

Indeed, we now wonder how communication technology might revolutionize our ways of living, and what effect it might have on conventional urban form. We can now shop with the click of a mouse. But will that obviate construction of new shopping malls? Will e-commerce lead to the closing of older, languishing shopping centers and malls? What will be the alternative uses of such spaces? If more and more workers stay home and telecommute, will that lead to a stronger sense of localities and local public spaces? Will it lead to the revival of the community main streets and third places?

The communication technology revolution may also presage other developments that could further negate public life and the public realm. The cyborgian life might lead to greater isolation, withdrawal, and anomie. It may lead to what former Labor Secretary Robert Reich (1991) had referred to as the secession of the successful, now to an analogous city in cyberspace. Seemingly, the duality of a public city of the poor and dependent population and a private city of the successful will continue on the two sides of the digital divide.

Epilogue

I would not want to end this essay with the impression that public initiatives are totally dead as far as public space is concerned. This is not quite the case. It seems that throughout the United States, scattered efforts are underway to create new open space under local, state, and federal initiatives of various sorts. Certainly the economic growth and prosperity of the 1990s has helped to finance such initiatives. The 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and more recently the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, authorized by Congress in 1998 to fix America's aging infrastructure, have created new opportunities to transform inner-city transportation rights of way for productive public space. Boston's "Big Dig" is a case in point. Putting the city's central artery underground will create 27 acres of new ground space in a premier downtown location, of which three quarters or about 20 acres will remain open. Earlier, San Francisco created major waterfront promenades and access by demolishing the Embarcadero Freeway. The Freeway Park that Seattle built in the 1970s to link the Capitol Hill neighborhood to the downtown is another example of a creative public project to produce new open space over transportation infrastructure.

Similarly, public efforts to create parks and open spaces in conjunction with safe neighborhoods or land and water conservation programs continue, and seemingly are gaining strength. A detailed review of such programs currently existing at the federal and local levels is not possible within the scope of this article. But the recent passage of Proposition 12 in California that allows the State to raise \$2.1 billion through general obligation bonds to spend on the acquisition, development, and protection of new and existing cultural, natural, and recreational areas is a case in point. In the metropolitan areas of California, the State's \$854-million budget for the first year has provided a major boost for parks and recreation projects. Whether such initiatives will spread throughout the country to signal a new revival of civic and public values remains to be seen. Let's hope they do.

Notes

1. According to Southworth and Parthasarathy (1996) large quantities of open space are in public ownership in suburbia, but not all of it is accessible to the public. It belongs to public utilities, water districts, or is simply not suitable for development. They note also that public space is often used for ornamental or aesthetic purposes.
2. In most instances these were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.
3. S. B. Sutton (1971), editor of Olmsted's writings, comments, "Olmsted believed, with his contemporaries, in the spiritual progress of man. As a landscape architect he tried, above all, to civilize the city; his parks simulated nature in response to the needs of an urban population" (p. 1). For a discussion on Olmsted's views implicit in his open space plan for Los Angeles, see Hise and Deverall (2000).
4. In fact, sports and games typically enjoyed by the urban working class and various ethnic groups were overtly discouraged from these urban spaces (Cranz, 1989). Scholars of modernity would also point out today that while women were considered an essential element of the family functions of the pleasure garden, they were probably not expected to be there on their own, as in any other public spaces (Fraser, 1993; Friedberg, 1994).
5. The Radburn Plan itself represented an attempt to organize housing around a public realm of a unified system of parks and open spaces. In 1928 Stein (quoted in Parsons, 1999) wrote:

The backbone of all our cities and towns has been the highways, the means of getting from place to place. In this New Town the backbone of the community will be the parks. All houses will face on gardens. Every child will be able to walk to school without crossing a single road. Every house will be within a minute's walk of a park as wide as a New York City block. Here the little tots may amuse themselves in the sand. Here the