to south to a staggering 110 miles. This growth has not been evenly distributed. In 1998, growth in Atlanta's suburbs was 100 times the growth in the city. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Atlanta's property taxes increased 22 percent, vehicle miles traveled jumped 17 percent, and ground-level ozone, measured by number of days with unhealthy concentrations in the ambient air, rose 5 percent (Nelson, 2000; U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000; Bullard et al., 2000; Benfield et al., 1999).

1.3 The Meaning of Sprawl

Sprawl contributes to loss of land and more environmental degradation. Between 1992 and 1997 the loss of farmland in the U.S. accelerated. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Inventory for farmland lost shows a significant increase in suburban sprawl during the 1990s. During those 5 years in the mid 1990s, we lost 11.2 million acres worth of farmland and other open spaces to sprawl. This means the annual average rate of loss is 2.2 million acres. The total land lost to sprawl was 25 million acres in the 15-year period from 1982 to 1997 alone (USDA, 1997).

Perhaps sprawl is the American Dream, and perhaps any problems with it are easy to fix. There is plenty of land left in the United States, and congestion would go away if we would just build more roads. Wal-Mart and SuperTarget respond to our desire for convenience, and hold out the promise of everything we might need, in one place, often available 24 hours a day, with easy access. Further, sprawling development patterns are the result of the free market responding to people's true desires. Including the desire for a single-family residence and a patch of green. Further, people participate through neighborhood associations and through voting on bond issues and for local office holders. If more people do not participate, perhaps that is because they are satisfied with the state of things.

Perhaps, but I think not. This version of the American Dream is what Benjamin called a "phantasmagoria." The phantasmagoria is a deceptive image intended to dazzle and amaze; a thing which appears as itself while simultaneously hiding itself. (Benjamin, 1999) We have tract mansions and suburban subdivisions as key to making a home and a place that is so like others as to be placeless and is often only inhabited for a few years. We purchase individual vehicles as the key to mobility in order to sit in traffic on the freeway. We build gated communities as the key to security, and we fear the remainder of the city and leave it to fulfill our fears. All of these offer and undermine what they promise. And, these commodities remain, as they were for Benjamin, phantasmagorias – the "century's magic images" (Benjamin, 1996). Just as for Benjamin's Paris the 19th century was a nightmare from which the city needed to awaken, so now we live within the dream of both 19th, i.e., early suburbs, rapid westward expansion of the country, and 20th centuries, i.e., the American century, with booming economic and military might.

These phantasmagorias are also fantasy versions of citizenship. They are perhaps consistent with a highly formal account of citizenship realized primarily through

voting activity and consumption in pursuit of a narrow notion of self-interest. Narrow because a fuller sense of self and hence of self-interest would recognize the poverty of this model of citizenship and human living in which there is little connection to people or to place. But, the perpetuation of this very model as dream and ideal cuts against this recognition of a larger self-interest and citizenship.

Further, we have some evidence that the trajectory of sprawl is neither sustainable nor desired. 1998 and 2000 state-wide polls in Colorado found that 45% of citizens thought that addressing growth and transportation problems are the most pressing issues facing the state (Ciruli Associates, 2000). A 2001 poll by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration found that over 60% favor sidewalks, mass transit and bikeways, and fewer than 40% favored building more roads (Federal Highway Administration, 2001). Numerous national publications have examined the growth of suburban "mega-churches" as responses to the isolation and lack of community found in most U.S. suburbs.

2 Some Responses: New Urbanism and Civic Environmentalism

2.1 New Urbanism

The New Urbanism movement is a response to the out-of-control development of the American suburban landscape. Its founding figures, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberg, have embraced commercial residential development opportunities like Celebration and Seaside, Florida, with a moral fervor. Hoping to use market forces to their advantage, Duany has said, we must "attack [the] enemy on [its] terms" and, as Plater-Zyberg has said, "improve the world with design, plain good old design" (The Congress for New Urbanism, 2005; NewUrbanism.org, 2005; Duany, 2000; Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, 1997).

New Urbanism encourages the construction and renovation of diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities using the same components as conventional development. But rather than creating more sprawl, New Urbanism proposes to combine these elements in a more integrated fashion, bringing forth complete communities. These New Urbanist communities contain housing, work places, shops, entertainment, schools, parks, and other public facilities essential to everyday life. Further, all of these elements are within easy walking distance of each other. Rather than highways and roads, New Urbanism promotes the increased use of trains and light rail. In the last 20 years, urban living has again become desirable to a growing segment of the U.S. populace, in part because core urban areas are more dense, and have many of the characteristics New Urbanism hopes to foster. As of 2005, there are over 500 New Urbanist projects planned or under construction in the United States alone, half of which are in historic urban centers.