



Libertarians and new urbanists

Hank Dittmar



Playing Fair with Words

- Let's take a look at Randall O'Toole's published critiques of the new urbanism, and contrast it with the Charter of the New Urbanism, our fundamental document.
- All O'Toole quotes viewed on the websites of the Thoreau Institute, Reason Foundation or American Dream Coalition in June 2004, after meeting Andres Duany in 2003.

O'Toole

- “New Urbanism was developed by several architects who believe that automobiles will soon disappear and that we should completely redesign our cities to live without them.

The Charter

- “In the contemporary metropolis, development must adequately accommodate automobiles. It should do so in ways that respect the pedestrian and the form of public space.”



O'Toole

The Charter

- “Their designs are based on American cities from around the turn of the century, when few people had autos, and focus on high densities, mixed uses, and lots of transit.”
 - The metropolitan region is a fundamental economic unit of the contemporary world. Governmental cooperation, public policy, physical planning and economic strategies must reflect this new reality.”
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O'Toole

- “ New Urbanism might be fine if it were optional. Developers could build it for those people who want to live in high-density, mixed-use communities without cars. But that isn't enough for the New Urban planners, who want to save our cities from the automobile by mandating New Urbanism everywhere.”

Duany and Bess


- “It is WE who are being denied the right to build such places by current codes, standards and economic protocols. Libertarians should, if they are true to their principles of democratic self-governance, support our agenda.”



O'Toole

The Charter

- “**New Urbanism:** a planning philosophy that aims to make cities more livable by increasing congestion, reducing living space, and preventing people from working and shopping where they like.”

- “Cities and towns should bring into proximity a broad spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy that benefits people of all incomes.”
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O'Toole

- According to a British study of a new urban neighborhood, new urbanism promotes crime

The Charter

- “The design of streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility and openness.”
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About that British study . . .

- . . .it was not a new urban neighborhood.







O' Toole

- “Grassroots support for rail campaigns comes from car haters.”

Polls and Surveys

- Over 60 percent favor offering new public transportation options. Federal Highway Admin. Survey, 2000.
 - Over 80% favor new rail systems to offer travel options, US Conference of Mayors, 2001.
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Areas of seeming agreement

- We believe in the marketplace
- We support homeownership, as a way of building wealth
- We support individual choice





The market demands new urbanism

- Dowell Myers, USC, 2001: between 30-50% of the market for new homes is for townhomes in denser, more walkable neighborhoods.
- Chris Nelson, U of Maryland, 2004, market demand is closer to 70 %.



••• Clarendon Market Commons:
sold for \$166 million in 2003





Zoning frustrates the market

- Single-use zoning
- Minimum lot sizes
- Mandatory setbacks
- Minimum parking requirements
- Suburban street standards

All frustrate the market in delivering new urbanism.






Government subsidies distort the marketplace

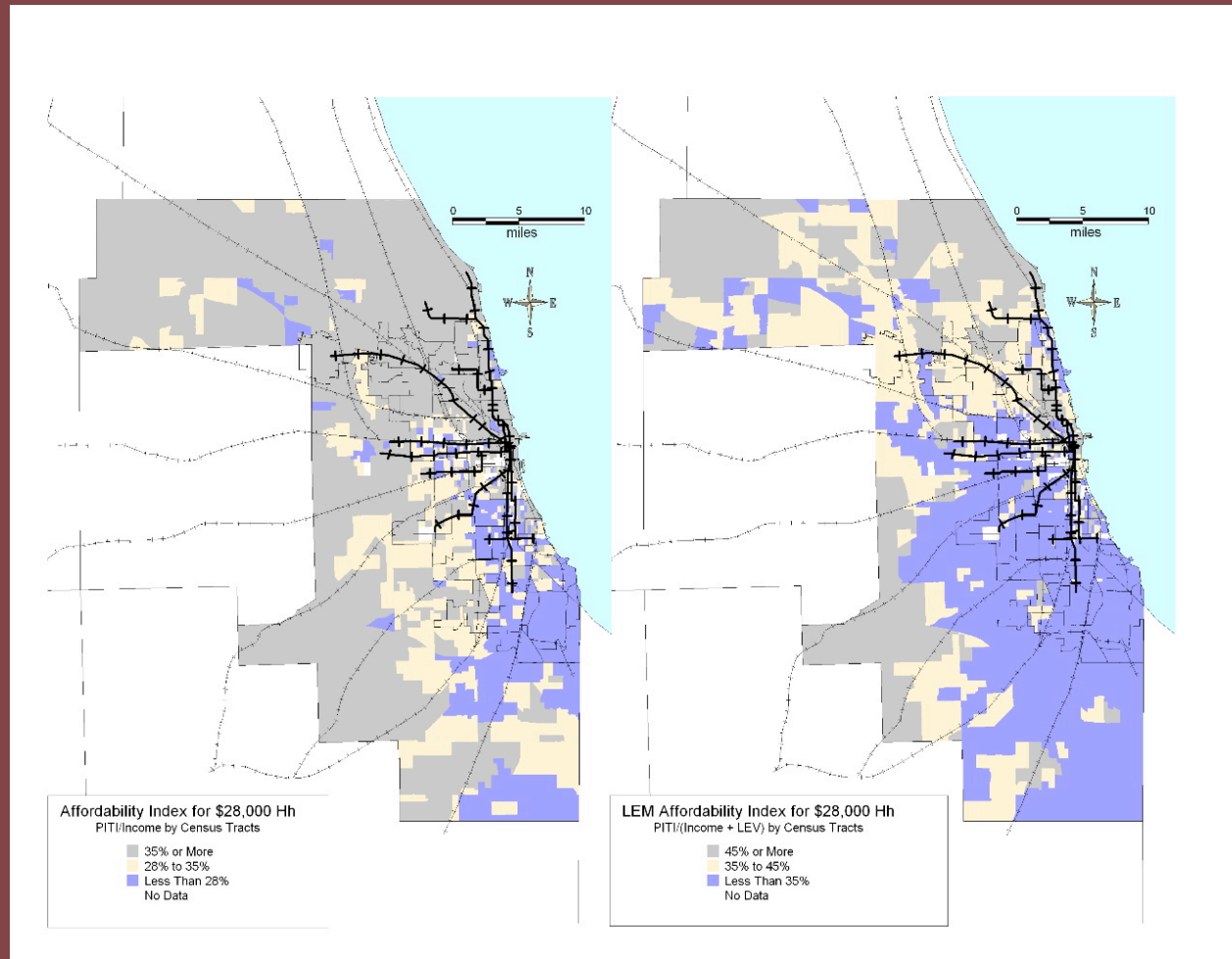
- TIF districts more often used to finance sprawl than infill TOD
 - Road, water line, sewer infrastructure commonly provided free or at a subsidized level to traditional suburban development.
 - Existing communities pay the freight for new schools, new roads, new parks in new development.
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We support homeownership

- Transportations costs are growing, crowding out housing costs.
 - Why should homebuyers have to trade off cheap housing at the edge for long commutes and high transport costs?
 - Last year the volume of condo sales exceeded home sales, and the median price for condos exceeded that for single family housing, according to the National Association of Realtors
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Transit and Housing Affordability



We support individual choice



- The Charter:
- “ Neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car.”



Libertarians would cede to homeowners

- Randall O'Toole: “ We support devolving zoning power to individual neighborhoods, so that neighborhoods can control their own destiny instead of being under the smart-growth planning sword of "infill" and "neighborhood redevelopment.”

This amounts to giving NIMBY's veto power over everything, and denying the interest of all but property owners





We debated that as a country . . .

- And we decided not to limit the vote to property holders!
- “I was for extending the rights of suffrage (or in other words the rights of a citizen) to all who had a permanent intention of living in the country.” Thomas Jefferson, August 26, 1776.





What's so subversive about:



Or:



It's the American Dream!