

# Zoning and Central Square

- Need cleaner sidewalks/public space
- Too many vacant and damaged buildings
- Solid metal gates that cover storefronts after hours
- Lack of collective planning (sign types vary by store, condition of buildings varies)
- Too many liquor stores
- Eliminate parking lots on Mass Ave toward Vassar Street/Main Street

# Zoning and Central Square

- Street too narrow- increases traffic problems
- Parking on street hinders traffic flow
- Benches encourage homeless people and loiterers – a bad thing
- Too many fast food restaurants – they have changed character of area
- Should restrict types of businesses in area
- Too much open space and sitting areas – attracts loiterers

# Zoning and Central Square

- Need restaurants with outdoor café/patio seating
- Need more visible information signs for parking, driving, etc.
- There is a great mix of everything – uses, people, activities
- It's nice that buildings aren't really tall
- Encourage artwork on buildings – this is good
- Need a parking garage and get rid of street spaces
- Enhance “village” theme to area to attract more visitors and tourists

# Zoning and Central Square

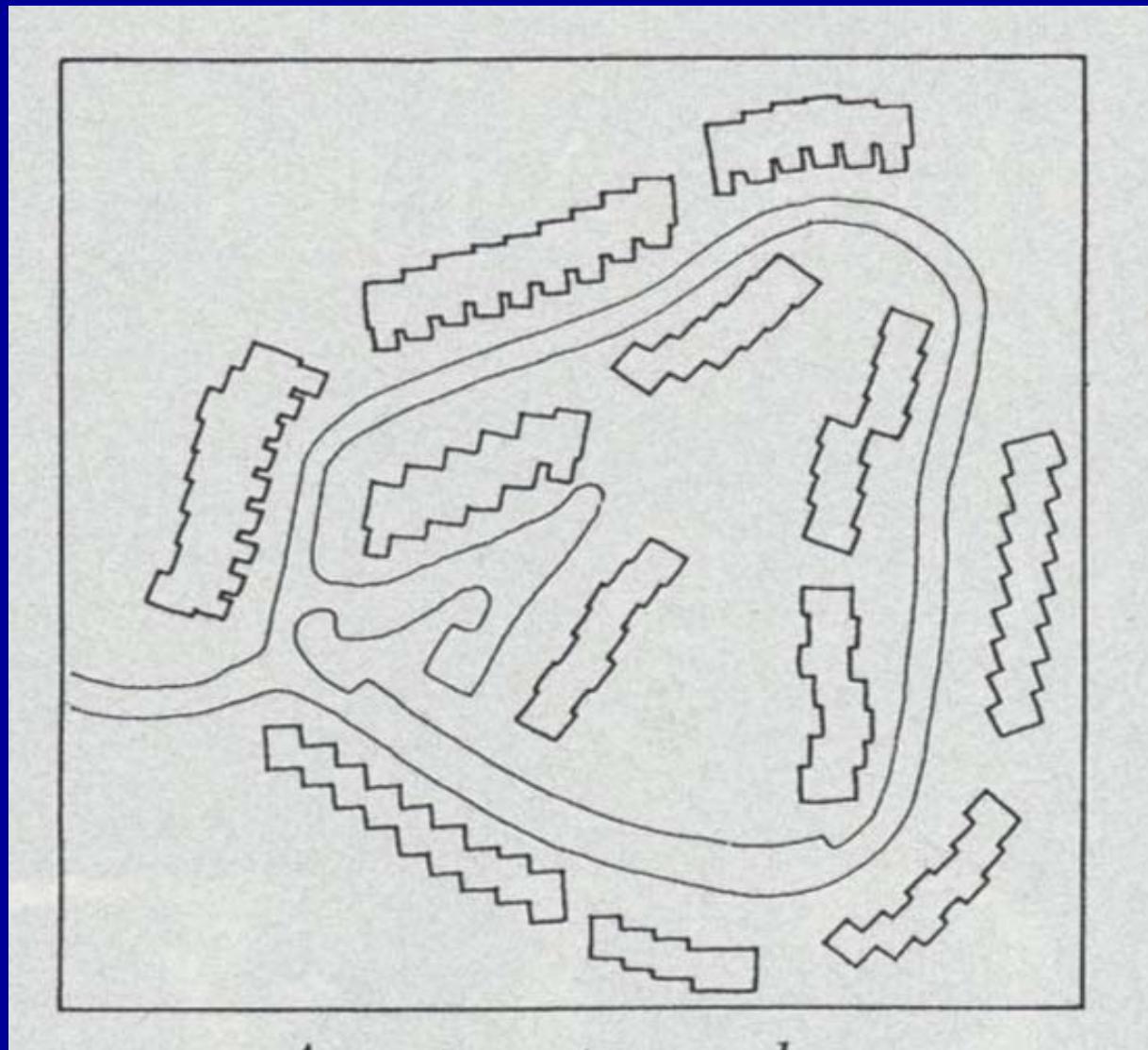
- Replace older obsolete buildings with new, modern ones
- Divert autos around the square (except for cabs and buses) to decrease congestion

# Beyond Traditional Zoning: Urban Design Controls

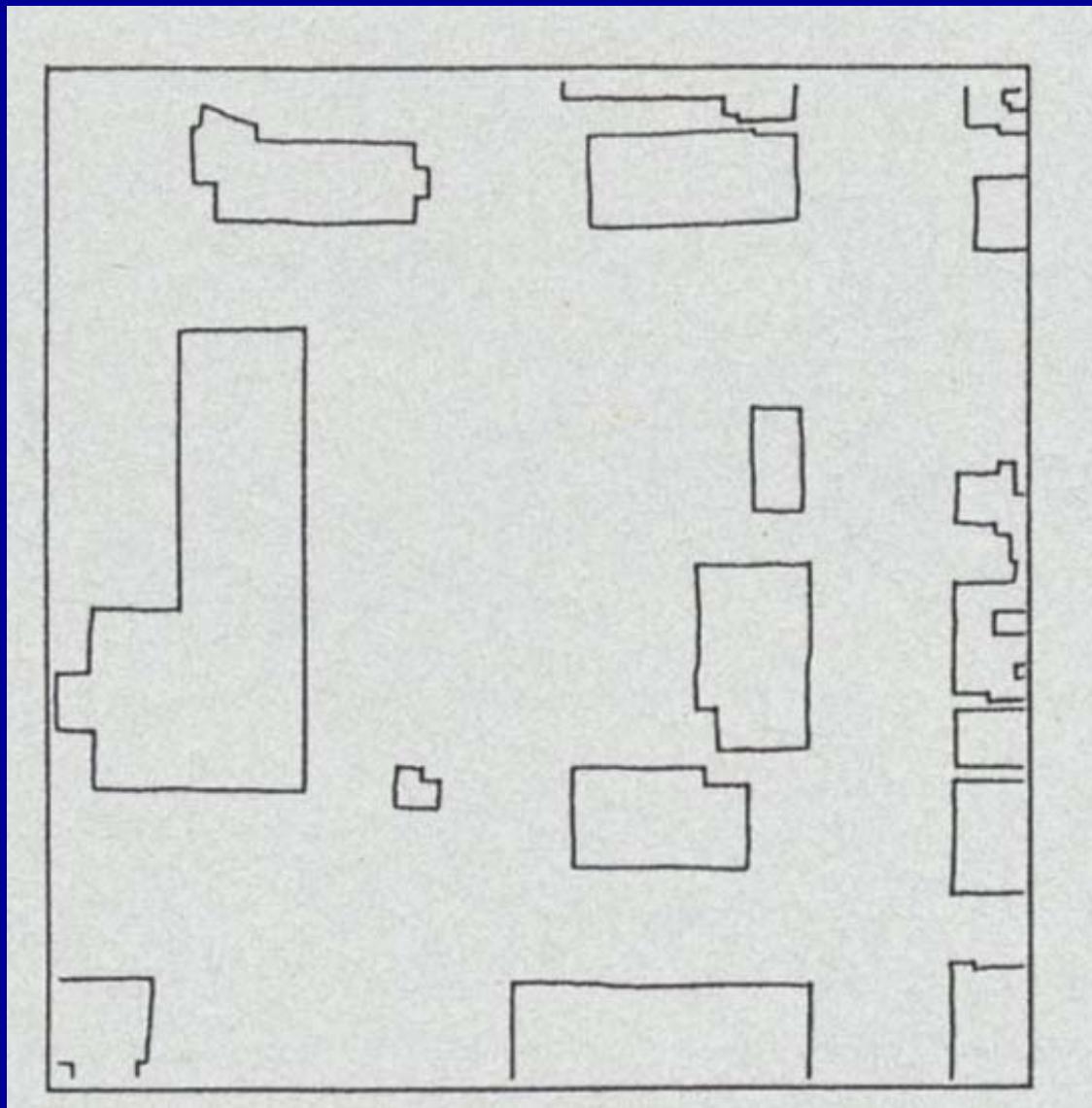
What is the relationship between development incentives and quality public space? Can urban design guidelines and design review ensure good urban design?

# Some results of a traditionally zoned world:

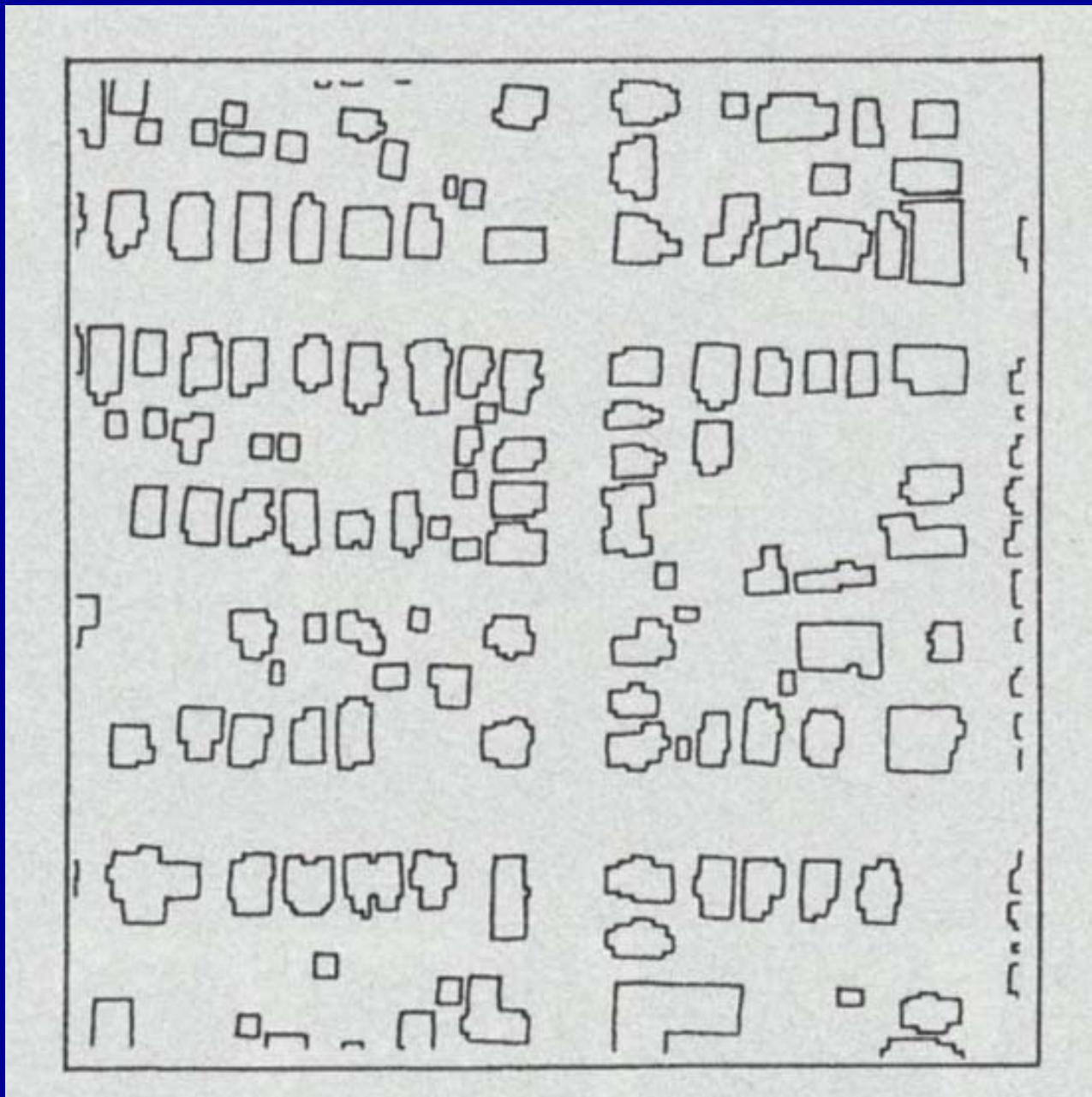
- “Euclidean” view of the world
- Maintain the status quo
- Segregate uses
- Ensure continuity
- Discourage change
- Dependence on automobile
- Loss of “city center” development/living transportation patterns

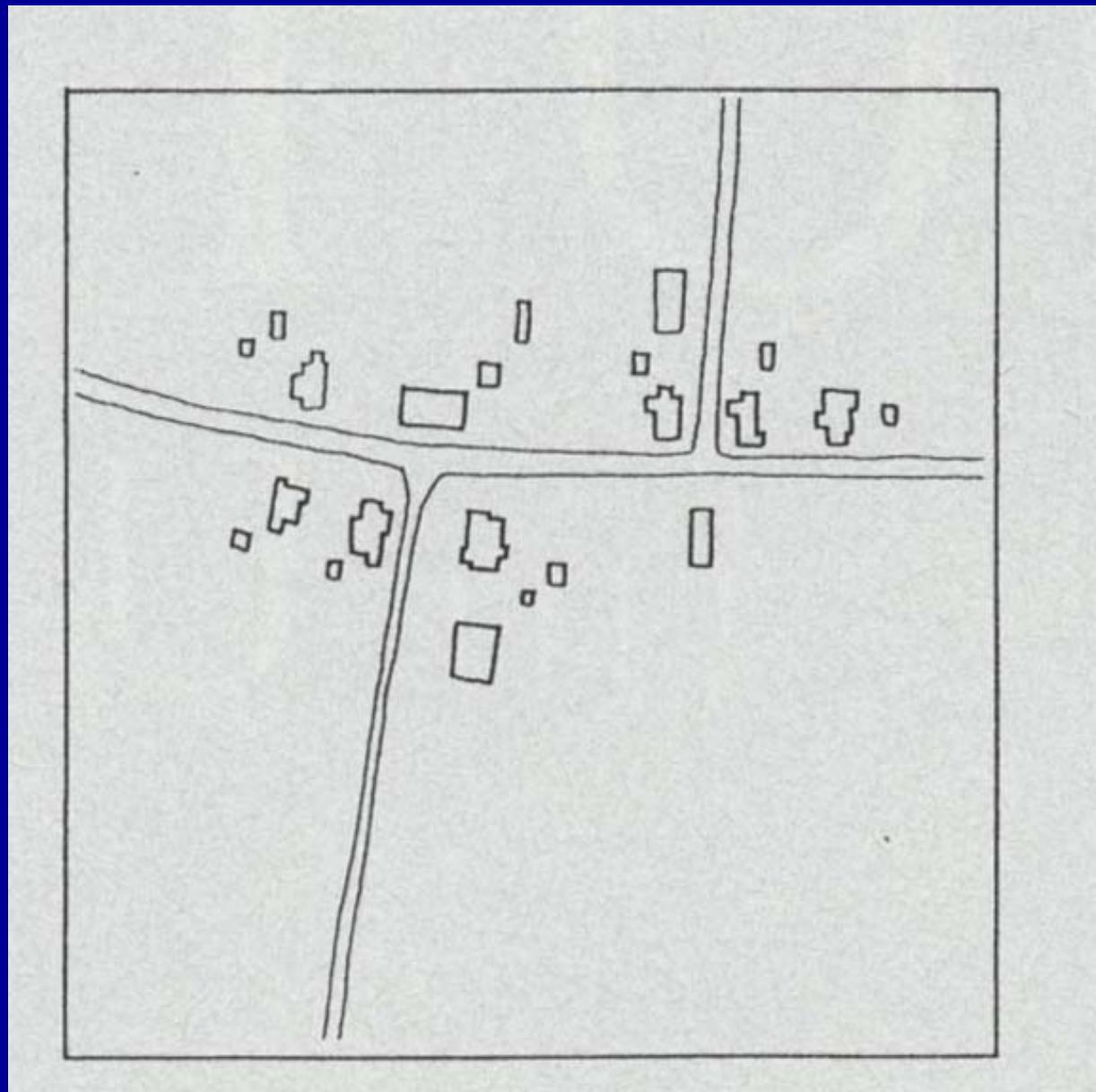


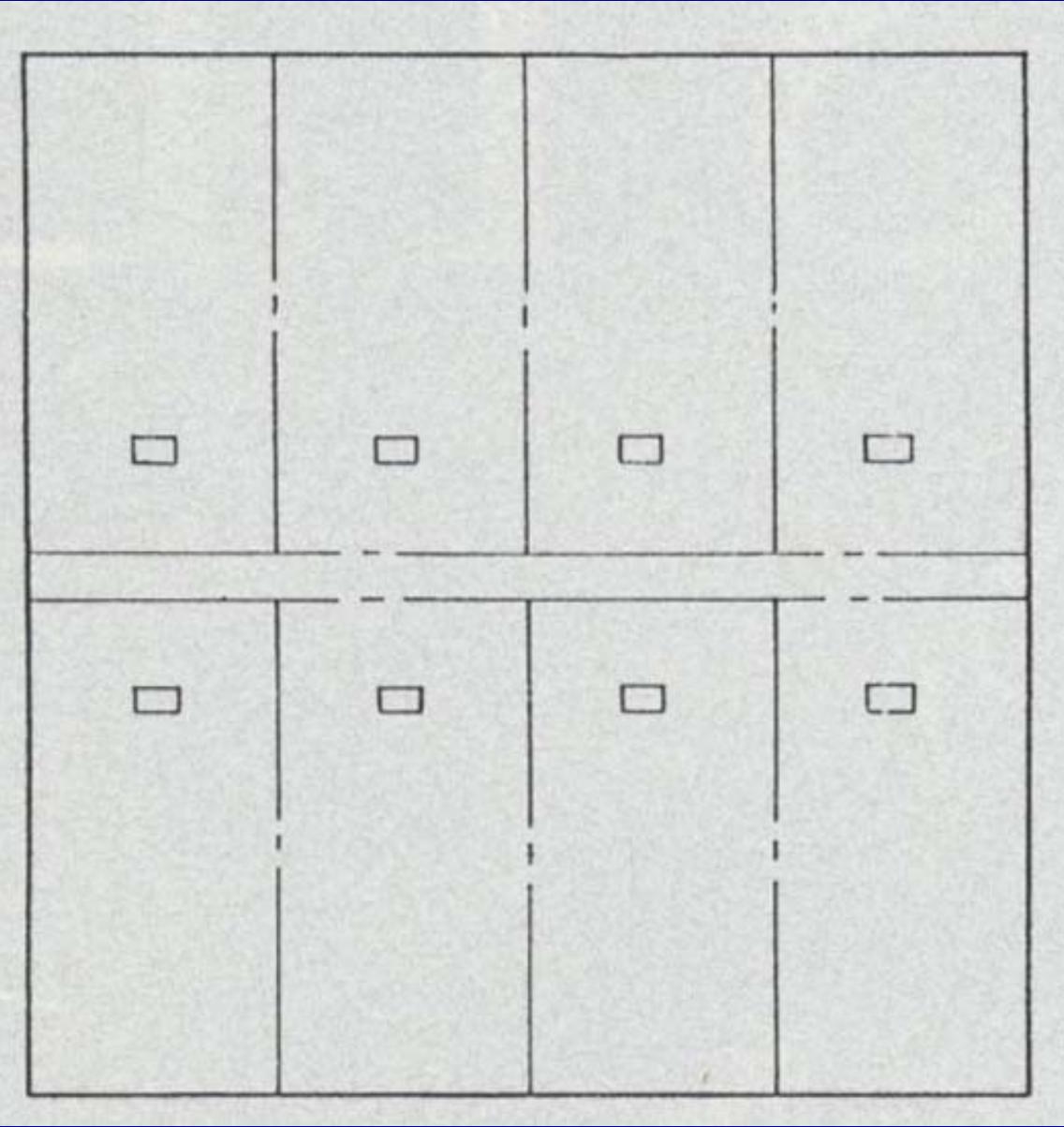
A complex path or maze.











# Outgrowths of Traditional Zoning

- Design controls to help zoning achieve more positive purposes
- More consciousness about physical affects of zoning
- Not only, “what do we want to avoid?,” but also, “what do we want to encourage?”

# A New Awareness Brings New Tools

- Incentive Zoning
- Planned Unit Development
- Urban Renewal and Master Planning
- Special Zoning Districts/Planned Development Areas
- Design Review
- Performance Zoning
- Growth Management









# Incentive Zoning

Allow the following:

- Increase in FAR
- Increase in Height

In exchange for developer-provided:

- Exterior public plazas
- Interior public lobbies/atria
- Interior shopping arcades
- Concessions to other buildings









“The Planning Commission  
shall permit such development  
as, from time to time, it  
considers to be appropriate.”

-NYC Zoning

# Planned Unit Development

- Cluster zoning
- Street mapping and irregular density within overall zoning framework to achieve public purposes

# Urban Renewal and Master Planning

- U.S. Supreme Court Case, *Berman v. Parker* (1954)
  - Upheld use of eminent domain for slum clearance
  - Legal to try to make environments beautiful, spacious, and well-balanced (in addition to healthy and safe)
  - Legitimized large master plans for areas of cities
  - Master plans aren't law but guide policy and zoning changes

# Special Zoning Districts and Planned Development Areas

- Urban design and development policies for an entire district of a city
  - Lower Manhattan
  - South Street Seaport District
  - 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Redevelopment District (theater)
  - Boston Financial District (housing)
- Areas of one or more acres where city sets ideas about location and appearance of buildings, parking, uses, densities, heights, building dimension.



Jonathan Barnett: Taking  
special zoning districts and  
new zoning provisions “almost  
to the point of a one-sentence  
zoning law.”

# Performance Zoning

- Zoning without zones
- Last 20 years
- Building any use, anywhere, if you adhere to set of standards (color, height, open-space, % of impervious surfaces, rooflines)
- Use of Euclidean zoning also to tell you how to build out that use.
- Attempt to put goals and tools together to get what a community WANTS instead of simply avoiding nuisances (perpetuating the status quo).

# Cambridge Zoning

- Kendall Square/East Cambridge
- Support density
- Encourage economic development
- Living and working mixed-use buildings
- Encourage non-auto dependent travel

# Is Design Quality a Public Purpose?

- Berman v. Parker (1954 U.S. Supreme Court Decision)
  - “The concept of public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled.”
    - *Justice William O. Douglas*

# Design Guidelines

- Concern for appearance as well as height, bulk, density
- Covers buildings and streetscape, activities, use, lighting, furniture
- Guidelines for treating pedestrians, autos
- Signage

# Design Review

- Began in the suburbs, not the cities.
- Protection of most valuable asset owned by most families
- Protection of social status
- Avoid change (and unknowns) from suburban living

# Palos Verdes, California

- Upper income suburb of LA
- Art Jury reviewed all new houses and building improvements to ensure that nothing of “bad taste” was built.

# Boston Civic Design Commission

- 50,000 square feet or larger
- Review of:
  - exterior of buildings
  - Landscape
  - Public open space
  - Materials
  - Windows, door openings and placement

# Where are we Now?

- Growing recognition of limitations of traditional zoning
- Recognition of need for regional planning efforts
- Struggle to change meanings and associations with words such as density and mixed use.