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Industry and the smart city

ZELDA BRONSTEIN

These days, U.S. city planning exudes an audacious air. The suburban sprawl that has dominated U.S. development since the Second World War is under assault from a multitude of policy makers and activists bent on protecting the environment and revitalizing city life. Rallying to varied watchwords—smart growth, new urbanism, sustainable development, green development, livable communities, traditional neighborhood development—the insurgent urbanists share key goals: mixing land uses, raising density, and ramping up public transit. In place of auto-centric, single-use districts reached only via traffic-choked roads, they put housing, shops, and offices close to each other and to ample transit options. Given such options, they contend, people readily abandon their cars and walk or bike to and from work or to the bus, train, trolley, ferry, or light or heavy rail that will carry them to and from work. Only “densification” and “infill”—building at higher densities, preferably in already settled areas—can provide mass transit with the substantial number of riders it needs to be financially feasible. The widespread realization of this scenario, say its proponents, will not only revive urban America; it will benefit the environment at large. By drawing people out of their private vehicles, compact, transit-oriented development will reduce traffic congestion, cut down air pollution, and diminish global warming; by concentrating new construction in city centers, it will protect farmland and open space from being further devoured by suburbia.

Of all the constituencies embracing this vision, smart growth has the highest visibility, the broadest agenda, the farthest institutional reach, and the greatest political leverage. Since 1996, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Urban Economic Development Division has

funded the Smart Growth Network. The network’s nearly forty partners include environmental groups; historic preservation organizations; professional associations; developers; real estate interests; and local, state, and government entities. One partner, Smart Growth America, is itself a coalition of more than one hundred national, state, and local organizations, including the Sierra Club, the Congress for the New Urbanism, the American Farmland Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the American Planning Association. Working both together and independently, these groups sponsor numerous conferences, tours, expositions, focus groups, forums, publications, and research projects. They vigorously lobby every level of government. A copious literature ranging from books to blogs disseminates smart growth’s principles, showcases its success stories, critiques its opponents, and publicizes its latest undertakings. Smart growth is now a curricular staple at the nation’s best planning schools. Most important, in the past two decades thousands of development projects that meet smart growth specifications have been completed.

For a movement that’s just twenty years old, smart growth has compiled an impressive résumé. That résumé, however, is not as impressive as its adherents would like. What others regard as a profound achievement—say, the passage in September 2008 of California’s first-in-the-nation law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by curbing sprawl—they’re likely to deem a mere step, albeit a big one, in the right direction. Appraising the new law, prominent planner and smart growth advocate William Fulton notes that, at bottom, it’s about controlling air pollution, not mandating comprehensive growth management or land use reform.

"It's an incremental change," he writes, "not a revolution." Indeed, to accomplish its goals, the smart growth movement must overcome formidable obstacles: the huge extent of existing sprawl, the political clout of the highway lobby, the recalcitrance of unreconstructed builders and lenders, the local opposition often elicited by the prospect of increased density, and the abiding desire of many Americans to live in a single-family house with a yard and a garage.

In the name of urban revitalization and environmental protection, smart growth defies powerful interests and entrenched attitudes. But it scarcely challenges the status quo across the board. On the contrary, smart growth abets one of the most debilitating phenomena to have beset American cities in the past half-century: deindustrialization. This move is never openly avowed; "postindustrial" is not in the smart growth lexicon. The contents of that lexicon, however, indicate that the renovated American metropolis envisioned by its authors has little need of, and thus scant room for, industry. By industry, I mean the production, distribution, repair, and recycling of manufactured goods. None of these activities figures in smart growth's standard inventory of desirable urban land uses. At most, working industrial enterprise merits an occasional passing reference.

But industry does have a role in the smart growth tableau: it's cast as a relic, if not a ruin. At best it takes the form of an empty warehouse suitable for adaptive reuse. More often it appears as a "brownfield," a site that's not only abandoned or "underutilized" but also contaminated and in need of detoxification. In any case, for smart growth advocates, the designated future of an industrial site is redevelopment with a mix of housing, retail, and offices.

The reindustrialization of the American city ought to have a place on the smart growth agenda—and a place near the top at that—if only because sustaining urban industry fends off sprawl. Sprawl busting aside, a vital industrial sector fosters social equity, supports the service economy, propels innovation, and builds economic resilience. Smart growth should be safeguarding urban industry; instead, its land use policies facilitate industrial displacement. The first step in reversing that strategy is to de-

bunk the myth that U.S. manufacturing is obsolete.

In depicting industry as basically irrelevant to twenty-first-century urban America, smart growth perpetuates a common misconception. Yes, the nation's older cities are littered with vacant or underutilized old factory buildings, many in need of remediation. Their presence testifies to a very real, decades-long decline. In 1979 nearly twenty million Americans worked in manufacturing; as of February 2009 that number had fallen to 12.5 million. In the same period, manufacturing as a share of national employment plummeted from 22 percent to 9 percent. Brownfields are just one troublesome legacy of this staggering loss. The disappearance of seven-and-a-half million jobs in a generation has shuttered downtowns, blighted neighborhoods, depleted public coffers, and devastated lives.

But, as we have been hearing lately, though U.S. manufacturing is down, it's far from out. Twelve million five hundred thousand jobs is still a lot of jobs. Add the numbers from other industrial occupations—wholesale trade (5.8 million), transportation and warehousing (4.3 million), waste management and remediation (361,000), repair and maintenance (1.2 million)—and you have 24.1 million jobs amounting to almost one-fifth of the nation's employment.

These jobs are valuable for their quality as well as their quantity. Dollar for dollar, manufacturing generates more economic growth—job creation, investment, and innovation in direct production and elsewhere—than other sectors of the economy. It also does more for social equity. While manufacturing and other industrial jobs increasingly demand technical skills, they rarely require an advanced degree; they thereby offer Americans an unusually accessible career path into the middle class—no small thing in a country where less than 30 percent of the population has graduated from college. (In the inner city, that figure is about 12 percent.) Workers with less education can obtain higher wages, better benefits, and readier advancement in industry than in retail or office employment. "The average manufacturing worker," writes economist Susan Helper in a 2008 report to the Economic Policy Institute, "earns a weekly wage of \$725, 20% higher than the national average."

If the green economy envisioned by Barack Obama comes to pass, industry will also provide millions of American workers with good jobs that improve the environment. According to economist Robert Pollin, the president's economic stimulus plan, passed by Congress in February, directs between \$50 billion and \$140 billion to clean energy investments, "depending on how one counts the patchwork of direct public spending and private-sector initiatives." Five hundred million dollars have been designated for training workers for careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy fields. Pollin marks the modesty of this effort: "[B]uilding a clean-energy economy," he writes, "is the work of a generation and takes only its first baby steps within the two-year Obama stimulus program." At the same time, he hails the measure for defying conventional wisdom and coupling environmental protection with economic opportunity.

Obama's proposal for a "green recovery" overlaps with the agenda of the Apollo Alliance, a national coalition of labor, business, environmental, and social justice leaders. Taking its name from the U.S. space initiative of the 1960s and hoping to emulate the inspiration, investment, and innovation engendered by that project, the Alliance's New Apollo Program calls for a \$500 billion, ten-year investment in a clean-energy economy and the creation of five million "high quality green-collar jobs." "High quality" means jobs that significantly broaden vocational opportunity. "[A] job that improves the environment but doesn't provide a family-supporting wage or a career ladder to move low-income workers into higher-skilled occupations," says one Alliance report, "...is not a green-collar job." A transformed and reinvigorated American manufacturing sector is central to the New Apollo strategy, which looks to U.S. manufacturers to design and deliver high-efficiency vehicles, world-class transit systems, a modern power grid, solar panels, wind turbines, and sophisticated cooling and heating systems—and to do all this in ways that are safe and clean. Last November, the *New York Times* reported that laid-off industrial workers in the rustbelt are beginning to find good jobs with manufacturers of solar panels and wind turbines, some operating out of retooled factories, others out of new plants.

Meanwhile, industrial businesses already furnish the nation's dominant service sector with

indispensable support. This crucial function is overlooked in the effusive tributes paid by Richard Florida and others to the "new economy" and its amenity-rich "consumer cities." Granted, no such encomiums are to be found in the discourse of smart growth, where the phrase "new economy" is almost as scarce as the word "postindustrial." But insofar as the smart metropolis is conceived as a place of residences, offices, and shops with no essential ties to industrial activity, its economy is arguably new. In real cities, however, the old and the new are deeply intertwined.

Their mutual dependency in one exemplary new economy town is graphically illustrated by a 2007 report prepared by the City of San Francisco's Back Streets Businesses Advisory Board. The report includes linkage maps that trace connections between three kinds of service business associated with San Francisco—a sourdough bakery (Boudin), a popular high-end restaurant (Delfina), and a major brokerage (Schwab)—and an array of "back streets" firms. Back street businesses are defined as "small to medium-size industrial or commercial businesses that create products or provide services in manufacturing, wholesale, commercial, logistics, construction, repairs and food processing." The restaurant, for example, gets the ingredients for its dishes from a variety of food wholesalers. The components of its table setting—the tables, chairs, utensils, glasses, napkins, menus, lights, flowers, to-go bags—come from an equally wide-ranging group of local suppliers, producers, and merchants. Similar back streets-Main Street relationships are replicated in urban economies around the country.

Domestic manufacturing also powers the "knowledge-based" economy. It's no accident that, as economist Robert Scott observes, "scientists and engineers make up 9 percent of the manufacturing labor force, a share that is nearly twice as large as in the rest of the economy," or that manufacturing accounts for almost two-thirds of all private research and development in the United States. These figures bear witness to the close ties between inventiveness and fabrication, an intimacy that economists Stephen Cohen and John Zysman highlighted more than two decades ago in *Manufacturing Matters: The Myth of the Post-Industrial Economy*. New proto-

types do not spring full-blown from labs; they need to be tested by users, refined, and tested again. The efficiency and fruitfulness of this process is enhanced by the geographic proximity of researchers and designers to users. That benefit, says geographer Lifang Chiang, helps explain one striking confluence of the old and new economies: the persistence of hundreds of independent machine shops in the San Francisco Bay Area. Manufacturers' proximity to their customers and their customers' suppliers enlarges the "spillovers" of knowledge, networks, and markets that, as economist Joel Popkin has noted, drive innovation in subtle and inimitable ways. The denser the geographic concentration of manufacturing plants, the greater the spillovers.

In any fair portrait, U.S. industry's vital contributions to the nation's economic and social well-being would overshadow scenes of industrial dereliction. That said, the overall impression left by such a picture would still be troubling, for it would also reflect the grave difficulties that confront American industry: competition from foreign firms using cheap labor, some now operating on these very shores; the mobility of capital, enabled by deregulation and new technologies; the overvalued dollar; the growing shortage of skilled industrial labor; the corresponding dearth of technical education; and the astounding absence of a national industrial policy. I want to discuss another, less familiar threat: inhospitable land use policies.

In the United States, businesses that do production, distribution, repair, or recycling are mostly small and medium-sized firms. Many rent their space and are thus highly vulnerable to market conditions. Industrially zoned land yields substantially lower rents than land zoned for offices, housing, or retail; hence it sells for substantially less, making it extremely attractive to nonindustrial developers. Landlords usually seek the most lucrative tenants they can get. In principle, landlords whose property is zoned for industry keep their rents at levels that industrial tenants can afford. But they're likely to raise those rents if they know that a city does not enforce its industrial zoning laws and permits non-industrial uses in an industrial zone. If they think the industrial zoning is going to be loos-

ened or eliminated altogether, they may well hold their property off the market until after the zoning has been revised and then sell it to developers of offices, housing, and retail. This is what happened in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and other metropolitan areas that until recently had strong economies and intense competition for space: extensive conversion of industrial lands paved the way for a profusion of new high-end offices, fancy condominiums, fashionable cafés, and boutiques—which is to say, for rampant gentrification.

Gentrifying development is often criticized for making inner-city neighborhoods unaffordable to the people who lived there before the gentry arrived. It has the equally pernicious effect of undoing industrial districts. A successful industrial district requires a critical mass of business, and the existence of that critical mass depends on the availability of industrial land. Rezoning not only shrinks the amount of land legally available for industry; it drives up prices in broad areas where industrial businesses are located, produces uncertainty about long-term capital investments in industrial operations, and invites conflict with nearby residential and retail uses.

Smart growth's devaluation of industry contributes to this subversive process. Industry's low rents mean that industrial enterprise will never qualify as what people in the real estate business call, in a cunning turn of phrase, a property's "highest and best use," meaning whatever yields the most profit. It follows that if urban industry is to survive, not to say thrive, it needs protection from market forces. What it gets from smart growth—where it generally appears as a form of blight, when it appears at all—is greater exposure, leading to a vicious cycle: treating industry as a relic justifies the conversion of industrial land to other uses, thereby further weakening the possibility of industrial revitalization. And like farmland, once lost, industrial land is gone forever.

The irony is that displacing industry from the metropolitan core increases sprawl. Forced out of city centers or unable to locate there in the first place, industrial businesses migrate to the more affordable edges of a region. But the trucks that carry the goods that those businesses make, repair, recycle, store, and transport regularly travel from the edges to the center and back, worsening air quality and further congest-

ing already crowded roads, as well as increasing the price of making goods. Industrial displacement also makes it harder for city residents employed in industry to reach their jobs. Economist Linda Hausrath has shown how a shrinking supply of industrial land in the Bay Area has led to the dispersion of goods-movement businesses, just as the demand for those businesses is growing. Hausrath ties the diminishing amount of centrally located industrial land to local and regional smart growth strategies that allow or even encourage new housing and retail development at the expense of industrial space, good jobs, compact development, and the environment.

That smart growth, declared enemy of sprawl, permits or actually exacerbates sprawl-inducing industrial dispersion is less surprising than it may appear. American city planning originated as a reaction against the industrial city. The constitutionality of traditional, so-called Euclidean zoning was established by a 1924 Supreme Court decision (*Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co.*) that affirmed a Cleveland suburb's prohibition of industrial development on vacant land within its boundaries.

Moreover, from early on, American city planning has aligned itself with urban "growth coalitions" dedicated to maximizing real estate values. The nation's first regional comprehensive plan, the 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*, sought to rid lower Manhattan of factory lofts and the tenements occupied by thousands of workers in the garment industry. The *Plan* was intended to eliminate real and perceived squalor and at the same time to facilitate the expansion of the city's central business district. Its authors, notes Robert Fitch, "had the tightest imaginable grip on actual Manhattan land prices," manifest in the *Plan's* sequentially arranged historical maps depicting the block-by-block spread of higher priced land.

After the Second World War, industrial displacement in New York and other American cities proceeded under the aegis of urban renewal. Urban renewal's foremost critic, Jane Jacobs, opened her 1961 masterwork, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, by declaring, "This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding." Jacobs is often invoked by smart growthers, who admiringly cite her stric-

tures against automobile-dominated urban transportation and her defense of mixed-use neighborhoods that are walkable, dense, and vibrant. They seem not to have noticed that light industry was an essential ingredient in her recipe for a great city. In April 2005, as New York's city council was deliberating the rezoning of the Williamsburg-Greenpoint waterfront, Jacobs sent Mayor Michael Bloomberg a letter urging him to "do the right thing" and support the community-devised plan that, unlike the city staff's "ambush" in behalf of "visually tiresome, unimaginative and imitative luxury project towers," did not "destroy hundreds of manufacturing jobs, desperately needed by New York citizens and by the city's stagnating and stunted manufacturing economy." Her recommendation was ignored, as the Bloomberg administration proceeded to expedite what Susan Fainstein has aptly dubbed "the return of urban renewal."

Smart growth's name signals an intention to take a different approach to development than the planning profession's habitual course. "Growth" is code for the joint enlargement of capital and construction. *Smart* growth avowedly seeks only such expansion as benefits cities and the environment, as opposed to whatever investment yields the highest return. Insofar as it fights new highways and suburban McMansions, smart growth lives up to its name. But the movement's marginalization of urban industry shows planners' continuing identification with property capital and its inherent drive toward the most profitable development, even when it's "dumb."

Still, smart growth's dismissive treatment of industry can't be laid entirely at the door of the planning profession. The movement involves multiple constituencies. In fact, a few members of the smart growth coalition—Urban Habitat; the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and, most notably, Good Jobs First—acknowledge the value of urban industry and the need to protect industrial lands. If such recognition hasn't made it onto the smart growth agenda, it's because it's not yet shared by the housing advocates, environmentalists, transportation activists, and architects who, along with city planners, dominate the smart growth movement. Two of smart growth's leading environmentalist supporters, the Sierra Club and the National Resources Defense Council, also belong to the

Apollo Alliance. But neither they nor the Apollo Alliance have connected the greening of U.S. manufacturing and employment to pro-industrial urban land-use policy. At least industry has their attention, which can't be said for smart growth's cadres of housing advocates or transportation activists. The housing advocates see industrial lands as potential sites for new residential development. The transportation advocates barely see industrial land at all; dedicated to getting commuters to take something other than their private cars to work, they rarely specify the nature of the work itself, much less the value of metropolitan industrial enterprise and employment.

But it's the architects, represented by practitioners of the new urbanism, who provide the most striking evidence of industry's marginal position in the smart growth universe: the form-based zoning they've devised as an alternative to traditional regulatory codes. Whereas traditional zoning focuses on the uses of land, form-based codes emphasize what a building looks like and how it relates to other structures, to the street, and to the overall design of a community. The new approach aims, among other things, to facilitate the dense, mixed-use development that, its supporters say, Euclidean zoning hampers or simply prohibits. Their assumption is that similar architectural forms can accommodate the full range of contemporary urban land uses. "In today's world of office, light industrial and residential uses," writes urban commentator Neal Peirce, traditional zoning's protection of residential areas "from such blight as tanneries and industrial plants" is "an almost irrelevant concern."

It's true that much of U.S. industry has considerably lightened up, in part by having gone high tech. But even absent tanneries, the production, storage, distribution, repair, or recycling of tangible goods typically generates traffic, noise, or odors that may not be noxious but still annoy and inconvenience nonindustrial neighbors. Moreover, the low rents that industry can afford will not last long in neighborhoods being utilized for new housing, retail, and offices. In short, form-based codes can't provide industry with the protections it requires.

But if industry is regarded as obsolete, protecting buildings for its use is irrelevant. What's needed are zoning regulations that expedite other uses. Form-based codes fit the bill. Writing in the National Association of Realtors' smart growth magazine, *On Common Ground*, Smart Growth America communications director David Goldberg cites Sandy Sorlien, co-author of the SmartCode, a guide to the form-based zoning code created by Duany Plater-Zyberk, the firm of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, two of the founders of new urbanism. "Think of the warehouse districts that have morphed into trendy arts districts with street-level shops and galleries and lofts above," suggests Sorlien. Use-based zoning, she notes, would deem such changes "drastic, because the land-use category has gone from industrial...to residential, although to the average onlooker, the place looks pretty much the same." Goldberg comments, "A form-based code could help to encourage such adaptation by removing many of the regulatory hurdles to be cleared."

No doubt it could. And, given certain conditions, turning a warehouse district into a beguiling arts quarter might be a good idea. The trouble with the perspective articulated above is that it's the only idea, unencumbered by any consideration as to whether a functioning industrial neighborhood might be destroyed by the rent inflation that inevitably accompanies a shift to "higher and better" uses of land. The sort of work being done inside a building doesn't count; what matters is how a place appears "to the average onlooker" and, it should be added, to the attending design professionals. In the new urbanism, observes architect Michael Pyatok, labor is trumped by the market-driven aesthetics of consumer culture.

That culture puts a premium on agreeable sensations and stimulating experiences. Offering little in the way of sublime allurements, working industry is held in low esteem by connoisseurs of excitement. For one thing, it fails the visibility test, a crucial prerequisite of consumer interest. Not only does industrial enterprise now occur largely on our back streets, but the face it presents to the world is usually dull, if not downright unattractive. Moreover, the work of production, storage, distribution, and repair is largely invisible to outsiders, taking place behind the opaque walls of factories, warehouses, and garages. That's one reason that active in-

dustrial sites often appear blighted to the public at large. But what disqualifies working industry as an object of consumer desire is not only how it looks but also what it signifies. Virtuoso consumers savor the thrill of personal empowerment that accompanies the act of consumption; the felt affirmation of individuality, however fleeting, underwrites the seductiveness of consumerism. By contrast, operative industry, particularly manufacturing, evokes routinization and standardization.

The operative word here is “operative”: as long as industrial enterprise is up and running, its physical setting connotes a stifling of choice that offends the consumer mentality. Once industrial labor has departed, however, its former venue is susceptible to being invested with an aura of creative freedom and personal integrity. “Loft living,” writes sociologist Sharon Zukin in a seminal study, “is part of a larger modern quest for authenticity.” The sturdiness and age of old factory buildings offer a reassuring contrast to the ephemerality of consumer culture. Even more compelling is the association of such buildings with artistic production. The artist’s studio “becomes the place—perhaps the only place in society—where the *self* is created.” Tying this idealization/idolization of artistic production to the appeal of loft living for the middle class, Zukin charts a now-familiar story of inner-city gentrification: starting in the late 1960s, artists began converting former factory lofts in lower Manhattan into live-work quarters. Middle-class professionals followed the artists, leading to an upward spiral of rents that displaced light industry and artists alike. Zukin emphasizes that the rise of the loft market owed as much to “large shifts of investment capital toward and within the service sector” as to the tastes of “urban pioneers.” As she also makes clear, that rise and the gentrification it entailed could not have occurred without rezoning that facilitated the conversion of manufacturing space to residential uses.

The fundamental protection that land use policy can offer industry is strong and reliable use-based zoning. Mindful of that fact, since December 2007 three of California’s largest cities—Los Angeles, which has the most manufacturing jobs (434,000) of any metropolitan region in the United States; San Jose; and

Oakland—have restricted the conversion of their functioning industrial lands to housing and other uses. In so doing, they followed the lead of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Portland, and Seattle, and the former lead (see below) of my own city of Berkeley. At the same time, these cities are all promoting dense infill development that mixes housing, retail, and offices in locales that are convenient to mass transit. In other words, with one exception, they’re simultaneously pursuing industrial retention and smart growth.

That joint pursuit makes sense. Keeping industry in the metropolitan core advances major goals of smart growth: By countering sprawl, it reduces air pollution, traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. By supporting a resilient and diverse urban economy, industry makes cities more appealing places to live and to work. From the other side, the density of urban life fosters the synergies that are essential to industrial vitality and innovation. Abundant and accessible public transit makes it easier for employees of industrial businesses to get to and from work, especially those who can’t afford to own or drive a car. As Daniel Luria and Joel Rogers point out, modern infrastructure and other “productive public goods” attract companies that might well go elsewhere, by making a metropolitan region a more efficient and thus a more profitable place to do business; their presence then increases the chances that such firms will stay. “[T]he immobility of these goods...serves to *ground capital*,” thereby bolstering a place’s ability to “demand more of capital—less pollution, higher wages, better labor relations, more investment in the community.”

Attaining these advantages involves more than zoning to limit the conversion of industrial lands or adding industry to the smart growth mix of urban land uses. Both these actions are predicated on shifts in attitude as profound as the rejection of auto-oriented sprawl in favor of transit-oriented density. The modern American city needs to be reconceived as a site of production, a place where tangible goods are made, and not just made, but invented and reinvented, repaired and recycled. For that expanded view to gain currency, the value and viability of such work has to be broadly acknowledged and widely publicized. And to that end, and most challenging of all, we need to affirm the power of human agency to shape our common life.

I'm talking about the power of politics as well as labor. The widespread belief that manufacturing is fated to extinction in this country concedes all to the impersonal forces of globalized capitalism and technological "progress." But the restructuring that has driven manufacturing out of the nation's cities is largely the result of decisions made by powerful men and women acting in public capacities. It takes enlightened city officials to promote zoning for industry and—crucial proviso—to enforce that zoning. Developers typically figure among successful local politicians' biggest donors. Then there's the matter of revenue, the lifeblood of local government: industry yields much less than the sales tax generated by retail or the property tax generated by housing and offices. It's all very well to point out that industry's higher wages create more wealth within a local

economy than office or retail, or that increased property taxes will be consumed by the additional services that new residential development requires. Such long-term considerations are hard to grasp if you're a cash-strapped city official trying to balance the municipal budget or figuring out how to fund your reelection campaign. They're even harder to grasp if you think domestic industry is passé. That said, the point is that cities have choices. In Berkeley, a neoliberal administration in thrall to developers is taking the short view and doing its best to dismantle the city's protections for its industrial sector. By contrast, in Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Jose a commitment to industry has been enabled by the farsighted leadership of each city's mayor and conscientious city staffers, including city planners. Their actions are all the more commendable for having been taken in an era when cities are heavily dependent on private investment and at a moment when the building boom was still in full swing.

Now the real estate bubble in California and just about everywhere else has burst amid the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression. With credit frozen and demand plummeting, many smart growth development projects have slowed, halted, or fallen through. Manufacturing, too, has plunged around the globe. "Foundation of New World Order Is Uncertainty," read a headline in the *Wall Street Journal's* year-end review of 2008 markets and finance. In fact, it's the breakdown of the fundamentally unstable old world order that has bewildered its adepts. The ensuing debacle has caused great hardship; it's also created opportunities for major transformation. The revival of America's manufacturing and construction sectors is central to Barack Obama's recovery plan. Achieving that double renaissance, and realizing its full potential to benefit our cities, will require a concerted political effort. As American cities' predominant advocates, the supporters of smart growth should join in and work for its success.

Zelda Bronstein is a writer and community activist. In 2006 she ran for mayor of Berkeley.

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