POSTSUBURBAN CALIFORNIA

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ORANGE COUNTY SINCE WORLD WAR II

EDITED BY
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Orange County: cities and major unincorporated communities
CONTENTS

Preface to the Paperback Edition: Beyond the Edge: The Dynamism of Postsurban Regions
Rob Kling, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster / vii

1. The Emergence of Postsurbia: An Introduction
Rob Kling, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster / 1

2. The Multinucleated Metropolitan Region: A Comparative Analysis
M. Gottdiener and George Kephart / 31

Martin J. Schiesl / 55

4. The Information Labor Force
Rob Kling and Clark Turner / 92

5. Changing Consumption Patterns
Alladi Venkatesh / 142

6. Public Ceremony in a Private Culture: Orange County Celebrates the Fourth of July
Debra Gold Hansen and Mary P. Ryan / 165

7. Narcissism or Liberation? The Affluent Middle-Class Family
Mark Poster / 190

8. Intraclass Conflict and the Politics of a Fragmented Region
Spencer Olin / 223

Lisbeth Haas / 254

10. The Taxpayers' Revolt
William F. Gayk / 281

CONTRIBUTORS / 301
INDEX OF NAMES AND PLACES / 305

Photographs following page 164
Beyond the Edge: The Dynamism of Postsuburban Regions

Rob Kling, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster

ORANGE COUNTY AND THE MEANINGS OF SUBURBIA

Many people, including scholars and journalists, refer to Orange County as a suburban region. As we argue later, the use of the concept “suburb” in this instance is a bit ambiguous and misleading. The 1970s saw a heightened concern with the “urbanization of the suburbs,” with the term suburb customarily referring to low-density settlements located on the fringes of cities. Much of the writing in that period about suburban areas in the United States adopted a core-periphery approach, focusing on cities (at the core), suburbs (on the periphery), or the interplay between the two (as in studies of “white flight” from cities to suburbs). Terms such as “outer city” (Jack Rosenthal), “new city” (Louis Masotti), and “satellite sprawl” (Anthony Downs) were applied to newly urbanized suburbs. A significant fraction of those earlier works about life in the suburban United States engaged in “bashing the ‘burbs” and viewed traditional cities as the leading centers of civilization and of cultural vitality.

More recently, there has emerged a tradition of scholarly research characterized by a more open-minded evaluation of the structures and ways of life in suburbs, with a multicentered approach supplanting the core-periphery model. Writers within this tradition have discovered economic, social, and cultural dynamism in what was formerly viewed as the sleepy suburban hinterland. They have also coined some new terms to characterize these places, including “technoburbs” (Robert Fishman), “urban villages” (Kenneth Jackson), “middle landscape” (Peter Rowe), and “edge cities” (Joel Garreau). Despite their common focus on suburbs, most of these terms, and the analytical strategies
associated with them, nevertheless retain an urban reference point. For example, Garreau is said to have coined the term “edge cities” partly “because they’re on the frontier of U.S. civilization.”

To be sure, the earlier, more negative assessment of suburbia continues to have its adherents. The 1990s version of “bashing the ‘burbs” portrays the new metropolitan regions in the United States as stubbornly resistant to heterogeneity and disturbingly parochial and exclusionary in mind set and behavior. From this highly skeptical point of view, many recent students of suburbia (including Kling, Olin, and Poster) have succumbed to a form of boosterism called “suburbanophilia.”

Our intention in the first edition of Postsuburban California was neither to bash nor to boost. It was, rather, to understand and explain. We joined others in writing the book with an awareness of the competing scholarly and journalistic orientations, as well as with a keen sense of the social and moral complexities of regions such as California’s Orange County and Silicon Valley and Virginia’s Fairfax County. While these particular regions originally developed in the 1960s as suburban appendages of larger cities (Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., respectively), by the late 1980s they had developed their own economic and cultural autonomy. By then, for example, the vast majority of Orange County residents worked in that region rather than commuting to Los Angeles, as had previously been the case. And the county’s economy had grown into the thirtieth largest in the world, with an export-driven economic output approaching $70 billion. Orange County is thus no longer a suburb of Los Angeles, or even a collection of such suburbs. Instead, it now exhibits the dynamism customarily associated with major urban centers, although it is much more decentralized than a traditional city.

POSTSUBURBIA AS A CONCEPT

The fundamentally decentralized spatial arrangement of postsuburban regions—in which a variety of commercial, recreational, shopping, arts, residential, and religious activities are conducted in different places, linked primarily by private automobile transportation—makes them complex, seemingly incoherent and disorienting, yet dynamic and lively. Precisely because they are a new kind of settlement space, such regions cannot easily be understood in terms of traditional conceptual categories, such as rural, urban, and suburban.

One leading student of contemporary metropolitan America, Peter Rowe, is at such a loss as to how to characterize postsuburban regions adequately that he simply refers to them as a “middle landscape,” something between rural and urban. Another astute observer, Kenneth Jackson, is more helpful; he referring to them as “centerless reference point. For Jackson, a still resemble cities. Yet, at the time, these regions are often example, has more artistic St. Louis.

In seeking to provide important, sprawling regions, we of “technoburbs.” Ultimately, unusually intense per capita distinguished these large multicenter suburbs. The alternative label contributors M. Gottdiener and trinucleated metropolitan region nonetheless, it sounds more than a place where people live or at least enjoy.

After considerable discussion with others, we coined the term to capture the way in which O anchored in a group of settlements Garden Grove and Buena Park traditional cities (e.g., Santa Ana) in the first edition of our book, the one of four defining features of cosmopolitanism, information.

How can one tell that a region activities are conducted in center separated by travel times of fifteen travel by automobile across city shopping as much as within the net of freeways seems both metaphor for social life in post-typical contain several center entertainment) that provide a Instead of stores and residence or shopping being mixed in with one will find distinct and separate shopping malls, and industrial
Jackson, is more helpful; he calls these regions “centerless,” but by referring to them as “centerless cities,” he repeats the city-centered reference point. For Jackson, although these regions lack a center, they still resemble cities. Yet, at the same time, as we seek to demonstrate in Table 1, these regions are often more than cities: Orange County, for example, has more artistic vitality than Denver, Pittsburgh, Dallas, or St. Louis.

In seeking to provide conceptual meaning to these increasingly important, sprawling regions, we also considered Robert Fishman’s notion of “technoburbs.” Ultimately, however, we were not convinced that unusually intense per capita investments in technologies truly distinguished these large multicentered regions from the more traditional suburbs. The alternative label adopted by our Postsuburban California contributors M. Gottdiener and George Kephart (see Chapter 2), “multinucleated metropolitan region,” is more accurate analytically, but, nonetheless, it sounds more like something in a chemical laboratory than a place where people live and that they may actually come to love, or at least enjoy.

After considerable discussion and debate, both among ourselves and with others, we coined the term “postsuburban.” In doing so, we hoped to capture the way in which Orange County’s recent development was anchored in a group of settlements that were suburbs in the 1950s (e.g., Garden Grove and Buena Park) and also settlements that were once traditional cities (e.g., Santa Ana and Laguna Beach). As indicated in the first edition of our book, the postsuburban spatial formation is but one of four defining features of postwar Orange County; the others are cosmopolitanism, information capitalism, and consumerism.

How can one tell that a region is postsuburban? One clue is that many activities are conducted in centers that are functionally specialized and separated by travel times of fifteen to thirty minutes. People are likely to travel by automobile across city boundaries for work, socializing, and shopping as much as within them. As Debra Gold Hansen and Mary Ryan point out in Chapter 6, “The flow of private automobiles through the net of freeways seems both a basic infrastructure and a fitting metaphor for social life in postsuburbia.” Furthermore, such regions typically contain several centers with specific foci (such as shopping and entertainment) that provide multiple attractions for many residents. Instead of stores and residences being integrated into neighborhoods, or shopping being mixed in with industrial work spaces, in postsuburbia one will find distinct and separable centers: residential neighborhoods, shopping malls, and industrial parks.
Postsuburbia’s reliance upon automobiles has led many traffic planners and architects to design shopping centers, industrial parks, and other commercial zones so that they discourage pedestrians. The most pedestrian-friendly places, as it turns out, are the centers of pre–World War II towns or cities. In Orange County, older beach cities, such as Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, and San Juan Capistrano, or inland cities, such as Orange, have interesting walking districts, usually in commercial areas. The large regional shopping malls may also be conducive to walking, but in a limited manner. One drives to the mall, leaves one’s automobile in a parking lot, and then enters a climate-controlled environment designed to keep people moving in a purposeful manner, with few places to sit or “hang out,” and few opportunities to receive personal service or to get to know the store owners by name.

Why does this antipedestrianism, which is characteristic of postsuburban regions, matter? We believe that many nonrural places—both interior segments of major cities and small towns—are marked by a public sense of conviviality because they are consciously designed to promote walking and social interaction. Certain neighborhoods of New York City, for example, resemble small towns in terms of their convenience and sociability. A sense of neighborliness can also be found in many older towns, where houses have front porches and residents can more easily meet neighbors who stroll by, unlike the newer neighborhoods of postsuburbia where houses are likely to be walled off from the street. Orange County residents, as like postsurbanites elsewhere, are thereby handicapped in their efforts to create a local identity and form community values. Again, as Hansen and Ryan conclude, postsuburbia “has not yet created a ceremonial platform from which to express a powerful, nuanced, diverse, and authentic local culture.”

The kind of spatial distribution to which we have alluded is common across Orange County, as well as in other postsuburban regions. Journalist Fred Barnes, for example, has commented on his family’s driving patterns in northern Virginia in terms strikingly reminiscent of Orange County:

My family has four cars. I drive only one, but the other three don’t sit idle. My wife, my daughter in college, and my daughter in high school each uses a car every day. . . . There’s not much chance I’ll go back to two or even three cars, and one car is downright unthinkable. I don’t believe anybody else is going to cut back either. There’s a reason, and it’s not just that Americans are car crazy (though they are). It’s the freedom, convenience, and flexibility that comes from having a car at your disposal. The automobile is the most freeing instrument yet invented. It allows folks to take jobs far away from their homes. It enables them to live far from central cities and, if they’re anti-social, far from other people. Two
cars make the two-earner family possible. . . . And the attachment has
grown as cars have become an extension of home and office, with tele­
phones, message pads, coffee cups, books (on tape), etc."

Fairfax County, located in northern Virginia and the site of Fred
Barnes's story, has about one-fourth the population and one-half the
land area of Orange County. Despite many similarities between the two,
in Fairfax County, unlike Orange County, there are large rural-like
separation zones between key cities: Reston, Falls Church, Fairfax,
Vienna, and McLean. The county includes some major destinations,
especially Dulles Airport and Tyson's Corner, as well as one of the
country's largest commercial centers and shopping malls and numerous
smaller office and industrial centers. It also contains other large shop­
ing centers, such as the Fair Oaks Mall in Fairfax, Merrifield, downtown
Reston, and Seven Corners. In addition, the adjacent city of
Arlington has its own large residential areas and downtownlike high­
rise office/retail complexes that are important destinations for Fairfax
residents. While these various centers are scattered over hundreds of
square miles, many of them are comparably accessible from cities well
within the county, such as Reston and Vienna. The net effect is that
there are few identifiable corridors that could effectively support mass
transit.

THE CULTURAL VITALITY OF POSTSUBURBIA

As suggested earlier, one of the major contentions of Postsuburban Cali­
ifornia is that cosmopolitanism has increasingly replaced parochialism
as a defining feature of Orange County. Admittedly, "cosmopolitanism"
is an understudied phenomenon for which we have general indicators
but little direct evidence. We use the term here in the common diction­
ary manner: being marked by an interest in, knowledge of, and appreci­
ation for many parts of the world. Further, a region becomes more
cosmopolitan when it is comprised (as Orange County increasingly is)
of persons and elements from many parts of the world. The term is the
opposite, therefore, of provincialism and localism. Cosmopolitan ten­
dencies within Orange County are also promoted by the county's in­
creasingly export-oriented commercial activities and the fact that its
largest corporate enterprises are decidedly international in their oper­
ations (see Chapter 8).

Moreover, we claim that in this regard Orange County serves, along
with similar settlements, as a "window on the future" or an "anticipatory
region." In Chapter 2, Mark Gottdiener and George Kephart show how
such developments are taking place in twenty other large and decen­
tralized (or "multinucleated") counties in the United States by focusing
on the economies of those counties. It is also important to note—
contrary to the claims of those who would deny the urban character of postsuburbia, and therefore its cultural significance—that these places also have impressive cultural vitality compared with settlements of similar size elsewhere.

**Table 1** Population and Arts Rank of Selected U.S. Cities and Postsuburban Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>1993 Population (millions)</th>
<th>Arts Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles / Long Beach</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis / St. Paul</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Long Island</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Orange County</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Silicon Valley</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Northern New Jersey</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fort Lauderdale</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma City</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesto</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macon</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbana / Champaign</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Postsuburban region.

One indicator of such cultural vitality is the arts. Table 1, which lists a diverse set of cities and five postsuburban regions, ranked by their populations and the relative strength of their arts, helps to illustrate how larger settlements usually have stronger arts cultures. Savageau and Boyer's top ten arts cities, for example, all have more than two million residents. In contrast between 244 and 343 in the larger settlements often have hundreds of thousands of very large group of artists, actors, and so on prove the rule: towns with two very large group of artists, actors, and so on prove the rule: towns with this definition, areas become within the last 30 years, as retail activities occur, he concludes
million residents. In contrast, all but a handful of the cities they rank between 244 and 343 in the arts have fewer than 300,000 residents. Larger settlements often have stronger arts cultures because it takes hundreds of thousands of workers in varied industries to support a large group of artists, actors, poets, writers, and musicians. The exceptions prove the rule: towns with relatively large and well-funded universities—Ann Arbor, Urbana/Champaign, and Boulder, for example—can create disproportionately dynamic arts communities through their campus arts programs and related off-campus communities. Even larger medium-sized cities that have small colleges, such as Macon, Georgia, have much less elaborate arts communities.

The main point established by Table I, however, is the important relationship between size of settlement and strength in the arts. The five postsuburban regions range in population between 1.37 and 2.62 million people. According to the Savageau and Boyer report, these same regions rank between 9 and 55 in the arts. We should therefore not compare Long Island (9) with New York City (1), or Orange County (19) with Los Angeles (2), any more than we should casually compare Dallas or Tampa with New York City. It is important, instead, to compare these regions with cities of comparable size, such as Dallas (39), Minneapolis (18), St. Louis (23), and Pittsburgh (36). Such comparisons more accurately demonstrate the artistic vitality of the postsuburban regions.

POSTSUBURBIA OR EDGE CITIES?

In 1991, Joel Garreau, a senior writer at the Washington Post, published Edge City: Life on the New Frontier, thereby adding his provocative term to the debate about metropolitan development in contemporary America. In what is arguably the most popular and widely quoted study of these new urban formations, Garreau identified more than 100 new urban centers popping up across the United States (including in Orange County) on the peripheries of older, high-density cities. According to his definition, areas become “edge cities” when they have urbanized within the last 30 years, and have at least 5 million square feet of leasable office space and 600,000 square feet of retail space, along with a population that increases at 9 a.m. on workdays. These criteria enable Garreau to identify 7 edge cities in Orange County and 5 in Fairfax County.

Unfortunately, Garreau’s conception of edge cities is blind to the complex social ecologies of postsuburban regions. In defining edge cities primarily by their centers, those spaces in which commercial or retail activities occur, he completely obscures the essence of what we
have called “postsuburban” because he ignores the fundamentally de-centered or multicentered nature of these emerging regions. His criteria do not permit us to draw boundaries around edge cities or to conceptualize relationships among these “new downtowns.” His edge cities, then, do not interact and therefore are situated in a region such as Orange County in much the same way that widely separated cities like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are located within the state of Pennsylvania. *Edge City* thus misses much of the fundamentally decentralized and interactive character that makes postsuburban regions so complex, incoherent, and dynamic. Such regions are not merely multicentered in their commercial activities. As we have noted, their commerce, shopping, arts, residential life, and religious activities are all conducted in different places on a spider web of interconnected travel paths linked primarily by private automobiles. In Orange County, as in Fairfax County and other similar regions, residents drive as much *between* Garreau’s edge cities as within them.

The limitations of the edge-city concept are dramatically illustrated by Garreau’s analysis of Irvine, California. A city of approximately 120,000 residents and one of the major planned (by the Irvine Company) communities of Orange County, Irvine plays a key role in Garreau’s assessment of community and its limitations in edge cities (see *Edge City*, Chapter 8). Irvine is located about four miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and lies adjacent to several cities, including Newport Beach, Laguna Hills, Costa Mesa, El Toro, Laguna Beach, Santa Ana, and Tustin. There are three major regional shopping centers located within a ten to twenty minute drive from Irvine: Fashion Island (Newport Beach), South Coast Plaza (Costa Mesa), and Laguna Hills Mall (Laguna Hills). Irvine also includes two major industrial parks: the Irvine Spectrum and another near the John Wayne Airport.

In order to comprehend the commercial and cultural dynamism of “Irvine,” Garreau expands Irvine to include three of his edge cities: Newport Beach/Fashion Island, the Irvine Spectrum, and the John Wayne Airport area (including South Coast Plaza-Costa Mesa, as well as the bulk of Irvine). However, even though their industrial and office parks are centered five to seven miles from each other, these are not distinct and separable edge cities. In fact, Garreau creates a significant problem by treating the Fashion Island shopping mall as part of Irvine rather than, correctly, as part of Newport Beach. Irvine, in fact, functions more like a suburb for Newport Beach/Fashion Island, where Irvine residents go for shopping and entertainment but rarely for work. In turn, few Newport Beach residents travel to Irvine for shopping or entertainment, and the affluent professionals and top executives who reside in Newport Beach are employed throughout Orange County, not primarily in Irvine. The point some part of Irvine and Newport Center is also a functional, or edge city.

Similarly, the South Coast Metro area of the Irvine Industrial Park are in Santa Ana and Costa Mesa to Irvine for either shopping or business.

Perhaps the largest oversights in Garreau’s most oversights in southern California edge cities are ethnic communities, such as the Mexican and Cambodian in Garden Grove and the Latino communities of some ethnic enclaves are inhabited when they arrive in the region. These ethnic enclaves depend on people who have lived outside of Garreau’s region to provide the larger metropolitan vibrancy and vibrant character.

There is a major difference commercially defined concept. There is an emphasis on the new so crucial to understand the other, an emphasis on the new so crucial to understand the other. This is by no means the cosmopolitanism has reached all newcomers or completely overpatriated segregation. Yet, for the parochialism of an earlier time once largely opposed to U.S. society, has been substantially transformed with the coming of metropolitans.

A POSTSURBANIZING

Our colleague at the University of California, Mark Baldassare, has observed simultaneously liberal on some issues such as abortion, and conservative on issues such as taxation to support enhanced government congruent with a libertarian or freedom and limited government organization discussed elsewhere.
primarily in Irvine. The point is that there is no easy way to combine some part of Irvine and Newport Beach/Fashion Island into the equivalent of a functional, or edge, city.

Similarly, the South Coast Metro area is functionally rich, like Newport Beach/Fashion Island, but not as tightly tied to Irvine as Garreau implies. The South Coast Metro area does include a significant portion of the Irvine Industrial Park North, and its primary residential areas are in Santa Ana and Costa Mesa. But its residents are unlikely to travel to Irvine for either shopping or the arts.

Perhaps the largest oversight in Garreau’s chapter on community in southern California edge cities is his failure to examine some of the new ethnic communities, such as those composed of Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians in Garden Grove and Westminster, or the Chicano/Latino communities of somewhat longer standing in Santa Ana. Such ethnic enclaves are inhabited by people who are often relatively poor when they arrive in the region. They settle in older neighborhoods, depend on people who share their native language and culture, and tend to live outside of Garreau’s edge cities. However, they definitely provide the larger metropolitan region with much of its cultural diversity and vibrant character.

There is a major difference, therefore, between Garreau’s narrow, commercially defined concept of edge cities, on the one hand, and, on the other, an emphasis on the socially defined communities that are now so crucial to understanding Orange County as a postsuburban region. This is by no means to suggest that Orange County’s developing cosmo­politanism has reached a point where it enthusiastically accepts all newcomers or completely obviates patterns of residential and occupational segregation. Yet, for reasons we seek to identify in our book, the parochialism of an earlier Orange County (whose residents were once largely opposed to U.S. participation in the United Nations) has been substantially transformed in more globally aware directions.

A POSTSUBURBAN POLITICS?

Our colleague at the University of California, Irvine, urban sociologist Mark Baldassare, has observed that Orange County residents are often simultaneously liberal on social issues relating to individual choice, such as abortion, and conservative on fiscal policies, such as raising taxes to support enhanced government services. Both positions are congruent with a libertarian orientation that favors maximal individual freedom and limited government regulation. Because of the spatial organization discussed elsewhere in our book, the group we call postsuburbanites creates their lifestyle in a place where central institutions,
such as the government, or the state, are less visible and functionally significant than they are in traditional urban cities. We wonder whether the decentralized lifeways of postsuburbia help engender, or reinforce, what can be called a politics of decentralization.

Such a politics may be further stimulated by the reshaping of work under information capitalism in contemporary America (see Chapters 1 and 4). Today careers are pursued far less often in large, bureaucratic entities, where seniority is customarily accompanied by reasonably secure pay and increases in benefits, and more often in smaller companies, where employment is more unstable and risky, and even in what are called nonterritorial, virtual offices which have been described by one observer as "the most radical redefinition of the workplace since the Industrial Revolution." The decentralizing trend toward the use of virtual offices is likely to become even more pronounced in both urban and postsuburban regions because of many organizations' reluctance to incur high fixed real-estate costs. This trend is most common for sales, service, and field-based workers whose travel between home, a central office, and clients in congested postsurburban regions can consume several hours of every workday. Many of these workers can use mobile technologies, such as car phones and portable computers, to communicate with their managers and coworkers, while their richest communication is face to face with their off-site clients. Despite the potential benefits of such practices, some have expressed concern that employees working away from traditional office settings will have "greater deadline pressures, work longer hours, and find they no longer can escape from their work after hours." In postsuburban, information-oriented regions, such changes are certain to have political consequences we are only beginning to comprehend. A historic event occurring at the time this edition of Postsuburban California was going to press—the Orange County bankruptcy debacle of December, 1994—complicates matters even further. The debacle, the largest municipal bankruptcy in history, dramatically exemplifies several themes of our study.

In the first place, the bankruptcy demonstrates the extent to which certain governmental agencies—in this case the office of County Treasurer—Tax Collector Robert L. Citron—had become insulated from the larger political process and functioned with relative autonomy in respect to that process (see Chapter 8). An internal audit, for example, concluded more than a year prior to the bankruptcy declaration, had warned the County Board of Supervisors that Citron was operating without adequate controls. When reminded of this audit, none of the supervisors could remember it. Some observers have argued that the supervisors lacked sufficient expertise in the securities markets to provide effective oversight of thereby contributing mightily to the bankruptcy. Citron member, eighty-two-year-old Robert L. Citron, was quoted as observing, "Damn it. This is the way we're supposed to do business. I'm not qualified to understand the markets they operate in."

provide effective oversight of the county's high-risk investment strategy, thereby contributing mightily to the ultimate disaster. As their senior member, eighty-two-year-old Thomas Riley, a former Marine Corps general, was quoted as observing in the bankruptcy's aftermath, “I feel so incompetent in responding to some of this. I'm used to saying, 'Damn it. This is the way we're going to do it.' I can't do that with this challenge. I'm not qualified.” Whatever one may conclude about the competency of the supervisors, it is clear that they gave the treasurer's office free reign with regard to the county's investment portfolio.

Second, the collapse reveals the close and continuing interaction between municipal and county governments on the one hand and private business on the other (see Chapter 8). In Orange County, political and business leaders have most often functioned as one unit in promoting rapid and unrestrained growth. The elected board of supervisors, for example, historically has been predisposed to favor the needs of the county's pro-growth oligarchy (bankers, financiers, and developers, such as the Irvine Company, the Rancho Santa Margarita Company, and the Mission Viejo Company). The bankruptcy debacle of late 1994 exposed yet another feature of that long-standing and collaborative interaction: in constructing the county's investment fund during the 1990s, the role of Merrill Lynch, the Wall Street brokerage firm where Citron was a favored customer, was crucial. "By all accounts," writes Charles R. Morris, a Wall Street consultant, "Merrill rang up huge investment fees by feeding Citron's recklessness like a bartender pushing drinks on a drunk driver." Even earlier, in the late 1980s, Merrill Lynch representatives had joined with Orange County lawmakers to work diligently and successfully in the state legislature on behalf of several bills designed to widen the county's authority to invest local tax money in complex financial instruments.

Third, Orange County's financial crisis may also be viewed as one significant legacy of the California "taxpayers' revolt" of the late 1970s and the 1980s. Sharply limiting the growth of property taxes resulted in increased reliance on higher and higher yields from investment funds in order to finance the quality of municipal services (police, fire, parks, street maintenance, sanitation, etc.) to which residents of that relatively affluent region had become accustomed. (For a comprehensive analysis of this matter—stressing the importance of rapid growth, consumerism, home ownership, and increasing property values in Orange County—see Chapter 10.)

It is difficult to gauge the long-term economic, financial, and political effects of Orange County's declaration of bankruptcy. The county will certainly have to pay higher interest rates to borrow money in the future, which will have a negative impact on public construction
projects of all kinds. It is unlikely, however, that the investment losses, as serious as they are, will permanently derail an otherwise robust regional economy. However, when added to the aforementioned factors—postsuburban spatial organization and the reshaping of work under information capitalism—the historic bankruptcy of Orange County will have long-lasting political reverberations. As urban economist David Friedman observed in reference to the midterm elections of 1994, in terms completely applicable to Orange County, "The passions unleashed [by those elections] are in no small part attributable to the enormous tension between the America being molded by the new economy and the bureaucracies that survive from an earlier era." These are the kinds of emerging issues that would merit another study, and we wrote Postsuburban California with the expectation of stimulating new research and analysis about Orange County and other similar metropolitan regions throughout the United States. December 1994

NOTES

Thanks to Greg Walsh for his cordiality and patience in teaching us about lifeways in Fairfax County, Virginia, and to Gene Rochlin for discussions of political orientations in postsuburban regions.


3. See, for example, Sharpe and Wallock, "Bold New City or Built-Up 'Burb?:" 13–14, 23.


7. We have been gratified by the generally positive reception of our book and its conceptual categories of analysis. See, for example, the following reviews: Arnold Hirsch, Reviews in American History 20 (March 1992): 78–83; Craig Hendriks, Journal of American History 78 (March 1992): 1512–15; Robert Young, Urban Geography 13 (March–April 1992): 203–4; Michael Ebner, Journal of Interdisciplinary History 23 (Summer 1992): 219–20; Robert Fishman, Con-

8. In addition to Chapter 6 of Madden, "Streets vs. Malls: The Mi


15. See, for example, Gordon, "Will the Office Bandwagon?" ibid.


18. Within two weeks of their decisions, acting against the urgence submitted by the Koll Real Estate Company and the county commission, acting against the urgent needs of the wetlands area near Huntington Beach, the councilperson Ralph Bauer declared the board just went through the motions.


10. David Savageau and Richard Boyer created an arts ranking for 343 metropolitan regions in the United States and Canada. See *Places Rated Almanac* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993). Their ranking system is based on a measure that includes certain kinds of fine arts and venues, including radio concert time, symphonic performances, theaters, museums, and touring performances. It emphasizes mainstream fine arts and downplays some important arts, such as jazz, and performance venues, such as clubs and galleries. Even so, the ranking seems to have good face validity for our purposes. We have selected settlements for Table 1 to include the five postsuburban regions identified by Gott diener and Kephart that are distinguishable in Savageau and Boyer's report. Unfortunately, their report sweeps many of Gott diener and Kephart's counties into larger metropolitan agglomerations. For example, they include Fairfax County, Virginia, as part of Washington, D.C., and Du Page County, Illinois, as part of Chicago.


12. For an analysis of the Irvine Company's role in Orange County, see Chapter 3 by Martin Schiesl.


15. See, for example, Gordon, "Are We Being Run Over By the 'Virtual Office' Bandwagon?", 8.


18. Within two weeks of their bankruptcy declaration, the board of supervisors, acting against the urgent appeals of local residents, approved a plan submitted by the Koll Real Estate Group to build as many as 3,500 homes in a wetlands area near Huntington Beach. After the approval, Huntington Beach councilperson Ralph Bauer declared, “They crammed this down our throat. The board just went through the largest municipal bankruptcy in history and


On March 8, 1889, the California entity out of the southern port later the voters of this proposal proved its formation. At that time Express, a leading newspaper of the region comprising Los Angeles, Orange counties. For several years the region comprised the major industrial metropolises in the nation's tenth largest county. The complex metropolitan region, with its own economy was less than one-tenth of a billion in 1989 (compared with the neighboring state of thirty in the world, along with Denmark, and Egypt.

After World War II Orange County became a major aircraft manufacturer. The aircraft and Lockheed. And in
Designing the Model Community: The Irvine Company and Suburban Development, 1950–88

Martin J. Schiesel

Few large organizations have played a greater role in the postwar economic and social evolution of Orange County than the Irvine Company. M. Gottdiener and George Kephart show in Chapter 2 that the county's spatial structure, unlike the structure of many older metropolitan regions that are based on a dominant central city surrounded by residential and industrial areas, is a new form of regional deconcentrated space consisting of several independent and highly specialized centers. Much of this important development can be attributed to the policies and activities of the Irvine Company. Holding the largest piece of undeveloped land in the county, company leaders decided to reorganize their business from a successful farming operation into a professional land-management corporation with community planning and building accorded highest priority. The result was the creation of a postsuburban system possessing remarkable commercial specialization, technological expertise, and much residential homogeneity and self-sufficiency. 1 In the process, serious questions emerged concerning population balance and diversity, environmental integrity, and regional obligations and responsibilities. Dealing with these various issues meant continual tension between the determination of the company to maximize profits on land development and the desire of citizen groups and public officials to maintain a higher quality of life than that found elsewhere in metropolitan California.

The history of the Irvine Company goes back to California's pastoral era. Two brothers, Benjamin and Thomas Flint, and their cousin, Llewellyn Bixby, operated a large sheep ranch in Monterey County under the name of Flint, Bixby and Company in the 1850s. The outbreak of the Civil War greatly increased the demand for California wool. Flint, Bixby
and Company proceeded to extend its business farther south and sought to purchase some cattle ranches located in the Los Angeles area. A severe drought in the early 1860s had brought devastation to the cattle industry and left Mexican-American rancheros financially destitute. James Irvine, a wealthy merchant from San Francisco, accepted an invitation from the sheepmen to take a half interest in their investment in the empty cattle lands. They purchased the Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Lomas de Santiago, and part of the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Irvine bought out his partners for $150,000 in 1876 and got title to all three properties. He died in 1886. Three years later the California legislature, responding to pressure from merchants and prominent landowners from towns in the Santa Ana Valley, voted in favor of creating a new county out of the southern part of Los Angeles County and authorized a special election to decide whether it should be formed. The voters in the proposed County of Orange approved separation by a huge margin. Mindful of the new county's growing economic importance, James Irvine II, who had inherited all his father's estate, decided to consolidate the properties and incorporated them as the Irvine Company under the laws of West Virginia in 1894.2

Incorporation sparked a gradual transition of the ranch from a grazing enterprise to an agricultural business. Much land formerly devoted to sheep pasture was planted in the late 1890s to field crops such as beans, barley, and corn. Farm operations diversified further in the following decade with the planting and cultivation of celery, cabbage, peas, lettuce, and other vegetables. In the 1910s and 1920s the Irvine Company entered the citrus industry and devoted hundreds of acres to lemon and orange trees. All this activity put heavy demands on the ranch's water resources; obtaining an adequate and continual supply of water was a major problem. In response, the company in the 1920s and 1930s drilled hundreds of wells and laid nearly a thousand miles of pipeline. It also built several dams and reservoirs for purposes of conservation and flood control.3

BEGINNING OF SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

Residential demands in the postwar decade placed new pressures on the Irvine Company to devote portions of the ranch to urban uses. One of the greatest assets of the organization was its ocean frontage, which stretched for eight miles along the coast from Newport Bay to Laguna Beach. The rapid increase of population in southern California and the growing demand for recreational opportunities gave the land a value that an older generation never contemplated. Rather than sell this precious property outright, Myford Irvine, who had become company president upon the death of his father in 1947, moved business. It subdivided a large number of small family houses and lots. Tennis courts were also provided. Several enclaves, such as Harbor Cove, Cameo Shores, and Harbor North, were designed with well-designed homes, frequented by owners associations organized by the right to use an association's park. The result was a gradual transition of the ranch from a grazing enterprise to an agricultural business. Much land formerly devoted to sheep pasture was planted in the late 1890s to field crops such as beans, barley, and corn. Farm operations diversified further in the following decade with the planting and cultivation of celery, cabbage, peas, lettuce, and other vegetables. In the 1910s and 1920s the Irvine Company entered the citrus industry and devoted hundreds of acres to lemon and orange trees. All this activity put heavy demands on the ranch's water resources; obtaining an adequate and continual supply of water was a major problem. In response, the company in the 1920s and 1930s drilled hundreds of wells and laid nearly a thousand miles of pipeline. It also built several dams and reservoirs for purposes of conservation and flood control.3

Urban growth in the northern end of the county proceeded along different lines. Federal loans from the Veterans Administration and the completion of new real estate developments of low- and moderate-income families for consumers provided hundreds of new jobs in the southern California. The county's population grew from 704,000 in 1960, an increase of 40% by 1980, and more than doubled by 2000. The Irvine Company, which received attractive offers for real estate development, sold some of its land to developers who were interested in building new communities. The University of California at Irvine Shopping around for a new campus in the United States and Europe, the university determined that the Irvine Company's land in Orange County was the ideal location. It purchased land in the United States and Europe, various prospective sites. Their size, location, and potential income were considered. The Irvine Company's land in Orange County was the ideal location. It purchased land in the United States and Europe for the construction of the new campus of the University of California at Irvine. The university's decision was based on the Irvine Company's strong commitment to the university's mission and the potential for a long-term partnership.
death of his father in 1947, moved the company into the development business. It subdivided a large number of tracts, contracted with building firms to construct single-family housing, and offered long-term leases for the houses and lots. Tennis courts, club houses, and other amenities were also provided. Several enclaves, dubbed with idyllic names like Irvine Cove, Cameo Shores, and Harbor View Hills, sprouted up around Newport Bay and along the coast in the 1950s. The affluent residents lived in well-designed homes, frequented superior recreational facilities, and enjoyed panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean. They also belonged to homeowners associations organized by Irvine executives. Residents were given the right to use an association’s property and to vote for its officers and, in return, were obliged to pay an association’s assessments and follow its rules and regulations. The result was an effective system of land-use control through which the company kept community amenities in good condition and maintained certain architectural standards.4

Urban growth in the northern and western parts of the county proceeded along far different lines. Federal Housing Authority insurance and liberal loans from the Veterans Administration enabled large numbers of low- and moderate-income families to buy homes and generated hundreds of new real estate developments in suburban areas. By the early 1950s these bedroom communities were heavily dependent on Los Angeles County for jobs, goods, and services. As a result, much of the housing, commercial, and industrial development occurred in those places closest to or with good access to Los Angeles. The 1955 opening of Disneyland at Anaheim and the completion of the Santa Ana freeway changed these arrangements considerably. Many companies, expecting a strong market for consumer goods and personal services, entered the Anaheim area and provided hundreds of new jobs that beckoned to people in every corner of southern California. The county’s population rose from 220,000 in 1950 to 704,000 in 1960, an increase of 220 percent. Large-scale merchant builders made the most effective response to the demand for housing. They bought up vast areas of farmland, subdivided their property into different-sized lots, and sold scores of identical homes to middle- and working-class families. This residential expansion gradually spread south and pushed toward the northern edge of the property of the Irvine Company, which received attractive offers from experienced developers who were interested in buying all or portions of the ranch.5

The University of California was also interested in the Irvine property. Shopping around for a new campus in the south, the regents commissioned architects Charles Luckman and William Pereira in 1957 to study various prospective sites. Their staff visited a few outstanding universities in the United States and Europe and did research on the kind of relationship that existed between the schools and their surrounding areas. They
concluded that a great university, in addition to having a superior faculty and gifted students, had to provide housing on or near the campus, enjoy the support of a sympathetic community, and be close to a cosmopolitan urban center. It also should possess enough land to avoid congestion in the future. Numerous locations in southern California could meet these requirements reasonably well. The regents accompanied Pereira on a tour of some of them, ending with the one he considered most suitable. It was a stretch of gentle rolling hills on the Irvine Ranch, just east of the northern tip of Newport Bay. Pereira pointed out that this location offered a unique opportunity to build around the campus a city that would fulfill all the needs of the university. The regents agreed and unanimously approved the campus site.  

Joan Irvine Smith was delighted with their decision. The strong-minded daughter of James Irvine III and holder of the largest amount of stock in the company, Smith replaced her mother-on the board of directors in 1957. She strongly urged Irvine officials to donate the land to the university. Her plea was a familiar mixture of altruism and self-interest. She talked about great intellectual and cultural benefits for nearby cities. She had also observed the building boom that accompanied the completion of the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles. The Janus family, among other groups, got rich developing the village of Westwood near the school. Neither factor, however, weighed heavily with Irvine officials. They felt that it would be quite unbusinesslike to give ranch property away and decided to reject Smith's generous proposal. Enraged over their decision, she took her case to the general public. She held formal press conferences, gave several radio and television interviews, and helped organize mass rallies at which she spoke out fervently in support of the Irvine campus.  

Such publicity became embarrassing for Irvine officials; Smith made them look like penny-pinching opponents of higher education and the public interest. They also had serious financial problems to worry about. With residential and business development moving close to the northern edge of the ranch, taxes on the company's agricultural property were raised considerably to reflect its growing value for urban use. This situation led the company in the direction of comprehensive land planning, and as a result it donated one thousand acres to the University of California for the new campus. The company then proposed that a land-use plan be prepared for the area adjoining the school to ensure proper integration of community and university life. Not having sufficient space and adequate housing on some other campuses, the regents also saw planning as vital to the interests of the university population and surrounding areas. They and company officials requested Pereira and his staff to make a detailed study of the Irvine site.
Few architects in southern California were better qualified than Pereira for the job. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1930, he joined an architectural company in Chicago and helped plan a number of public-works projects for recently unemployed people. His wife, a top photographer's model, accepted an offer in a Hollywood film and moved to Los Angeles with her husband in 1938. Pereira signed on as a set designer and producer for Paramount Studios and also established his own architectural practice, designing department stores, medical centers, and military installations. Charles Luckman, a former college classmate and ex-president of Lever Brothers, joined his firm in 1950. Together they designed the space-exploration complex at Cape Canaveral, Los Angeles International Airport, Marineland on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and dozens of other multimillion-dollar facilities. By the late 1950s Pereira felt that his artistic integrity had been compromised by too much commercial business and decided to break up the lucrative partnership. “It is not that we were doing bad work,” he recalled later, “it’s just that I knew I wasn’t doing my best work. With our volume, I couldn’t give each job the individual attention it deserved.”

PLANNING A COMMUNITY

The Irvine contract demanded nearly all of Pereira’s attention and expertise. His initial report, finished in the fall of 1959, established the economic feasibility of building a major campus on the ranch. It also recorded promises of support from various governmental agencies and surrounding cities. A second report, finished in the spring of 1960, mapped ten thousand acres of undeveloped land and presented a master plan for a university-oriented community to be organized along the lines of the venerable garden-city model. The garden city was the brainchild of Ebenezer Howard, a London court stenographer and reformer. Howard, writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century, worried about the waste and social disorganization that rapid industrialization brought to large European cities and proposed a new kind of community that would be self-sufficient and would combine the best features of city and countryside. His scheme had the support of a number of prominent American planners during the early twentieth century and reached its fullest expression in the New Deal’s famous greenbelt towns. Garden-city principles reappeared in the late 1950s as part of various proposals for new communities by leading architects and academic consultants who specialized in urban and regional land-use planning. Close observation of the patterns of suburbanization convinced them that most metropolitan areas suffered from too-rapid change and considerable instability and obsolescence. The remedy to this situation appeared to lie in the direction
of structured and interdependent urban development. Kevin Lynch, a professor of city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, contended that such arrangements would encourage "the use of intensive centers, variety ... and a differentiated but well-patterned flow system."  

Pereira's plan for the university community met some of these criteria almost perfectly. It designated certain land surrounding the campus as inclusion areas to be interlocked with the central core. Roughly two hundred acres each, these parcels would provide apartments and single-family dwellings for faculty and staff, residences for single and married students, churches, schools, and shops. Land was also reserved for a new town center, which would serve as the focus of commercial, cultural, and social activity in the community. Shops, offices, restaurants, and entertainment facilities were to be closely grouped, resembling the structure of older university towns in America and Europe with their "intimate pedestrian scale." Pereira devoted equal attention to environmental and recreational needs. He proposed that various low lands on the site be converted into a lake, open greenbelts, a golf course, and public parks.  

Irvine Company officials saw great merit and value in Pereira's plan. They watched nervously as merchant builders continued to transform adjacent areas from citrus groves to sprawling subdivisions. Their property also sat at a central point in the state's network of roads. The state legislature in 1959 approved new highway plans and appropriated ten billion dollars for their completion; three major freeways linking the Irvine Ranch with the rest of the Los Angeles metropolitan area were slated for future construction. Pereira's scheme for the new campus gave permanent assurance against encroachment. It also pointed the way to avoidance of uncontrolled suburbanization of ranch property. Pereira had introduced into southern Orange County a new version of the garden city, complete with shopping centers, greenbelts, and parks. The Irvine Company retained him to prepare a master land-use plan for the rest of the ranch.  

Joining Pereira and his staff in the project were a group of new Irvine Company employees unfamiliar with farming operations. Irvine officials created a new land-development division in 1961 and recruited several landscape architects and planning consultants to staff it. Raymond Watson, a highly respected architectural planner, left a lucrative partnership in San Francisco and joined the company because the job possessed "a lot of romantic appeal." The ranch, with its thousands of acres of virtually untouched wilderness, appeared to him to be a "planner's dream." Watson and his colleagues gave the lowest priority to the remote mountainous areas to the east. The central tier, some thirty-two thousand acres of lush fields and citrus groves, received more attention in order to maintain income from farming activity as long as possible. Highest prior-
ity went to the southern sector, which covered about forty thousand acres from the ocean to the northern boundary of the proposed university community. As an extension of existing residential enclaves located around Newport Bay, it was the logical location for initial development. The planners talked about new communities in the southern sector that would feature attractive and comfortable residences for people at all income levels and that would provide a variety of jobs and services. There would also be less dependence on the automobile, with people easily able to walk to shops, restaurants, and recreational facilities. Pereira believed that there was nothing “more ugly” than vast areas of open land paved for parking lots and spoke fervently of neighborhood and regional parks that would “restore the land to the pedestrian.”

Merchant builders in the 1950s seldom bothered with these considerations. Concentrating on the broad middle- and lower-income segment of the housing market, they bought land in the urban outskirts and applied techniques of mass production to the housing industry, offering homes at lower prices than similar structures would cost if built individually. Land was set aside for various community functions, but its actual development was often left to the whims of local government and the marketplace. The Irvine Company pursued different and broader goals. It represented what two authorities on postwar California suburbanization have described as the “new community builders” of the early 1960s. The others in southern California included the Newhall Land and Farming Company, which would develop the community of Valencia on some four thousand acres of ranch land in northeastern Los Angeles County, the Janss Corporation, builder of Janss/Canejo in Ventura County, and the Mission Viejo Company, which would develop a planned community on ten thousand acres of rolling hills in southern Orange County. They and the Irvine Company were strongly influenced by the writings of prominent urban critics who viewed the rapid expansion of suburban America as a crisis. Lumping all suburbs together without regard to differences in class composition and living conditions, they argued that profit-oriented building companies had scarred the countryside, produced waste and economic inefficiency, and completely disregarded human and social needs. It followed that development in the future could be spared these deplorable consequences only if it were based on thorough and comprehensive planning.

This critique of suburbia convinced Irvine executives that it would be possible to create a better living and working environment than that typically found throughout metropolitan California. They could also expect to make a great deal of money doing it. The supposed unrest with the quality of suburban life suggested to them the existence of a strong market for amenity-packed, planned communities. They intended to be a
leader in offering consumers a product that had not been available in most conventional suburbs.

Orange County planning officials had no objections to their goals. They worried that the aimless urban sprawl in other areas of the county would be repeated throughout its southern tier. "The growth of western Orange County was a piecemeal process of one subdivision after another, and the consequent related piecemeal zoning problems of residential, commercial, and industrial areas," Planning Director Harry Bergh told the county Board of Supervisors in 1963. "It was not characterized by a preconceived master plan of development, nor even a series of master plans, such as must be prepared to guide the growth of large holdings." The alternative to this disturbing situation, he felt, lay in flexibility in development and attention to the interrelationship of land uses. Accordingly, he and his staff drafted a planned-community ordinance and persuaded the board to adopt these regulations for future urban and suburban expansion. The ordinance permitted much more flexibility in community planning and site design than did traditional zoning regulations. Land uses could be mixed on the same site. Cluster development on small lots was also allowed in exchange for large amounts of open space in the community. The developer, in return for this increased flexibility, was required to get approval of a master plan for the entire area and subsequently submit detailed site plans for each part of the holding to be developed. Pereira and his colleagues proceeded to incorporate the original university-community scheme into a master plan for the southern part of the ranch and confidently presented the entire package to the county for its consideration and approval.

The Board of Supervisors did not quarrel with the plan; they saw it largely as enhancing the county's financial interests. The plan was designed to create an attractive environment, which would encourage a rise in land values. Taxes would rise accordingly on any developed lands to reflect their growing value for urban uses. The supervisors also believed the plan could be completed. Irvine Company executives, unlike many merchant builders who generally bypassed architects and planning consultants, had the expert staff to carry out their ambitious plan. Moreover, they seemed financially capable of providing and managing facilities that would otherwise be the responsibility of the county, such as golf courses, swimming clubs, and parks. Impressed with these points, the supervisors adopted the south Irvine Ranch general plan in the winter of 1964 as the county's guide for future urban and suburban development. Shortly afterward, a full-time professional planning staff was established in the Irvine Company to assure consistency of concepts, continuity of projects, and design control. They took over responsibility for master planning from Pereira and hired several engineers, economists, and market analysts.

Garden-city principles were a plan. It proposed a system of "the social heterogeneity and achieve independence." Each community districts to which inhabitants could for these areas would not be mono in the county. Instead, the plan proposed garden apartments, single-family units. In addition, each village would have shopping centers. Environmental plan. It identified certain sites as for greenbelts and community parks.

Company planners also gave a They called for the immediate development on the ranch. One was the Aeronutronics Division of File north of the campus, near the O served by four freeways and two supportive commercial areas, Th port Center. Envisioning a "down the south coast of Orange Count acre complex to consist of high service businesses, and other co regional shopping center. Irvine talking about Newport Center an plan at a special press conference organization was undertaking the and expected to see "enormous communities as well as the compa

Developments in the late 1964 county gradually evolved from an contract construction and management of growth. Many aerospace and-development industries four four-thousand-acre Irvine Indus of new jobs and attracted large numbers of southern California. The county to 1.4 million in 1970, an increase among the newcomers were affluent families, who shared with the their certain high living standards. The access to the outdoors, proximity to tional and recreational opportunities.
Garden-city principles were at the heart of Irvine's southern-sector plan. It proposed a system of “balanced communities” that would foster social heterogeneity and achieve “a measure of economic and functional independence.” Each community would contain distinctive residential districts to which inhabitants could relate in an intimate way. The housing for these areas would not be monotonous and repetitive as it was elsewhere in the county. Instead, the plan provided for a diversity of building types—garden apartments, single-family housing, and cluster home developments. In addition, each village would have its own schools, churches, and shopping centers. Environmental considerations, too, were part of the plan. It identified certain sites as open-space preserves and reserved them for greenbelts and community parks.21

Company planners also gave attention to employment opportunities. They called for the immediate development of two major industrial areas on the ranch. One was a site southwest of the university campus ringing the Aeronutronics Division of Ford Motor Company; the other extended north of the campus, near the Orange County airport. Both sites were served by four freeways and two railroad lines. Land was also reserved for supportive commercial areas. The most ambitious project was the Newport Center. Envisioning a “downtown” for the Irvine development and the south coast of Orange County, the plan proposed a seven-hundred-acre complex to consist of high-rise office buildings, medical centers, service businesses, and other commercial facilities arranged around a regional shopping center. Irvine Company president Charles Thomas, talking about Newport Center and other proposed projects in the master plan at a special press conference held on the ranch, proclaimed that his organization was undertaking the “finest land development in the world” and expected to see “enormous progress and prosperity” for nearby communities as well as the company.22

Developments in the late 1960s confirmed Thomas’s optimism. The county gradually evolved from an agricultural to an industrial base, with contract construction and manufacturing accounting for the largest share of growth. Many aerospace companies, electronic firms, and research-and-development industries found their way south and located in the four-thousand-acre Irvine Industrial Complex. They provided thousands of new jobs and attracted large numbers of people from different parts of southern California. The county’s population rose from 704,000 in 1960 to 1.4 million in 1970, an increase of 100 percent. Most conspicuous among the newcomers were affluent white-collar employees and their families, who shared with their counterparts in other suburban regions certain high living standards. They wanted comfortable housing, ready access to the outdoors, proximity to work, and better-than-average educational and recreational opportunities.23
Providing such amenities on the Irvine property demanded a style and strategy different from those of older real estate developments in southern California. Unlike merchant builders, who usually marketed homes first and the community second, the Irvine Company sought reputable homebuilders and concentrated on marketing an amenity-packed community. Some large builders in the county specialized in the middle- and lower-income segment of the housing market, while others preferred to build relatively expensive homes. Irvine officials accepted offers only from those building expensive homes and informed them that ranch land would be leased for real estate development only. They also stipulated in contracts the minimum price for which homes to be constructed could be sold.24

The leaseholds also permitted orderly and coordinated urbanization. Developers were required to preservice ranch lands with roads, water supplies, and sewer systems. Company planners, moreover, closely supervised residential and commercial projects and made sure that they conformed to specific architectural and landscape styles outlined in the master plan. Many houses, for example, were clustered and located near open space and paths. Because of the company’s special emphasis on leisure activity, it provided golf courses, tennis courts, lakes, and other recreational facilities.25 Two consultants who wrote an extensive report on urbanization on the Irvine Ranch in 1968 observed that the residential villages provided a “more desirable living environment” than that available in most subdivisions elsewhere in California. The following year the Orange County chapter of the American Institute of Planners singled out the Irvine development as being “one of the most comprehensive and completely balanced new communities to be found in the United States.”26 Company officials deserved much of this recognition. Ten years of skillful planning and careful design made the residential enclaves on the ranch far more attractive and healthier than the drab rows of tract housing that permeated the northern and western sectors of the county.

PROBLEMS IN PARADISE

The Irvine design was not, however, a radical alternative to postwar California suburban sprawl. One close observer of the Irvine operation pointed out that the company was not concerned with providing any “utopian solution to urban problems” and saw its projects mostly as an “extension of professionalism in the development process and [as avoiding] the excesses of uncontrolled suburbanization.” It was also less risky and more businesslike to promote generally accepted forms of development with assured returns rather than radical changes. Irvine vice-president Watson, in a paper read to a conference on community projects sponsored by the American Association of Architects, recommended to community builders to consider “certain “financial constraints” as best policy, his continued, Watson strategies” that held the “most promise.”

Least promising to him and his company officials spoke about a reasonable housing. They claimed to be competitively priced and were upper-class people. The average the Irvine property was thirty-five average for the county.28 Urban Shirley Weiss, writing in their book about the United States since 1960, observed that the economics of the development precluded immediate values as rapidl lower income persons be seen as land values, but rising prices the build moderately priced housing. the Irvine Company chose not to continued to advertise its urban picturesque place to live.

The housing programs of not succeeded along more equitable line. Irvine Company. Builders in the commitment to architectural design for population balance and diversity developer James Rouse of Columbia dwellings for low-income families community. One of his main objectives was to socioeconomic mixing, facilitate housing by writing down the cost certain federal assistance program buy or rent decent homes. He ab individual residents to maintain bria’s social diversity was created and initiated by believed that changes in family should not force people to move. Reston, Inc., took over the deve...
American Association of Architects in 1971, talked about the reluctance of new community builders to commit all their available resources because of certain "financial constraints" within which they usually operated. The best policy, he continued, was to narrow down development to "one or two strategies" that held the "most promise of success."27

Least promising to him and other Irvine executives was low-income housing. They claimed to be committed to population diversity and repeatedly spoke about a reasonable range of building types and prices in their residential projects. Most of the homes, however, were luxury dwellings with costly frills and were affordable only by upper-middle- and upper-class people. The average selling price of a single-family house on the Irvine property was thirty-five thousand dollars, more than twice the average for the county.28 Urban studies scholars Raymond Burby and Shirley Weiss, writing in their monumental work on new communities in the United States since 1960, attribute this situation largely to the economics of the development process: "Development strategies are designed to escalate values as rapidly as possible. Not only may housing for lower income persons be seen as threatening necessary appreciation in land values, but rising prices themselves make it exceedingly difficult to build moderately priced housing units."29 Acting on these considerations, the Irvine Company chose not to hold down the costs of new houses and continued to advertise its urban landscape as a high-income, homogeneous place to live.

The housing programs of noted community builders in the East proceeded along more equitable lines in the late 1960s than those of the Irvine Company. Builders in the East matched the Irvine Company's commitment to architectural design and amenities but added a concern for population balance and diversity. Most impressive in this regard was developer James Rouse of Columbia, Maryland. Rouse saw adequate dwellings for low-income families as necessary for a balanced and healthy community. One of his main goals in Columbia was income diversity through the provision of housing for blue-collar workers unable to find affordable homes in the area. He recruited planners who were committed to socioeconomic mixing, facilitated the construction of lower-priced housing by writing down the cost of developed land, and made use of certain federal assistance programs designed to help low-income families buy or rent decent homes. He also worked closely with civic groups and individual residents to maintain the credibility of such policies. Columbia's social diversity was emulated in Reston, Virginia, a planned community conceived and initiated by developer Robert Simon in 1962. Simon believed that changes in family structure, age, or financial situation should not force people to move out of the community. When Gulf-Reston, Inc., took over the development, it maintained Simon's commit-
ment to population diversity. The company and other developers built lower-priced dwelling units, financed partly through federal housing-subsidy programs, for elderly people, working-class families, and moderate-income groups.30

This program of income diversity in Reston and Columbia aroused little interest among Irvine executives and planners. They directed most of their attention and energy to broad questions concerning the distribution of population, resources, and institutions. The 1964 plan had proposed a new city of ten thousand acres with a projected population of 100,000 to be created around the University of California campus. Further planning and development activity in the late 1960s convinced them that interest in the central portion of the ranch was greater than originally thought and the goal of orderly development in this area would be better served by greatly expanding the size of the proposed city. They unveiled a new master plan in 1970 for a fifty-three-thousand-acre development with a population of 430,000 by the year 2000. The plan, covering an area twice the size of the city of San Francisco, provided for twenty-four separate residential villages, reserved twenty-four hundred acres for parks and recreation, and suggested numerous sites for elementary and secondary schools. It also proposed a thirty-three-mile network of landscaped environmental corridors for nonresidential use and set aside seventy-five hundred acres for industrial and commercial activity. Political considerations, too, were given close attention. The plan evaluated different jurisdictional alternatives and concluded that the goals and unity of purpose desired for Irvine could be best met with a single municipal-level government. It was expected that the city would be incorporated within five years.31

County planning officials greeted the Irvine scheme with great interest. They had adopted a new countywide program that expanded the usual process of general planning to include economic, physical, and human considerations. The program also emphasized intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of public and private development activity. Irvine’s master plan provided county planners with their first opportunity to apply some of these criteria to proposed suburban development.32 They were particularly concerned with the overdependence on automobile transportation. Company planners, while reserving land for a few bus routes, gave little attention to mass transit and put most of their effort into providing for an efficient flow of auto traffic on local streets and roads.

“The inability of the automobile centered circulation structure to meet the transportation needs of a significant minority, especially the young, the too old, and the low income citizens, impairs the movement of a substantial proportion of the county’s citizens,” the officials stated. “Thus, programs must be developed to meet the overall transportation needs of the county.” They urged the Irvine transit facilities in its proposed

Little attention was also given to the local businesspeople. University concerned with improving the study of open-space needs in the number of proposals for creating open disturbed natural areas, many were heavily on this document, the plans for the environment be added of riding and hiking trails, wetlands and the conservation of prime areas.

Far more disturbing to the plan environment was the company’s quite concerned that dwellings be families whose services would be scheme, however, said nothing housing. Planning officials pointed the county could afford a new area beyond the reach of two-thirds of the plan to utilize federal or housing for lower and middle the planning department’s equally of civil rights activists and represented of their clients resided in the barrio and had low-paying jobs, poor care. One remedy to this depression newly developed suburbs like Irvine white families. “The hand of the planning department’s established nonwhite families to be a large a ten to fourteen percent Chicano has been a resident of Orange County of this mixed population.”33

Class and racial diversity had however. Like other new commu ciated nonwhite families to be a housing market and chose not to into their master plan. “It [Irvine] is a sterile, suburban ghetto,” Alan I
the county." They urged the Irvine Company to consider building mass­

Little attention was also given in the plan to protection of the natural landscape. The planning department invited UCI-Project 21, a group of local businesspeople, university professors, and various public officials concerned with improving the suburban environment, to do an extensive study of open-space needs in the county. Their report contained a number of proposals for creating open-space preserves in shoreline and undisturbed natural areas, many of them on the Irvine Ranch. Drawing heavily on this document, the planners recommended that certain protections for the environment be added to the plan. These included a system of riding and hiking trails, wetlands preservation, additional greenbelts, and the conservation of prime agricultural soils.

Far more disturbing to the planners than the lack of protection for the environment was the company's elitist housing program. The county was quite concerned that dwellings be available for low- and moderate-income families whose services would be needed in the new community. Irvine's scheme, however, said nothing about income diversity and subsidized housing. Planning officials pointed out that only about half the families in the county could afford a new apartment, while single-family houses were beyond the reach of two-thirds of the population. "Unless Irvine deliberately sets out to utilize federal or state programs which enable it to develop housing for lower and middle income families," they observed, "only upper middle and upper income families will be able to live at Irvine." The result could be increased "polarization" in certain residential areas and more "social envy and social strife." Similar concerns were expressed by the planning department's equal-opportunity subpanel, which consisted of civil rights activists and representatives of minority organizations. Most of their clients resided in the barrios and ghettos of the county's older cities and had low-paying jobs, poor housing, and inferior schools and health care. One remedy to this depressing situation was to open portions of newly developed suburbs like Irvine to low- and moderate-income non-white families. "The handwriting is on the wall," subpanel members observed. "Los Angeles has a large Black population, Orange County has a ten to fourteen per cent Chicano population, and the Oriental has long been a resident of Orange County. Thus, the City of Irvine must also share this mixed population."

Class and racial diversity had been of little concern to company officials however. Like other new community builders in California, they considered nonwhite families to be a relatively unimportant segment of the housing market and chose not to incorporate open-occupancy provisions into their master plan. "It [Irvine] will be a white, upper-middle class, sterile, suburban ghetto," Alan Kreditor, a professor of urban and re-
MARTIN J. SCHIESL

Regional planning at the University of Southern California and former consultant to the Irvine Company, bluntly stated. “They will just build a subdivision a little bit better and a whole lot bigger than the last one.”

Other critics singled out Columbia and Reston for special praise because of their commitment to some degree of racial balance. Developers in both communities, backed by local business and civic groups, used nonwhite models in their promotional literature and attracted a substantial proportion of black residents. The black population accounted for 18 percent of Columbia households in 1970, the highest rate for any new American town. Irvine’s Watson saw little chance of racial integration in his community however. “When Columbia started, they ran full-page newspaper ads showing pictures of interracial couples,” he noted. “Back there, that went over great. But if I tried it here, I would scare off every white person I had even the slightest hope of getting.”

A survey of Irvine’s population by a group of urban specialists at Claremont College gave him no reason to worry. It revealed that 95 percent of the 10,500 persons living in the residential villages were white, with blacks and Asians comprising less than 1 percent of the total population. One minority member of the equal-opportunity subpanel attributed this severe imbalance to certain policies prevalent in suburban southern California in general and the Irvine operation in particular. “The creation of the suburbs and their growth is directly related to the process of relegating nonwhite minorities to the rundown core of the cities,” he pointed out. “In the Irvine Plan, as in all those I have heard of, there is implied the idea that ‘quality [natural] environment costs a lot.’ This implication carried to its logical extension means those unable to pay for a quality environment aren’t going to get one.” He and other subpanel members strongly recommended against approval of the master plan on the grounds that it would permit company officials to keep the prices of their homes above what most nonwhite families could afford and would thus foster increased racial segregation in the county.

Coastal development was another serious problem confronting the Irvine Company. The late 1960s saw environmental concerns and issues gain widespread support in California, as elsewhere in the country. Watson, speaking before the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers in 1975, recalled that those proposing planning and controls had in the past taken “a back seat to the growth advocates.” The results of this situation were traffic congestion, polluted air and water, and needless destruction of the natural landscape. The debate in southern Orange County centered on Upper Newport Bay, one of the few remaining large estuaries along the California coast. Irvine executives talked about an extensive development of the shoreline of the interior portion of the bay to include a recreational harbor and adjoining water-oriented residential commu-

nities. Their project, however, de- They agreed to transfer company owned tidelands. A large group with considerable resentment and serious infringement on public access to a natural resource, the club denounced and certain migratory birds.

Irvine Company president Watson, speaking before the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers in 1975, portrayed Sierra Club leaders as irresponsible zealots. His internal environmental movement dedicates to the preservation of the natural landscape for the Board of Supervisors. The county commissioners endorsed the criticism of space and affordable housing for extensive revisions.

THE FIGHT ON

Making things more difficult for the Irvine Company. The late 1960s saw environmental concerns and issues gain widespread support in California, as elsewhere in the country. Watson, speaking before the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers in 1975, recalled that those proposing planning and controls had in the past taken “a back seat to the growth advocates.” The results of this situation were traffic congestion, polluted air and water, and needless destruction of the natural landscape. The debate in southern Orange County centered on Upper Newport Bay, one of the few remaining large estuaries along the California coast. Irvine executives talked about an extensive development of the shoreline of the interior portion of the bay to include a recreational harbor and adjoining water-oriented residential commu-
nities. Their project, however, depended on a land swap with the county. They agreed to transfer company-owned islands on the bay for county-owned tidelands. A large group of local residents greeted the exchange with considerable resentment and charged that the Irvine project would seriously infringe on public access to the bay. The Sierra Club, a highly influential organization of environmentalists and conservationists, added its voice to the chorus of protest. Seeing the bay as an irreplaceable natural resource, the club denounced the project as a threat to marine life and certain migratory birds.\textsuperscript{43}

Irvine Company president William Mason reacted angrily to this opposition. Convinced that the project would be beneficial for the county, he portrayed Sierra Club leaders and their supporters as misguided and irresponsible zealots. His intemperate remarks helped fuel a growing environmental movement dedicated to the preservation of the natural features of the coastal landscape. Some participants entered the 1970 race for the Board of Supervisors on an anti-Irvine Company platform and won election by a fairly wide margin. They immediately voted to rescind the land-exchange agreement in Upper Newport Bay and appointed conservation-minded people to the planning commission. The new commissioners endorsed the criticisms of Irvine's master plan regarding open space and affordable housing and sent the document back to company planners for extensive revisions.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{THE FIGHT OVER INCORPORATION}

Making things more difficult for the company were the territorial ambitions of surrounding cities. The 1950s and early 1960s saw several communities in the county incorporate to protect themselves from encroaching urbanization and annexation threats. Irvine executives faced the same situation in 1969 and 1970. Newport Beach proposed to annex a large portion of the Irvine Industrial Complex; Costa Mesa wanted some of the company's commercial property located near the county airport; and Tustin eyed several hundred acres of prime industrial land on the ranch. Company executives, in response, accelerated their cityhood timetable and called for the incorporation of Irvine as soon as possible. The alternatives, either partition of the planning area by adjacent suburban municipalities or a multiplicity of new jurisdictions, held forth the unpleasant prospect of the abandonment of large-scale development in favor of local, provincial development. Incorporation would also transfer control of development in the affected areas from the county planning agency to a city planning agency that could be expected to work cooperatively with the company in the pursuit of its plans, independent of regional social and environmental considerations.\textsuperscript{45}
These views and expectations found considerable support among the homeowners associations. They believed that incorporation was necessary to preserve the economic viability and territorial integrity of the proposed city. Some thirty associations joined together in the Council of the Communities of Irvine (CCI) to investigate and determine the feasibility of cityhood. Headed by John Burton, a local businessman, CCI worked closely with Irvine Company personnel and prepared an extensive report that included information on public services, tax estimates, and development goals. The report convinced CCI that cityhood was the best choice for Irvine residents. Piecemeal annexations, CCI contended, would allow adjoining towns to usurp the community's tax base and cause a considerable rise in homeowners' taxes. They also claimed that incorporation would reduce the costs of urban services being offered by the county. The alternative of several existing cities could lead to a "patchwork of conflicting jurisdictions" with inconsistent levels of service and taxation. In addition, CCI argued the importance of protecting the "balance and promise" of the Irvine master plan and stressed the supposed advantages of having major land-use decisions made by local authorities rather than by county bureaucrats and officials operating many miles away. All these points, along with some statistical data and boundary maps, were integrated into an incorporation petition drafted jointly by CCI leaders and the Irvine Company. They submitted the petition to the Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in late 1970 and expected that it would be approved without any serious revision or long delay.

Some neighboring cities felt uncomfortable with the proposed incorporation. The Irvine Company had assured them for some time that they could annex certain portions of its undeveloped property. Santa Ana, for instance, claimed nine hundred acres of prime industrial land near the Marine Air Corps Station at El Toro. The boundaries of the new city would cancel this and other annexation agreements. Irvine executives, uneasy over the prospect of continuing opposition to incorporation, met with the leaders of CCI and persuaded them to reduce the proposed boundaries in their petition from fifty-six thousand to nineteen thousand acres. The new borders did not exclude the area claimed by Santa Ana however; and Santa Ana officials decided to oppose the proposed incorporation until the company honored its long-standing annexation agreement with their community.

More troublesome than annexation agreements were the fiscal hardships that could arise for Santa Ana because of the creation of a new suburban municipality. Irvine's residential developments had attracted some middle- and upper-income families from Santa Ana and other older cities in the county. Santa Ana officials worried that incorporation might lure even more of these people from the county, thus important tax revenues needed to support a growing minority of low-income, minority family, and senior citizen households and a rapidly aging population. "If we could share in the economic development of the new city, it would be a fair share of low-income families," City Manager Carl Thornton said, "but there is no such guarantee on the part of the city for Irvine Company officials to take social and environmental problems into consideration.

 Thornton persuaded the city to consult a consulting firm to study and assess the city's financial future. The study said that the new city could represent a drain on values needed to support other cities and the entire county. Thornton argued that the new city could create a rich variety of life styles, income brackets, and good design of a new city could encourage economic growth and balanced urban development. None of these considerations were taken into account by the city commissioners however. After some discussion and examination of the incorporation proposal and surrounding communities, the Board of Supervisors signed a petition amending the incorporation proposal to take into account the concerns of the new city and the surrounding communities. The petition was signed by two and a half percent of the property owners in the area's property owners, including the Irvine Company officials. After receiving the petition, the City of Irvine voted four to one to approve the incorporation of the new city, thus ending the "economic degradation" of the old city. The new city was incorporated in 1971, with the election of a new mayor and city council. Some local opposition to incorporation by the City of Irvine (FACT), a group of several dozen residents of Irvine, was unsuccessful.
lure even more of these people from their community and deprive it of important tax revenues needed to finance services for a growing population of low-income, minority families. The city in 1970 contained 68 percent of the county's black population and 30 percent of its Mexican American residents. "If we could be assured that Irvine would take care of its fair share of low-income families, we would have no position on incorporation," City Manager Carl Thornton stated in January 1971. "But there is no such guarantee on record and we would wind up at the mercy of people with no direct interest in the problem."

Thornton persuaded the city council to hire a prominent Chicago consulting firm to study and assess the impact of incorporation on the county in general and on Santa Ana in particular. Its report confirmed his anxieties about the cityhood proposal. "A city of Irvine could capture virtually all of the major new tax resources to be created in the county," said the report, "and at the same time reject groups and activities that represent a drain on values or resources." The Irvine area, however, also possessed "great potentials" which could be used for the benefit of neighboring cities and the entire county. "The size, newness, economic base, and good design of a new city could provide an environment in which a rich variety of life styles, income groups, and activity are accommodated in truly balanced and compatible ways," the report pointed out. It called for Irvine Company officials to take increased responsibility for areawide social and environmental problems and urged that their master plan be amended to match county policies regarding affordable housing, mass transportation, and open-space reserves.

None of these considerations weighed heavily with the LAFCO commissioners however. After some debate over the economic impact of the new city on surrounding communities, they voted three to two in favor of the incorporation proposal and sent written notice of their action to the Board of Supervisors. The next step required that petitions for cityhood be signed by 25 percent of the property owners in the area proposed for incorporation. CCI members, with the help of City of Irvine Now (COIN), a group of several dozen residents, circulated incorporation forms among subdivision communities on the ranch and signed up 67 percent of the area's property owners, including the top executives of the Irvine Company. After receiving the petitions, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on Irvine's incorporation at which Santa Ana officials charged that the new city would hoard valuable industrial land and contribute to the "economic degradation" of their community. The board, however, voted four to one to approve the municipal boundaries and authorized an election in the proposed city at the end of 1971.

Some local opposition to incorporation soon surfaced. Forum Against Cityhood Today (FACT), a group of homeowners attracted to the area by
various amenities, held that the community's existing tax base was not sufficient to support an independent city. They predicted a large increase in property taxes for financing municipal services. FACT also found fault with the Irvine master plan and pointed out that it gave no attention to serious environmental problems such as air pollution and flood control.52

Meanwhile, CCI and COIN conducted a vigorous campaign in which they talked glowingly about the alleged virtues of local autonomy and self-determination. Irvine Company executives made available to them space in their weekly newspaper, the Irvine World News, and time on a local television station owned by the company. Both organizations proclaimed in numerous articles and television speeches that cityhood would deliver Irvine homeowners from the supposed bad influence of Santa Ana and the county government. They also held that the new city could offer one of the lowest tax rates among California municipalities and provide a higher level of public services and facilities. Irvine residents were sufficiently impressed. They approved incorporation by a margin of two to one in December 1971.53

THE FIGHT OVER GROWTH

Coincident with the cityhood vote was an election for Irvine's first five-member council. The central issue in the campaign was the Irvine Company master plan for the future growth and development of the area. Irvine executives financed and strongly promoted several candidates. Among them was Burton, the local businessman who had been a leading figure in the incorporation drive. Burton strongly supported the Irvine plan mainly on the grounds that it would assure an orderly and productive environment, and he pledged to secure the adoption of the scheme without any major changes.54 Running against him and other company-backed candidates were several persons affiliated with the Irvine Tomorrow organization. It consisted mostly of upper-middle-class activists who shared a new environmental philosophy described by historian Carl Abbott in his major work on postwar sunbelt cities as “quality-of-life liberalism.” The Irvine Company, like other new community builders, did not always come through on its promises regarding parks, greenbelts, and other amenities.55 Irvine Tomorrow leaders worried that the public would not have permanent access to recreational land and cared deeply about the preservation of the natural environment. The group was also concerned with the lack of population balance and diversity. They were most bothered by the inability of local residents to affect private planning and to control or slow down the pace of community development. Irvine Tomorrow candidates stuck mostly to this issue and conducted highly effective, door-to-door campaigns. Especially candid and persuasive was Gabrielle Pryor, a member of the owners' association. Pryor expressed environmental elements of the Irvine plan for fair housing, and vowed that could put the community on other Irvine Tomorrow candidates. “All Southern California Irvine is fulfilled,” reported the election. “If projections are correct, it is More important, it has the charm created here.”56

The new council quickly took a moratorium on all company master plan projects. The Irvine Company established a planning commission and environmentalists was Wesley Marx, a visiting lecturer at California at Irvine. Marx quested Company master plan and won another upper-class suburb with. The council hired the consulting firm of the other commissioners. In the 1960s did the master plan for different parts of the country, in miles south of San Francisco. Joy number of people from local expressed ideas and views with the professions. Out of the activity came Newport, its sphere of influence, and a city, its sphere of influence. and projected a population of 337,000 people. Maximum urban with a projected population of 337,000 people. Maximum urban with a projected population of 337,000 people.

The plan also established government. Particular attention was given to attractively grouped community system of bicycle, hiking, and e
Gabrielle Pryor, a member of the board of directors of a local homeowners' association. Pryor expressed strong reservations about the environmental elements of the Irvine Company master plan, pledged support for fair housing, and vowed to oppose certain large-scale projects that could put the community “on the road to bad growth.” She and two other Irvine Tomorrow candidates, along with Burton, won seats on the council. “All Southern California will be watching to see if the promise of Irvine is fulfilled,” reported the Los Angeles Times shortly after the election. “If projections are correct, it could become the county's biggest city. More important, it has the chance to be a better city than any other created here.”

The new council quickly took advantage of this opportunity. It voted a temporary moratorium on all construction in the city and told the Irvine Company to expect major revisions in its master plan. The council also established a planning commission and brought in a group of conservationists and environmentalists to staff it. Most outspoken in the group was Wesley Marx, a visiting lecturer in social ecology at the University of California at Irvine. Marx questioned the basic premises of the Irvine Company master plan and wondered whether the county could afford another upper-class suburbia with a projected population of 430,000. The council hired the consulting firm of Wilsey and Ham to help him and the other commissioners prepare land-use plans for the city. Wilsey and Ham in the 1960s did the master planning for several new communities in different parts of the country, including Foster City, located twenty-five miles south of San Francisco. Joining them in the Irvine project were a number of people from local homeowners' associations. The council placed them on several committees and encouraged them to share their ideas and views with the professional planners.

Out of the activity came the Irvine general plan in 1973. It covered the city, its sphere of influence, and a ten-thousand-acre coastal section south of Newport Beach. Three development options were presented in the plan. Option 1 closely followed the proposals of the Irvine Company for a series of villages and activity corridors, with an additional industrial complex and a regional commercial center located at the junction of the San Diego and Santa Ana freeways. It projected a midrange population of 337,000 people. Maximum urbanization was assured in the second option with a projected population of 453,000. Option 3, based on minimum urbanization estimates, reserved all the coastal-hills zone as open space and projected a population of 194,000.

The plan also established goals and policies to guide future development. Particular attention was given to having a range of convenient and attractively grouped community facilities. The plan outlined a circulation system of bicycle, hiking, and equestrian trails to link recreation areas
together. Such a system was expected to reduce dependence on the automobile and provide residents with increased access to recreation land. The plan also reserved various sites for schools, churches, and shopping facilities. More impressive was a concern and support for social diversity. The plan proposed the establishment of an information network that could closely monitor housing developments to be sure they filled the residential needs of all people who worked in the community. The plan also outlined specific procedures for builders to follow so that they provided housing in different price ranges and for different income groups in specific areas of the city.

Irvine Company executives did not quarrel with these particular arrangements. The stinging criticism of their residential projects in 1970 and 1971 had led them to pay increased attention to the middle-income segment of the housing market. Furthermore, the nearby communities of Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo offered many of the same features and conveniences found in Irvine. The place was no longer the only destination in the county for upper-class buyers seeking a planned environment with a wide range of leisure and natural amenities. Accordingly, company executives decided on a policy of allocating a certain number of units in their housing construction program for moderate-income families. They submitted to the planning commission in early 1973 a proposal to provide housing for about eleven thousand people on a 484-acre site to be named the Village of Valley View, 200 acres of which would be developed within the first year. The housing would be for families earning incomes from eight to twelve thousand dollars a year. Included were proposals for 375 apartment units, 504 detached homes, and a townhouse section of 912 units. The planning commission voted in favor of the project with the recommendation that the total number of units be reduced from 1,791 to 1,358 to achieve a lower density.

Homeowners living near the proposed Village of Valley View were not happy with the commission's decision. "In order for integration policies to be implemented successfully, resident support is vital," Burby and Weiss point out. "It is important that residents are aware of the integration goals and if possible, involved in the decisions regarding integration." Neither of these procedures was followed by Irvine Company leaders and city planning officials. As a result, planned development in this case was not the same thing to them as it was to the homeowners in the affected area. These residents and many other Irvine homeowners believed that one of the basic purposes of planning was to minimize the threat that unknown changes would present to their social status and monetary investment. The change most feared by them was the construction of markedly less expensive housing nearby. Their concerns were voiced in several heated hearings held by the council on the proposed project. Some residents argued that the densities were too high, would adversely affect traffic, and incur huge costs for flood control and racial integration. One neighbor was on food stamps in new city for minority transient young adults. In the face of council voted unanimously against

Subsidized housing was an equal opportunity for the Federal Housing Administration and Section 236 rental-supplements by builders and developers in cities. The Irvine Company leaders announced in late 1971 that 235 projects in the city had 236 projects in the city. In March 1973, the council approved the measure that pointed the city in a different direction from its liberal-minded planning committee to develop after moderate-income families. Out of necessity, the council voted to reduce the number of units in the Irvine Company's new 8,900-unit 5,000-unit University Town Center to the city's population constraints. Such a policy, while admirable to meeting the city's responsibility, Irvine Company's industrial parks.
argued that the densities were too high. Others charged that the project would adversely affect traffic and surrounding property values and also incur huge costs for flood control. Still others expressed opposition to class and racial integration. One resident worried that most of his new neighbors would be on food stamps. Another strongly objected to making room in the new city for minority groups, families on welfare rolls, and transient young adults. In the face of all this prejudice and protest, the council voted unanimously against the Valley View project.64

Subsidized housing was an equally troublesome issue for Irvine officials. The Federal Housing Administration Section 235 interest-supplement and Section 236 rental-supplement programs were being extensively used by builders and developers in cities across the nation to increase the supply of decent dwellings for low- and moderate-income families.65 Irvine Company leaders announced in late 1972 that they were considering participation in both programs and hoped to provide a certain amount of low-cost housing in new villages. Their intentions aroused some vigorous debate among members of the council. Burton strongly opposed joining federal housing programs and argued that they were generally unworkable and sometimes disastrous. Recent resident polls in the city, he noted, showed much resistance to housing subsidies, particularly those for low-income groups. Pryor was not impressed. Decrying opposition to subsidized housing as a "socialist bugaboo," she pointed out that the quality and management of 235 and 236 projects in many cities were improving and urged that housing subsidies be actively considered, short of using city tax monies. The council, however, voted three to two against participation in federally assisted housing in March 1973. Shortly afterward, Pryor consulted with the liberal-minded planning commission and helped them organize a study committee to develop alternative ways of providing housing for moderate-income families. Out of the committee's work came a recommendation that pointed the city in the direction of income diversity. They proposed that a certain number of lower-priced rental and sale units be built in large developments. The council, after some debate over density requirements, approved the measure in early 1974. It was first applied to the Irvine Company's new 8,900-unit Woodbridge Village. The council required that 10 percent of the units be moderate-income housing. One year later, they imposed the same income allocation on the company's 5,000-unit University Town Center proposal. Irvine, in the process, became the first city in the county to require that some inexpensive housing be permanently available in residential developments.66

Such a policy, while admirable and long overdue, fell far short of meeting the city's responsibility to the regional housing market. The Irvine Company's industrial parks had lured a large number of manufacturing firms and service businesses from older cities in the county and
other parts of southern California. Many employees could not afford housing and commuted an hour or more to their jobs. This disturbing situation was not of great concern to Irvine city officials however. They generally subscribed to the progrowth philosophy of the Irvine Company and considered large-scale commercial and industrial expansion to be essential to the continued economic health and social cohesiveness of the community. Irvine Company executives made sure the politicians did not change their minds. They lobbied hard for approval of the Irvine Industrial Complex-East (IIC-East), a two-thousand-acre site located just east of the El Toro Marine Air Corps Station. The council voted four to one to approve zoning for the project in early 1975. IIC-East, in combination with the existing western complex, made the company the owner of the largest industrial development in the nation. It was expected that the new project would employ over fifty thousand people and provide tax revenues of ten million dollars a year to the city. Company and city officials regretfully reported that only a small number of workers would find moderate-income housing in the area and saw little chance of any low-income units being built over the next several years.

This bleak announcement aroused much concern among some liberal-minded activists in the community. The continual movement of industry to suburban areas, they pointed out, was creating severe hardships for workers who were not able to afford the costs of extended journeys to work. Backed by the Orange County Fair Housing Council, environmentalist Marx and six other Irvine residents filed a lawsuit against the zoning of the IIC-East site. The suit accused the city of abandoning the principles of its general plan and violating new state regulations regarding affordable housing. Irvine officials, in response, reaffirmed their moderate-income allocations, which applied to five villages. They also adopted incentives for developers to build low-cost housing; these incentives included waivers on density levels and park fees. Marx and the other plaintiffs were not satisfied with these actions. They asked that the Irvine Company provide 644 low-income projects over a ten-year period, regardless of whether state or federal assistance were available. Their request was firmly rejected by city and company officials in 1976.

The following year brought a breakthrough in the housing debate. Following several months of negotiation, a financial consortium outbid the Mobil Corporation and bought out the Irvine Company for $337 million. Among the new owners were shopping-center developer A. Alfred Taubman, Joan Irvine Smith, and Donald L. Bren, a wealthy southern California developer who had conceived and initiated the community of Mission Viejo. They were eager to get IIC-East under way and negotiated an out-of-court accord that was signed by all the parties involved in the housing suit. The Irvine Company agreed to provide 725 low-income units for workers and their families over a six-year period. The accord also committed the Irvine Company to provide off-site improvements such as schools and parks.

These concessions indicated some progress for Irvine residents. The Irvine Company promised that industrial workers made the new IIC-East site available. The Irvine Company would now be responsible for developing a “balanced community” with a mix of all kinds of housing, including low-income units. The Irvine Company must also pay for public off-site improvements such as schools and parks.

The Irvine Company also adopted new legal guidelines and supervisory measures. The Irvine Company would be responsible for monitoring the construction of all kinds of housing. The Irvine Company also had to ensure that the low-income units would be sold rather than leased to tenants.

The Irvine Company also adopted new legal guidelines and supervisory measures. The Irvine Company would be responsible for monitoring the construction of all kinds of housing. The Irvine Company also had to ensure that the low-income units would be sold rather than leased to tenants.
workers and their families over a five-year period in five separate villages. The accord also committed company officials to providing $2.8 million for off-site improvements such as streets, sidewalks, and various utilities.71

These concessions indicated some shift in the development policies of the Irvine Company. The intense controversy over affordable housing for industrial workers made the new owners more receptive than the previous ones to class integration and income diversity. Taubman talked about having a "balanced community" on the ranch and promised construction of "all kinds of housing." He and his colleagues also believed that the company had become too diversified and announced that certain land would be sold rather than leased to reputable building firms. The builders were responsible for developing portions of residential villages under strict guidelines and supervision by company planners and engineers. Little was said about slowing down the pace of development however. Watson had resigned as company president and moved on to a top position at Walt Disney Productions. His replacement was corporate executive Peter Kremer, a long-time business acquaintance of Bren. Kremer had headed a residential-development subsidiary of the Newhall Land and Farming Company, which was responsible for the creation of the new town of Valencia, a high-amenity suburb not unlike Irvine.72 He listened to complaints from local critics that the Irvine development was a perpetuation of aimless California suburban sprawl. His rebuttal emphasized the marketing and financial aspects of new community building. "Sociologists may want them to live that way, but the vast majority of Southern Californians don't like high density urban development," he maintained. "And when you are in business, you have to respond to the market." Kremer told company stockholders that all existing residential projects would be completed and promised a considerable expansion of commercial and industrial construction.73

His assurances might not have been completely in line with the development programs and goals of the city of Irvine. The 1978 council election, in which several candidates vied for two open seats, revolved largely around this crucial matter. Arthur Anthony, former mayor of Irvine, argued strongly in favor of the city's general plan as "one of the best in California" and stressed the need to maintain a healthy balance of commercial, industrial, and residential development. He promised to work cooperatively with Irvine Company directors and continue the implementation of the plan in a "rational and just manner." His support did not extend to the city's fair-housing program however. He pledged firm opposition to any attempt of county and state agencies to force the city to provide additional subsidized housing.74 Larry Agran, a local attorney and active member of various community organizations, presented different views regarding the future growth of Irvine. "The City Council's
present General Plan would cause Irvine to explode in size, doubling to over 100,000 people by 1982,” he pointed out. “This excessive rate of growth threatens our beautiful, uncrowded environment.” He called for some fundamental changes in the general plan and urged extensive use of zoning powers to slow the intense pace of suburban growth, with particular attention to open-space protection. He also argued in favor of increased class integration and talked about getting additional state and federal funding for moderate-income housing. His candidacy attracted considerable support from Irvine Tomorrow, the influential citizens group strongly committed to the preservation of open space. They conducted an effective door-to-door campaign and helped elect Agran to the council. Anthony, backed by local developers and construction companies, won the other seat.75

The elections prompted no major reduction in Irvine’s economic and physical expansion. Anthony expressed concern that the city’s retail business was lagging behind that of surrounding cities and sent a letter to the Irvine Company in which he urged it to build additional commercial facilities. He talked about a serious shortage of furniture, plumbing fixtures, electrical supplies, and other retail goods. Increased commercial development would also provide badly needed sales-tax revenue for various public services. The council in 1980 approved the urban design for the commercial portion of Irvine Center, a 480-acre site located within a triangle created by the intersection of the Santa Ana, San Diego, and Laguna freeways. Irvine Center was to contain several large office buildings, a regional shopping mall, and three hotels. The council also approved company plans for the construction of offices and retail facilities in University Town Center, the Irvine Home and Garden Center, and Woodbridge Village Center.76

Development in Newport Beach proceeded along different and controversial lines. The Irvine Company had leased a large amount of residential land in the city in the 1960s. By the end of the 1970s the rapid rise in Orange County land prices greatly increased the value of the leases. Some four thousand residents in 1981 received rent adjustments called for in their long-standing agreement with the company. They protested vehemently against the increases and pleaded with Irvine directors to sell the land to them at prices well below current market value. Seeing their request as unfair to other tenants on the ranch, the directors offered them a variety of land-purchase plans and rent-reduction packages. Several leaseholders, however, decided to file a lawsuit against the company. Further controversy erupted over the proposed expansion of Newport Center, a financial area. The city council voted in favor of company plans for a three-hundred-room luxury hotel and 200,000 square feet of commercial facilities. Its decision met with much resentment from many Newport Beach residents. Fearful of losing their picturesque community, they organized a citizens’ group and conducted an extensive campaign to get residents a chance to vote on the company directors, uncomfortable with the planned expansion to their other projects in the area and promised a scaled-down version in the future.77

A CHANGE

This agitation over the growth of the leasehold controversy, seriously damaged the Irvine Company. County Supervisor Thomas Agran of Newport Beach, reported that many county residents felt the company to be an “insensitive big corporation” and upset with the organization for its development. Particularly irrate was the agitation over the development of Newport Center, located in a financial area. The company’s plans for a three-hundred-room luxury hotel and 200,000 square feet of commercial facilities met with much opposition from residents. Friends of the Irvine Coast, a citizens organization, opposed the project and promised a scaled-down version in the future.77

The result of all of this criticism and opposition was the fall of 1982. Bren, the company’s chairman of the board of directors, announced that he would “pursue personal business interests.” He resigned as chairman of the board of directors and was succeeded by company president Robinson. Nielsen had served the company for business management in the late 1970s. He joined the executive committee and held the position of vice-president of the company. Nielsen had a good reputation among the company’s many employees, who admired him for his straight talk and his ability to get things done. He was a strong leader who was tough but fair in his dealings with employees. Nielsen’s reputation was a major asset for the company, and he was able to bring a sense of stability to the organization. Nielsen operated in a friendly manner and was known for his conciliatory style. He told a gathering of employees in 1983 that the company was “strong and...
Newport Beach residents. Fearful of increased traffic congestion in their picturesque community, they organized themselves into a number of citizens' groups and conducted an effective referendum campaign to give residents a chance to vote on the Newport Center proposal. Irvine Company directors, uncomfortable over the prospect of continuing opposition to their other projects in the city, scrapped the development plans and promised a scaled-down version if they expanded the center in the future.77

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

This agitation over the growth of Newport Center, coupled with the leasehold controversy, seriously damaged the public image of the Irvine Company. County Supervisor Thomas Riley, whose district included Newport Beach, reported that many of his constituents considered the company to be an "insensitive big corporation." Irvine city officials were also upset with the organization for dragging its feet on certain promised development. Particularly irritating to them was the failure to start a shopping complex in Irvine Center. Making things worse was renewed agitation over the development of ocean property between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach. The company presented a plan to build two ten-story office towers and twenty-one thousand homes on the site and won approval from the Board of Supervisors and the state Coastal Commission. Friends of the Irvine Coast, a conservation organization boasting a membership of two thousand, complained about a serious lack of open-space provisions and filed a lawsuit against the plan in 1981.78

The result of all of this criticism was a major executive shake-up in the fall of 1982. Bren, the company's largest stockholder, joined Taubman as cochairman of the board of directors. Kremer resigned as president to "pursue personal business interests" and was succeeded by Thomas Nielsen, who had a good reputation among local public officials and civic organizations. Nielsen had served as assistant secretary of the Air Force for business management in the late 1960s and had worked in various real estate enterprises for the Newhall Land and Farming Company in the 1970s. He joined the executive ranks of the Irvine Company in 1978 and held the position of vice-president for community development at the time of his appointment to the top post.79

Company tactics and attitudes changed considerably under Nielsen's direction. Kremer had been content to muscle company plans past local residents and treated certain projects on the ranch as feudal fiefdoms. Nielsen operated in a friendly manner and gave priority to flexibility and conciliation. He told a gathering of county and municipal officials in early 1983 that the company was "sincerely concerned with the future of com-
munities" and assured them that it would be more "constructive and cooperative" than it had been in the past. These points were repeated in numerous speeches given to citizen groups and various community organizations. He also made extensive use of public relations managers and instructed them to help explain various proposals to the governments of six cities responsible for different portions of the company’s development activity.  

Less visible but more significant was Bren’s strong dissatisfaction with the company’s general development program. His colleagues on the board of directors, unlike their predecessors, who followed a long-term growth plan and invested heavily in community infrastructure such as improved roads and water facilities, were content to continue the practice of selling land to builders and putting most of the proceeds in the bank. The problem with this policy, Bren complained, was that the company was not sufficiently expanding its investment in income-producing office buildings, shopping centers, and apartments. Worried about the effect of these conditions on his investment, he bought out five members of the 1977 consortium for $500 million and acquired majority ownership of the company in 1983. His takeover led to the drafting of a new, comprehensive plan designed to dramatically increase the pace of development on the ranch. The largest projects included 740,000 square feet of additional office space in the John Wayne Airport area, a two-hundred-acre medical complex on the western edge of Irvine Center, and three new shopping malls in Irvine. Company leaders also proposed to provide in Irvine over a five-year period 3,888 apartments renting for between $500 and $950 a month and 10,000 homes of which 1,700 were to be priced from $80,000 to $150,000. The apartments and moderately priced homes, Nielsen noted, were vital to keeping businesses in the city’s industrial parks. He and other company executives were concerned that many manufacturing firms might leave the area because of a shortage of affordable housing for their workers.

Such ambitious proposals served as the dominant topic in the 1984 council elections in Irvine. Six candidates vied for three open seats. Incumbent David Sills campaigned in support of continual, large-scale building as long as the projects followed the “guidelines and controls” contained in the city’s general plan. David Baker, a local attorney, called for shorter, five-year plans that would allow the city to initiate development programs rather than simply respond to the “Irvine Company’s concerns.” Both candidates endorsed the controversial Proposition A. Drafted by the Orange County Transportation Commission, Proposition A provided for a 1 percent countywide sales tax to finance street and road maintenance, new freeway construction, and the development of a mass-transit system. The centerpiece of the measure was a proposal call-

ing for freeways along the San Juan corridors bordering Irvine. Irvine the ability to sustain growth would endorse the measure. Mary argued strongly against Proposition A, which would bulldoze the remaining quality in the area. Enough went down to defeat by a margin of another term however. Sills, on the other hand, won the elections.

Irvine Company planners at time in getting down to business building permits with a skillful plan. Irvine won approval of certain commonsense improvements was Irvine Spectrum, a technology community near the freeways in Irvine. Helped along by expenditures, Orange County has been adding superior amenities, continued to develop others such as electronic firms, research biotechnical companies. Richard Irvine Industrial Research and Development, the final home of many of these companies, become the key to both the continuing economic prosperity and the firming of Sim’s optimism. Many of the electronic equipment and personnel to Irvine 160 companies with twelve the made to provide hotels, restaurant facilities.

This expansion, along with served as the major issue in the Irvine date. Tom Jones, president of the in favor of continual residential endorsed the proposed San J campaign enjoyed considerable of its employees tirelessly walked substantial financial contributors conducted an equally vigorous need to effectively restrain "excess" in the city’s general plan that we
ing for freeways along the San Joaquin Hills and Foothill transportation corridors bordering Irvine. Irvine Company leaders worried about losing the ability to sustain growth without new transportation facilities and endorsed the measure. Mary Ann Gaido, running for a third term, argued strongly against Proposition A on the grounds that it would allow developers to bulldoze the remaining hills and canyons with "little respect for the environment" and would result in a substantial deterioration of air quality in the area. Enough voters shared her concerns. The measure went down to defeat by a margin of two to one. Gaido lost her bid for another term however. Sills, Baker, and another pro-growth candidate won the elections.82

Irvine Company planners and public relations experts wasted little time in getting down to business with the council. They lobbied for various building permits with a skillful blend of deference and determination and won approval of certain commercial and industrial schemes. Especially impressive was Irvine Spectrum, a twenty-two-hundred-acre business and technology community near the junction of the Santa Ana and San Diego freeways in Irvine. Helped along by a boom in federal aerospace and military expenditures. Orange County, with its high-quality labor force and superior amenities, continued to attract a large number of growth industries such as electronic firms, research-and-development enterprises, and biotechnical companies. Richard Sim, president of the newly formed Irvine Industrial Research and Development Division, saw Spectrum as the final home of many of these businesses. He expected the project to become the key to both the company’s financial future and the county’s continued economic prosperity.83 Developments in 1985 and 1986 confirmed Sim’s optimism. Many industrial concerns requiring additional space as the result of opening new subsidiaries moved most of their equipment and personnel to Irvine Spectrum. The complex housed over 160 companies with twelve thousand employees. Plans were also being made to provide hotels, restaurants, and other supportive commercial facilities.84

This expansion, along with the company’s numerous other projects, served as the major issue in the Irvine council elections in 1986. One candidate, Tom Jones, president of the Irvine Chamber of Commerce, argued in favor of continual residential and industrial construction and firmly endorsed the proposed San Joaquin Hills and Foothill freeways. His campaign enjoyed considerable support from the Irvine Company; many of its employees tirelessly walked precincts on Jones’s behalf and solicited substantial financial contributions.85 Incumbent Agran and his supporters conducted an equally vigorous campaign in which they stressed the need to effectively restrain “excessive growth” and proposed basic changes in the city’s general plan that would reduce increasing residential densities
and guarantee permanent preservation of certain hillsides and farmlands. Agran also argued against new freeways in the Irvine area as potential sources of additional congestion and "unbearable air pollution" and advocated the withdrawal of the city from the Joint Powers Agreement as soon as possible. The agreement was entered into by Irvine and surrounding cities to oversee the design and financing of the Foothill, San Joaquin Hills, and Eastern freeways. Similar views and proposals were voiced by Ed Dornan, a member of the city planning commission. Dornan criticized the council for some "hasty and unwise development" in certain parts of the city. He promised to work aggressively for open-space preservation, spoke in favor of widening existing freeways to relieve traffic snarls, and called for the enactment of new ordinances designed to reduce the rate of physical growth to manageable proportions. Irvine voters, concerned that their pleasant community might become one more smoggy, congested suburb on the road between Los Angeles and San Diego, elected Dornan and Agran to the council by wide margins. They and incumbent Ray Catalano, a professor of urban planning at the University of California at Irvine, composed, for the first time in the council's history, a slow-growth majority. 

Irvine Company leaders greeted the new council with resignation and a spirit of cooperation. "We read the election outcome in Irvine as an expression of public support for controlled growth," Nielsen told a local newspaper journalist. He reported that the company was willing to work with the slow-growth coalition and hoped to assist them in furthering "public understanding" on open space, transportation, and other development issues. The actions of the new council left little room for any consultation or cooperation however. It voted in favor of changes in the city's general plan to rezone hundreds of acres of land as permanent open space. It also withdrew Irvine from the consortium of cities collecting fees for the construction of three freeways until a citywide vote could be held on the matter.

Further disappointment for Irvine Company executives came over their commercial property in Newport Beach. They won council approval of a proposed $300 million expansion of Newport Center to include three office towers, homes, shops, and cultural facilities. A large number of residents greeted the plan with considerable resentment and organized a citizens group called Gridlock to protest the company's actions. Charging that the office towers would add forty thousand car trips a day to already congested roads and further transform the community into an overcrowded urban center, Gridlock successfully circulated a petition calling for a referendum on the expansion as an amendment to the city's general plan. The Irvine Company vigorously promoted the plan and spent $100,000 on public-opinion surveys, campaign brochures, and television advertisements. Newport Beach gestion and seeing no major bention, soundly defeated the propo

Coastal planning proceeded a for Newport Center. Irvine Cot 1981 lawsuit against their origin not make enough money for the to shelf the plan and met with Irvine Coast and other conserva native building proposals. Out o for the development of a ten-th rty just north of Laguna Beach courses, and twenty-six hundred site as open-space preserves to Supervisors unanimously adopt for future coastal development. mentalists appeared before the prove a development agreene changes for twenty years. It req million for road improvements the construction of a fire station the area. Carol Hoffman, a men hailed the coastal arrangement clared that developers were fin upront.

Slow-growth advocates in Or California did not share her se tions of traffic flow, open-space nvinced them that big developer profits rather than environme make any fundamental chan They were also greatly disapp county elected officials and fau power to alleviate growing trafi of natural terrains. Their critic various slow-growth proposals

Orange County's controvers y proposal. Drafted by Orange C property owners, environment politicians, Measure Aprohib moved at speeds slower than th hours on roads between the freeway, state highway, or majo
designers. Newport Beach voters, fearful of increased traffic congestion and seeing no major benefits to their community from the expansion, soundly defeated the proposal.88

Coastal planning proceeded along more hospitable lines than did plans for Newport Center. Irvine Company executives had not forgotten the 1981 lawsuit against their original plan. They also believed that it would not make enough money for the company.89 Consequently, they decided to shelve the plan and met with representatives of the Friends of the Irvine Coast and other conservation groups to discuss and evaluate alternative building proposals. Out of the talks came a comprehensive scheme for the development of a ten-thousand-acre stretch of oceanfront property just north of Laguna Beach. The plan called for four hotels, two golf courses, and twenty-six hundred homes. It also set aside 76 percent of the site as open-space preserves to include parks and trails. The Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the plan in 1987 as the county’s guide for future coastal development. The following year a coalition of environmentalists appeared before the supervisors and persuaded them to approve a development agreement to protect the project from land-use changes for twenty years. It required that the Irvine Company pay $22.7 million for road improvements and contribute about $2 million toward the construction of a fire station, police facilities, and a public library in the area. Carol Hoffman, a member of the company’s board of directors, hailed the coastal arrangements as a “very thoughtful balance” and declared that developers were finally “seeing how to include the community upfront.”90

Slow-growth advocates in Orange County and other parts of southern California did not share her sentiments. Ten years of debate over questions of traffic flow, open-space preservation, and density levels had convinced them that big developers, with their eyes primarily on lucrative profits rather than environmental integrity, could not be relied on to make any fundamental changes in their land-use policies and programs. They were also greatly disappointed with the performance of city and county elected officials and faulted them for not using enough regulatory power to alleviate growing traffic congestion and unnecessary destruction of natural terrains. Their criticisms and frustration found expression in various slow-growth proposals that reached the ballot in 1987 and 1988.

Orange County’s controversial Measure A was the most far-reaching proposal. Drafted by Orange County Tomorrow, a coalition of affluent property owners, environmental activists, and liberal and conservative politicians, Measure A prohibited any new construction where traffic moved at speeds slower than thirty to thirty-five miles per hour at peak hours on roads between the proposed development and the nearest freeway, state highway, or major artery. It also required developers to set
aside an increased amount of land for parks. As expected, the initiative met with strong opposition from building firms, the Irvine Company, and other development companies in the region. They spent two million dollars on direct-mail brochures, personal phone calls to homeowners, and strategically placed highway billboards. Measure A, they charged, would halt most construction, greatly increase the cost of housing, and eliminate many jobs in various areas. Orange County voters were sufficiently convinced. They rejected the proposition by a comfortable margin.91

The 1988 elections in Irvine, however, clearly indicated that rapid suburban growth would remain the dominant issue in South County public affairs. A gran, promising increased regulation of certain development projects, won the city’s first election for mayor, while three council seats went to slow-growth candidates.92 Irvine Company executives could also expect close scrutiny and criticism of their development activities on other parts of the ranch. The postwar decades saw the company, equipped with a remarkable amount of planning expertise and technical skills, transform a vast agricultural landscape into a postsuburban complex organized around a number of distinct centers, portions of which lie within the boundaries of several incorporated cities. These jurisdictions continue to be protective of their turf and work to advance their own economic and social welfare.

The toughest challenge for the Irvine Company is to modify its preoccupation with private profit and to help create a consensus that can transcend such partisan interests and deal with serious regional problems such as aimless commercial sprawl, maddening traffic congestion, and random destruction of natural landscapes. An equally disturbing problem is that much of the housing provided by the company and other South County developers, while available to a limited number of middle-income people, remains beyond the reach of most low-income workers and their families. This lack of population balance deserves the same degree of concern as environmental health and preservation.

One important step in the right direction is the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee formed by the Board of Supervisors to develop a countywide growth-management plan. The committee welcomes the advice and proposals of municipal officials, civic leaders, and representatives of the Irvine Company and other business organizations in the region. In a position paper presented to the committee, the company stated:

Sound growth management requires an ongoing partnership between the developer, governments, and communities to resolve competing and sometimes conflicting public policy goals. We hope the result of your Committee’s efforts will be a growth management process that accommodates new growth in a manner that . . . insures rates and types of growth that are adequate to meet the housing, cultural needs of the county.93

Such expectations can be seen in the development industry, which has demonstrated form of metropolitan sets the region’s economic and social and other corporate organizations work cooperatively to relieve future quality of life for all people County.

3. Ibid., 104-10, 120-22.
adequate to meet the housing, employment, economic development, and cultural needs of the county.93

Such expectations can be seen as additional confirmation of the important fact that the Irvine Company, along with other leading members of the development industry, has brought into existence a highly deconcentrated form of metropolitan settlement that places enormous strains on the region’s economic and social resources. The ability of the company and other corporate organizations, citizens’ groups, and public officials to work cooperatively to relieve these strains will greatly determine the future quality of life for all people who work and live in southern Orange County.

NOTES


3. Ibid., 104–10, 120–22.


41. Orange County Planning Department, Irvine General Plan, 17-18.


88 MARTIN J. SCHIESL

60. Ibid., pt. 2, 1, 3, 7; pt. 4, 10–13.
67. Welles, "Graying of Orange County," 28. Two years after the council required the building of inexpensive housing, a survey of housing opportunities by an Anaheim firm found that 90 percent of individuals working in Irvine lived elsewhere. Envia, Inc., Housing Demand/Preference Study for the City of Irvine, August 1976, Government Publications Files, UCI, 54.
68. Wong, "Irvine's Housing Battle.
72. Quoted phrases in Forest Kimler and Art Barrett, "Heiress Vows No Fragmentation of Irvine Ranch," Santa Ana Register, 27 July 1977; Leslie Berk-


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