

and tunnels, the outcome approaches the condition of a suburban mall. But the city cannot compete with the suburb by becoming more suburban, since it has no hope of providing the same amount of convenient parking and open space.

Designing the city around automobiles has yet to be widely recognized as misguided, and pedestrians are losing the battle against the car on a daily basis. New York City has recently made it an infraction for pedestrians to cross certain midtown streets where vehicles turn onto one-way avenues. Meanwhile, in the name of pedestrian safety, traffic engineers in Los Angeles are erasing the city's crosswalks. They are taking this approach because "more pedestrians are killed in crosswalks than in unmarked intersections," ignoring that the streets with crosswalks are wider and faster. It is troubling that most efforts meant to "improve" pedestrian safety end up limiting pedestrian access.

That said, the solution is not the removal of cars from the city—far from it. The most vital American public spaces are full of cars. But these cars move slowly, due to the appropriate design of the thoroughfares. Just as in residential neighborhoods, city streets must be narrow—lanes should be ten feet wide, not twelve—with on-street parallel parking to protect the pedestrian. To make life easier for both walkers and drivers, streets should be two-way (typically one lane in each direction), since one-way streets contribute to speeding and make it difficult to find one's way around. Traffic lights must have short cycles, to avert both driver and pedestrian frustration.

The taming of the automobile is a necessary but not sufficient precondition to pedestrian life. Sidewalks must be lined with continuous building frontage, with few blank walls, parking lots, or other gaps that undermine the spatial definition of the street. Because there are never enough high-quality frontages for all streets to satisfy these criteria, the city may need to engage in what could be called *urban triage*. In pedestrian crises, as in battle, the worst-off must sometimes be sacrificed for the greater good. In the city, this means designating an "A/B" street grid. "A" streets must maintain a high standard of spatial definition and pedestrian interest, while "B" streets can be assigned to the lower-grade uses—the parking lots, garages, muffler shops, and fast-food drive-throughs. The A streets must be organized in a continuous network so that the pedestrian experience is uninterrupted. A pedestrian will cross unattractive side streets when walking on a street that provides an otherwise continuous urban fabric of buildings fronting the sidewalk with doors and windows.

The need for a clear A/B hierarchy is particularly evident in newer cities such as Dallas. Its downtown has at least a dozen city blocks of excellent pedestrian quality. Unfortunately, no two are adjacent to each other. A person cannot walk more than four hundred feet in any direction without being confronted by automobile-dominated banality. By attempting to be universally excellent, most cities are universally mediocre. The A/B grid is eminently practical because it recognizes that many cities are beggars. Desperate for the twenty-five jobs, they will accept onto their Main Street a McDonald's with an iridescent plastic jungle gym in front and a drive-through at the side. With an A/B grid, a city can give McDonald's a choice: behave in a responsible way—with doors and windows on the sidewalk and the drive-through to the rear—and you get a site on Main Street; behave in your standard boorish suburban way, and it's off to the access road with you.

One of the most compelling reasons for an A/B grid is the demand for parking lots and garages, which must not be allowed to erode the network of A streets. But even well-placed parking, in excess, can be a bad thing. Like automobile use, parking rarely costs the driver as much as it should, and is thus a *free good*. For this reason, there is always an outcry for more parking, just as there is always a demand for more lanes of traffic. Building additional parking lots causes more people to drive downtown, which requires the construction of more roadway, creating demand for yet more parking lots. The question is not how much parking is enough but how many of its buildings a city must level before it gives up trying to meet the demand.

When it comes to parking, every city must eventually answer two questions: Do new buildings have to provide their own parking, and where should that parking go? Most cities answer both of these questions incorrectly. A commitment to suburban standards of parking is a commitment to a second-class transit system used by virtually no one but the poor, since everyone else will drive. Further, most cities require new and renovated buildings to provide their own parking on site. This is probably the single greatest killer of urbanism in the United States today. It prevents the renovation of old buildings, since there is inadequate room on their sites for new parking; it encourages the construction of anti-pedestrian building types in which the building sits behind or hovers above a parking lot; it eliminates street life, since everyone parks immediately adjacent to their destination and has no reason to use the sidewalk; finally, it results in a low density of