

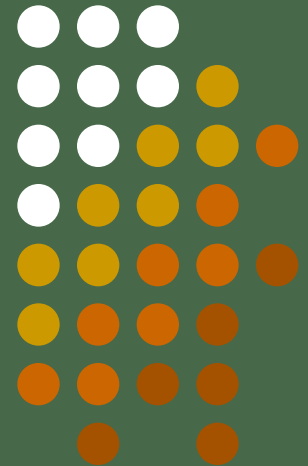
# A Short History of Urban Planning

Drawn from:

Richard LeGates and Frederic  
Stout, “Modernism and Early Urban  
Planning, 1870-1940”

Paul Knox, Urbanization

Barry Cullingworth, Planning in the USA



# Crisis...response...crisis...



- Paul Knox argues that the profession of planning emerges out of series of crises and people's responses to them
  - health crises (epidemics)
  - social crises (riots, strikes)
  - other crises (fire, flood, etc.)
- planning tries to mitigate the adverse elements of capitalism, but also makes capitalism viable over the long term

# Marxist inspiration



- **Friedrich Engels** observed the misery of mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. Manchester & wrote: The Condition of the Working Class in England (1844)
  - worker oppression
  - pollution
  - overcrowding
  - disease
  - alienation
  - display of status symbols in the landscape

# The Roots of Urban Planning: Romanticism & Progressivism



- these were philosophical, intellectual, and moral stances opposed to the trend in social relations, values, and environmental conditions of the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> c., with loose ties to Marxism
- Romantics were utopian visionaries
  - generally attempted to balance city/country opposition
  - seldom saw their plans actualized
  - had a major influence on planning profession
- Progressives were activists
  - motivated by desire to reduce poverty or the harmful effects of poverty

# Urban Public Health as a Focus of Concern



- Physician **Benjamin Ward Richardson** wrote Hygeia, City of Health (1876) envisioning:
  - air pollution control
  - water purification
  - sewage handling
  - public laundries
  - public health inspectors
  - elimination of alcohol & tobacco
  - replacement of the gutter with the park as the site of children's play
- such concerns motivated the Parks Movement



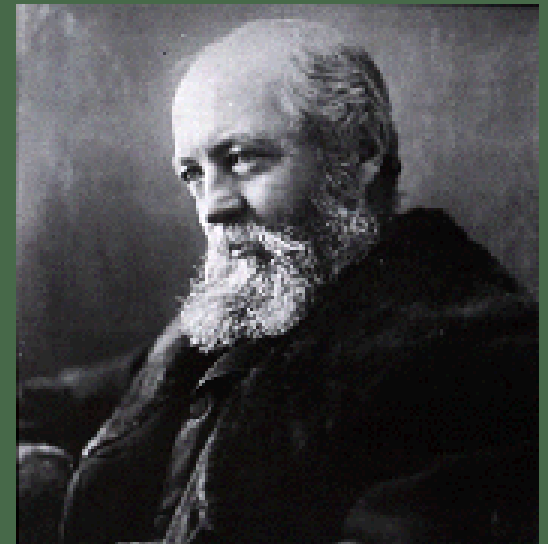
# The Parks Movement

- grew out of landscape archit. & garden design
- shifted from private to public settings
- naturalistic parks were created in the U.S. by **Frederick Law Olmstead**, whose career started with Central Park, New York, 1857
- goals:
  - separate transportation modes
  - support active and passive uses
  - collect water
  - promote moral pass-times

# Frederick Law Olmsted



- 1822-1903
- advanced quite impressively for a park superintendent without a college degree
- with Calvert Vaux (1847) won the competition & went on to design:
  - Prospect Park (1865-1873),
  - Chicago's Riverside subdivision
  - Buffalo's park system (1868-1876),
  - the park at Niagara Falls (1887)
- In later years worked on Boston's park system, "the Emerald Necklace" and the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago



# Central Park

OF NEW YORK CITY



Olmsted's parks were not natural but they were “naturalistic” or “organic” in form

This form was seen as uplifting urban dwellers and addressing the social and psychological impacts of crowding

**environmental  
determinism**

# Olmsted's Park Design Principles

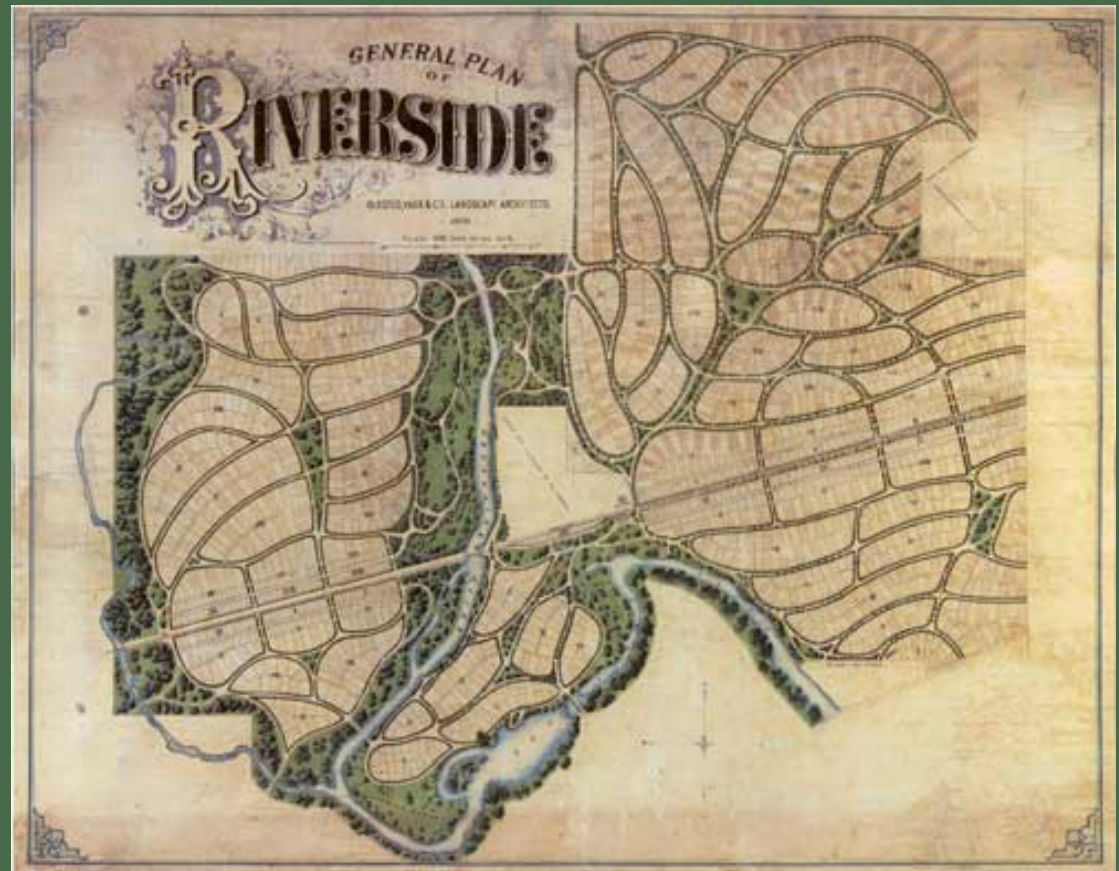


1. SCENERY: design spaces in which movement creates constant opening up of new views and “obscurity of detail further away”
2. SUITABILITY: respect the natural scenery and topography of the site
3. STYLE:
  - “Pastoral” = open greensward with small bodies of water and scattered trees and groves create a soothing, restorative atmosphere
  - “Picturesque” = profuse planting, especially with shrubs, creepers and ground cover, on steep and broken terrain create a sense of the richness and bounteousness of nature, produce a sense of mystery with light and shade
4. SUBORDINATION: subordinate all elements to the overall design and the effect it is intended to achieve: “Art to conceal Art”
5. SEPARATION:
  - of areas designed in different styles
  - of ways, in order to insure safety of use and reduce distractions
  - of conflicting or incompatible uses
6. SANITATION: promote both the physical and mental health of users
7. SERVICE: meet fundamental social and psychological needs

# Riverside, Illinois



- designed by Olmsted, 1869
- a prototype suburb
- 9 mi. from Chicago
- fashionable location for the wealthy to live
- often copied





# Settlement House Movement



- **Jane Addams** founded Hull House (Chicago) 1889
- soon over 100 others are founded in American cities
- goals: educating, elevating and saving the poor (condescending attitude) gradually evolved into something more responsive and scientific
- residents surveyed slum populations, organized housing studies
- the gathering of information from such surveys and studies became central to urban planning
- famous tenement studies around 1901: Lawrence Veiller (NY) and Robert Hunter (Chicago)

# Garden Cities (a British innovation)



- **Ebenezer Howard:** Garden Cities of To-morrow (1902)
- “three magnets”
  - town (high wages, opportunity, and amusement)
  - country (natural beauty, low rents, fresh air)
  - town-country (combination of both)
- separated from central city by greenbelt
- two actually built in England
  - Letchworth
  - Welwyn

# Ebenezer Howard



no training in urban planning or design

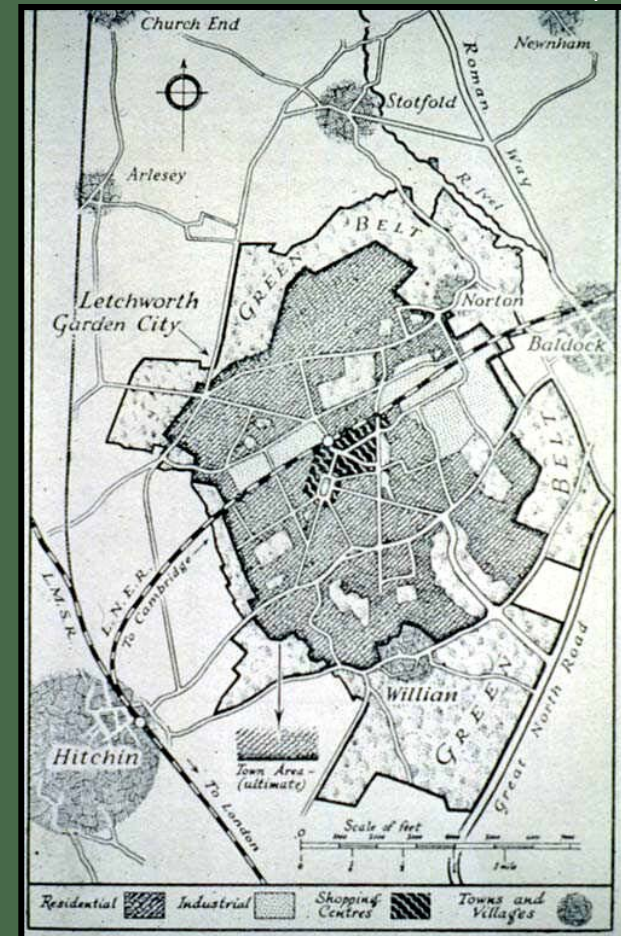
1850-1928

opposed urban crowding/density

hoped to create a “magnet” people would want to come to

# Garden Cities

- would combine the best elements of city and country
- would avoid the worst elements of city and country
- formed the basis of the earliest suburbs,
- separation from the city has been lost virtually every time due to infill



# A Utopian Model



- an ideal, self-contained community of predetermined area and population surrounded by a greenbelt
- was intended to bring together the economic and cultural advantages of both city and country life while at the same time discouraging metropolitan sprawl and industrial centralization
- land ownership would be vested in the community (socialist element)
- The garden city was foreshadowed in the writings of Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and James Silk Buckingham, and in the planned industrial communities of Saltaire (1851), Bournville (1879), and Port Sunlight (1887) in England
- Howard organized the Garden-City Association (1899) in England and secured backing for the establishment of Letchworth and Welwyn
- Neither community was an entirely self-contained garden city

# Actual Garden Cities



- Letchworth, England
  - Founded 1903
  - Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, planners
- Welwyn, England
  - Founded 1920 by E. Howard
  - designed by Louis de Soissons
  - most of the population now commutes to London





# More Welwyn photos



# Garden City Legacy in the U.S.



- Garden City idea spread rapidly to Europe and the United States
- Under the auspices of the Regional Planning Association of America, the garden-city idea inspired a “New Town,” Radburn, N.J. (1928–32) outside New York City
- The congestion and destruction accompanying World War II greatly stimulated the garden-city movement, especially in Great Britain
  - Britain’s New Towns Act (1946) led to the development of over a dozen new communities based on Howard's idea
- The open layout of garden cities also had a great influence on the development of modern city planning
- Most satellite towns fail to attain Howard's ideal
  - residential suburbs of individually owned homes
  - local industries are unable to provide enough employment for the inhabitants, many of whom commute to work in larger centers

# A New Town in the U.S.



Radburn, VA



# Origins of the Planning Profession in the U.S.



- emerges during the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.
- adopts less critical stance relative to modernity
- first national conference on city planning in Washington D.C., 1909
- shifts slowly from concern with aesthetics (city beautiful) to concern with efficiency and scientific management
- patriarchal attitude
- naïve faith in social engineering
- left-leaning political bias almost disappears, esp. with role of zoning

# The City Beautiful Movement



- main emphasis: showy urban landscapes
- drew on “beaux arts” tradition (France)
- aped classical architecture
- iconography of and for the urban elites
- moral diagnosis: people need to be civilized
- **Daniel Burnham**: 1893 Chicago World’s Fair
  - orderly and clean
  - aesthetic rather than social sensibility
  - grandiose and ambitious







# The Birth of Land use Zoning



- 1886 statute: San Fran. Chinese laundries shut down
  - Fed. court case: Yick Wo v. Hopkins, Sheriff struck down statute, so city imposed no-laundry zone
  - other CA cities zoned against laundries, brothels, pool halls, dance halls, livery stables, slaughterhouses
  - How? municipality's trad. responsibility for protecting "health, safety, morals and general welfare" of citizens
- 1<sup>st</sup> NY zoning law (1916) protected Fifth Ave. luxury store owners from expansion of Jewish garment factories
  - protected property values and expressed chauvinism
  - idea spread to 100s of cities in decade after the NY law was passed, promoting property values and special interests of the upper class, white majority

# Giants of Planning in the U.S.



- concept of the “master plan”: **Edward Bassett**, 1935, included:
  - infrastructure layout
  - zoning
- **Patrick Geddes** (1904, 1915) called for urban planning to take into account the ecosystem and history of a region, called for social surveys
- a protégé of Geddes, **Lewis Mumford** (1895-1990) was the first notable critic of sprawl and the main figure in the Regional Plan Association of America, which built new towns in NJ & NY

# A New Generation of Dreamers



- **Le Corbusier** (1920s): skyscrapers in parks
  - apartment tower idea caught on, but not the park setting
  - bland concrete apartment building is everywhere, and is hated everywhere
- **Frank Lloyd Wright** (1930s): “Broadacre City”
  - his small house with carport became more or less the American standard in the 1950s
  - his dream of a decentralized, automobile-dependent society materialized
  - Wright’s vision, with 1-acre lots, would have created even worse traffic nightmares

# Le Corbusier

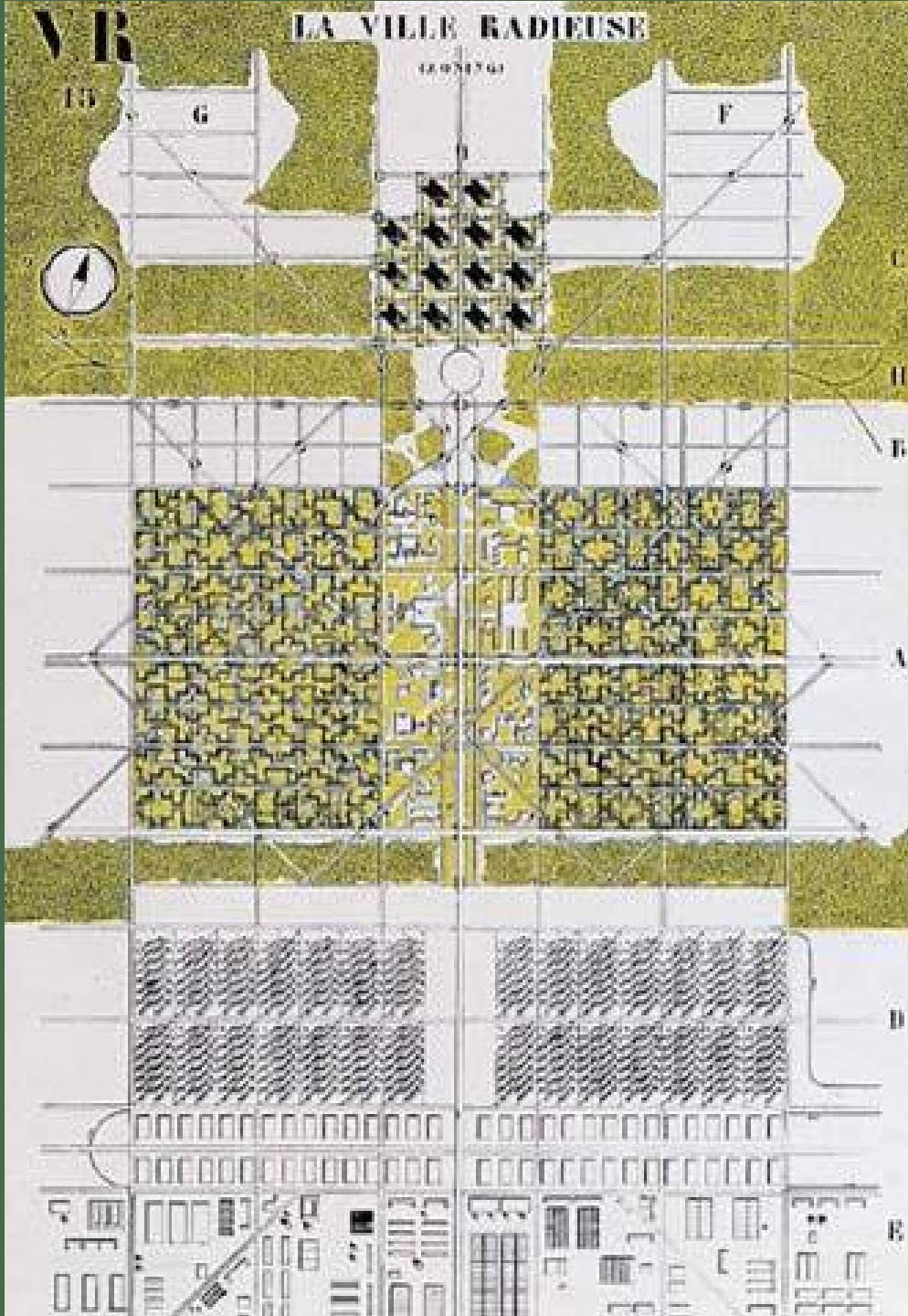


originally Charles-Edouard  
Jeanneret

1887-1965

a founding father of the  
modernist movement

“social engineering”



Villes satellites, par ex.:  
siège du gouvernement  
ou centre des études scien-  
tifiques, etc.

Le site d'affaires.

La gare et l'aéroport.

Les hôtels.  
Les ambassades.

L'habitation.

Les manufactures.

Les centres généraux.

L'industrie lourde.



# Elements of Le Corbusier's Plan

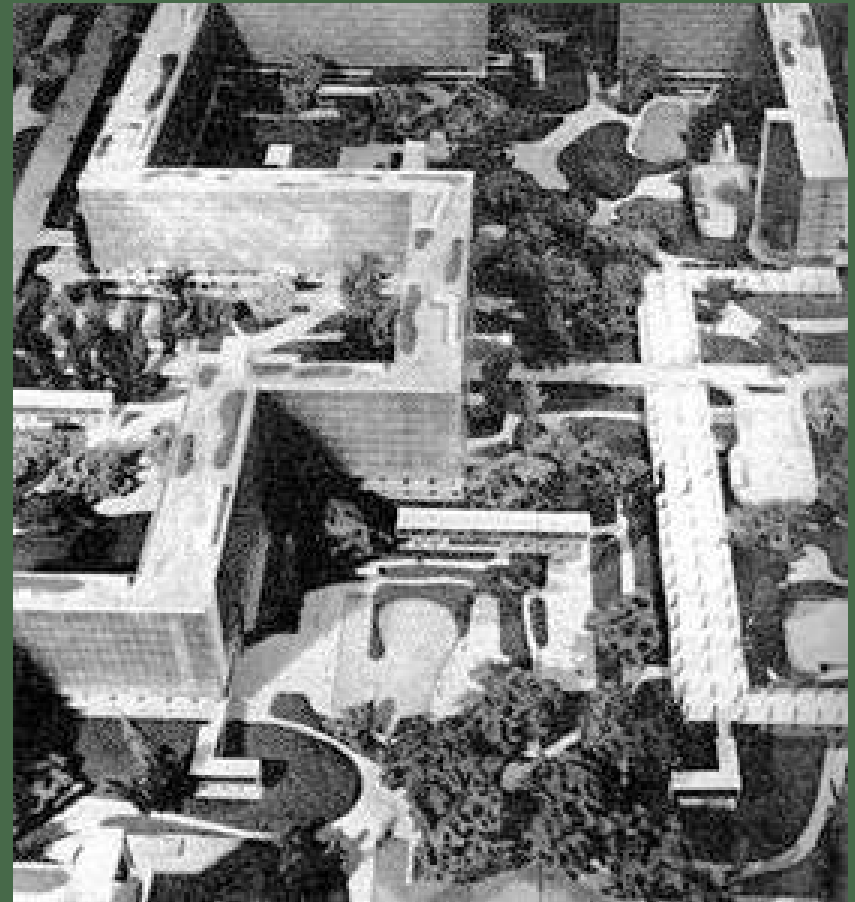


- very high density
  - 1,200 people per acre in skyscrapers
    - overcrowded sectors of Paris & London ranged from 169-213 pers./acre at the time
    - Manhattan has only 81 pers./acre
  - 120 people per acre in luxury houses
    - 6 to 10 times denser than current luxury housing in the U.S.
  - multi-level traffic system to manage the intensity of traffic

# Elements of Le Corbusier's Plan



- access to greenspace
  - between 48% and 95% of the surface area is reserved for greenspace
    - gardens
    - squares
    - sports fields
    - restaurants
    - theaters
  - with no sprawl, access to the “protected zone” (greenbelt/open space) is quick and easy



# The logic of increasing urban density

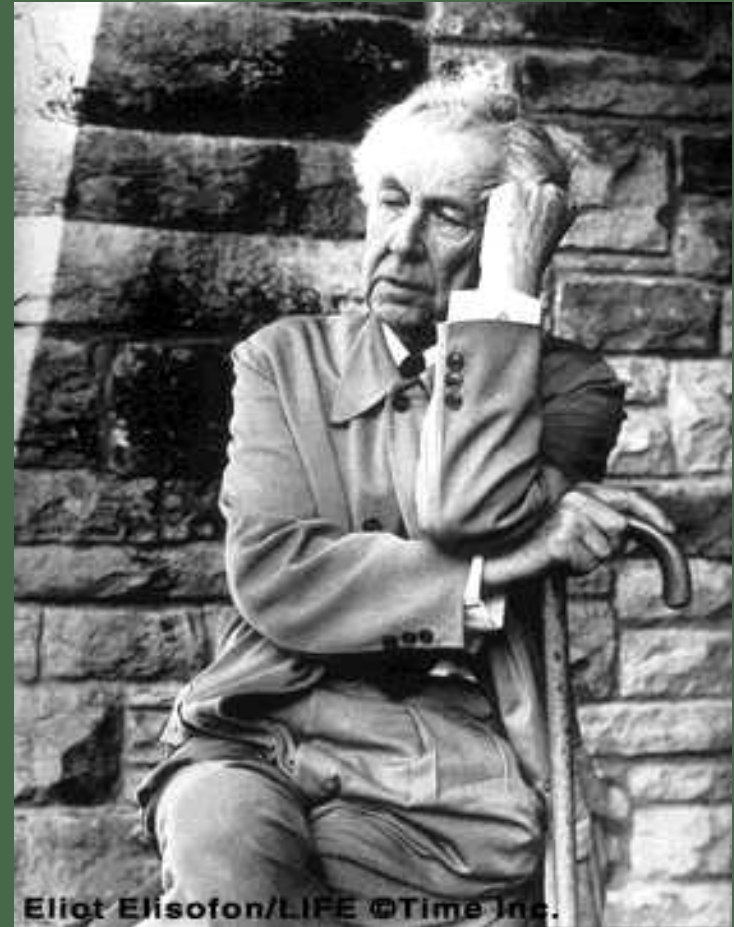


- “The more dense the population of a city is the less are the distances that have to be covered.”
- traffic is increased by:
  - the number of people in a city
  - the degree to which private transportation is more appealing (clean, fast, convenient, cheap) than public transportation
  - the average distance people travel per trip
  - the number of trips people must make each week
- “The moral, therefore, is that we must increase the density of the centres of our cities, where business affairs are carried on.”

# Frank Lloyd Wright



- 1867-1959
- 532 architectural designs built
- (twice as many drawn)
- designed houses, office buildings and a kind of suburban layout he called “Broadacre City”



# Broadacre City



Broadacre City



**Frank Lloyd Wright, 1934**

*A square mile section of what was proposed to be a continuous fabric of inhabited landscape across the American continent*

low-density  
car-oriented  
freeways  
+feeder roads  
multinucleated

# Planning Today



- main tool: zoning
- 19,000 different systems
- tends to actually do little in the way of planning
  - imposes a rigidity to existing land uses
  - encourages separation by class
  - encourages retail strip development
  - discourages mixed use, pedestrian areas
  - in practice, it promotes satellite bedroom communities and suburbs superficially like Garden cities or Broadacre City

# Relationship between Planning and the Crises that Created It?



- Water quality and sanitation is controlled
- Most people have adequate light and air
- Fire danger is controlled
- Disease is controlled
- Current planning practice has even more to do with protecting property values
- Urban growth continues to create unhealthy and dehumanizing environments (air pollution, stress, isolation, lack of community, etc.)
- genuine planning is desperately needed