❖ **Avoiding the costly extension of these networks.**

❖ **Provides property tax revenues**

❖ **Providing a variety of uses within a walkable area, and increasing property values.**

Characteristics of and benefits of directing development towards existing: (cont.…)

❖ **Characteristics:**

❖ **Overall residential** **densities high**

❖ **It is designed to support improved** **transportation choices**, **including convenient vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and regular transit service.**

❖ **Attention to the** **character** **of development also is a key component for ensuring that** **the new development fits the existing context, and gains neighborhood acceptance.**

❖ **Infill development strives to address the** **needs of community growth** **by filling available spaces with urban centers before building in the undeveloped countryside.**

❖ **Benefits:**

❖ **support transit**, **and a wider** **variety of services and amenities**.

❖ **Allowing for multiple modes of travel including walking and cycling.**

❖ **compatible with the historic nature** **of a community by respecting the design and architecture of existing historic resources.**

❖ **The underlying notion is** **to keep community resources** **–jobs, churches, schools, shops, restaurants, museums, and parks – where citizens are and vice versa.**

STRATEGIES

1. *Make decisions based on the long-term interests of all citizens rather than short-term interests.*

➥ So many community leaders are desperate for any type of progress that they never take the time to evaluate the true impact of their decisions.

➥ The short-term gains generated by certain developments can have shocking long-term impacts to the community.

➥ The locations of new schools and parks, the demolition of historic sites, and other developments are some examples that are often based solely on the immediate benefits.

2. *Encourage infill development rather than expansive development along the city's edge.*

- Many cities struggle to identify strategies for improving vacant buildings, vacant lots, and undeveloped properties while praising all of the new development along the outskirts.

- In reality the underutilized properties in the core area of town are already serviced by infrastructure.

- Since those properties are not active, the tax base is more than likely too low to fund the necessary infrastructure maintenance and repairs.

- Rather than increasing the tax base to fund improvements to existing infrastructure, the new development along the edge is adding new infrastructure that will also require maintenance and improvements in the future.

Lead by example. *Locate municipal facilities within the city core.*

- Another trend that can be seen around many rural communities is the relocation <mark>of municipal facilities</mark>.

- These facilities may include city hall, courthouse, post office, police department, or other core governmental services.

- Historically all of these facilities were built as the foundation of the community and made up the central core of the city.

- Most of the facilities served, and continue to serve, as key landmark buildings for the community.

- The structures were built with long-lasting materials, and the architecture showed a sense of pride that can still be observed today.

Renovating and Relocating

- As the historic facilities begin to age, communities are forced to evaluate the options needed to accommodate present day demands.

- Factors including :

1. updating the heating and cooling units,

2. need for additional office space,

3. increased demand for parking space,

4. and other issues become part of the discussion.

Renovating OR Relocating

Oftentimes the debate is between:

1. Renovating and expanding the existing historic structure
2. Relocating to a new facility elsewhere in the community.

- The costs of renovating the existing facility often seem very high related to the costs of a new facility on cheap land along the outskirts of the community.

- However, by locating these key civic facilities on the outskirts of the community, citizens are forced to drive to these locations.

- Since driving is the only option for every visitor, extensive infrastructure must be built to accommodate the new traffic.

- So even though the land was cheaper, the costs associated with those decisions are greater than areas in the city core.

Example: San Diego, California's Uptown District

- redeveloping underused or vacant retail centers known as "brownfields" can help revive and reconnect communities.

- This 14-acre (1 acre= 4046.86 m^2) **mixed-use development** in the Hillcrest neighborhood was built on the site of an **abandoned department store and parking lot**.

- The project combines 145,000 square feet of **commercial and retail** space with 318 **homes** and a 3,000-square-foot **community center**.

- Most of the stores surround a central parking plaza attached by a large grocery store in the rear.

- Housing units on an adjacent block are connected by courtyards and have some first-floor retail spaces.

- **Restoring streets** that had been removed to create the original store's parking lot created a **pedestrian-friendly** atmosphere.

- Smaller blocks and pedestrian paths **make walking safer and easier**. A **pedestrian bridge** crosses a busy street and a canyon to connect the Uptown District to the University Heights neighborhood, giving residents access to shopping and transit.

- The Uptown District is in an established neighborhood **next to one of the city's busiest bus corridors,** so parking could be **reduced below the city's requirements for conventional developments**.

- Redeveloping brownfield properties like the Uptown District gives communities **places to provide more housing choices, stores, and services without building over open space**. It can also branch redevelopment of adjacent properties.

A restaurant and community center frame the entrance to a courtyard for the apartments.

The mix of shops with apartments above complements the commercial corridor that borders the Uptown District.

Frequent bus service on an adjacent street gives Uptown District residents transit access to the rest of San Diego. The buses can also carry bikes.

People enjoy coffee across the street from the grocery store that anchors the Uptown District's retail component.

Thank You

Any Questions?