Facing the challenge of the divided American city

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The postwar story of older American cities was one of almost unremitting decline.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the Bronx is burning”

“The cities are finished”

“we should try to help people....as quickly as possible facilitate transition to new locations and jobs.”
The narrative began to shift toward the end of the century
...as change started to become visible in America’s older cities
This shift was driven by the emergence of a new urban economy.
...based on ‘eds and meds’
...and a new demographic: a young, well-educated population

Share of population over 18 who are 25 to 34 with BA or higher degree
...creating a growing consumption sector
These changes are transforming cities
But are they?
The revival is real but so are the poverty and inequality. They are inextricably linked.
Inequality is....

Spatial
Economic
Racial
Baltimore’s White “L”

Median sales price >$200K

60%+ Non-Latino White

Young BA+ clusters
and its “Black Butterfly”
The population of young university graduates is spreading, but not everywhere.

Baltimore 2000
25,775 people
25-34 with BA+

Baltimore 2015
48,533 people
25-34 with BA+
Wealth is concentrating in a select few areas

Ohio City, Tremont and Downtown
Most Ohio cities have a large ‘eds and meds’ sector

Share of total jobs by sector 2015

Eds and Meds
Health Care alone
Cities have jobs, but city residents aren’t filling them

Change in jobs and workers 2002-2015 in Cleveland

Who works in Cleveland?

- Cleveland residents
- Commuters

Jobs in Cleveland
Jobholders living and working in city
Jobholders living in but working outside city
People living outside but working in city
Only some cities are drawing young college graduates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<td>Akron</td>
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Racial disparities are growing

Change in median household income 2000 to 2016
Areas of concentrated and segregated poverty are spreading

Areas of concentrated and segregated poverty in 2000 and 2016

Declining areas: areas of concentrated and segregated poverty in 2016 but not in 2000
More neighborhoods are declining than gentrifying

Indianapolis
Black-majority middle neighborhoods in 2000

19 census tracts in Cleveland with over 50% Black population and median household income over $27,582 in 2000 ($40,000 in 2016 dollars)
Black majority middle neighborhoods in 2000

1 census tract in Cleveland with over 50% Black population and median household income over $40,000 in 2016
Falling off a cliff: change in Cleveland’s black middle neighborhoods since 2000

- Median HH income in constant $$
  - 2000: 50000
  - 2016: 30000
  - Change: -40%

- Number of Homeowners
  - 2000: 14000
  - 2016: 8000
  - Change: -3001 (26%)

- Number of vacant DUs
  - 2000: 1000
  - 2016: 5000
  - Change: +3078

- Poverty rate
  - 2000: 26%
  - 2016: 35%
  - Change: +93%
So, where are we?

- Our cities are doing better than at any time in the last 60+ years

- Yet more people cannot make a living wage and are living in poverty, and poor housing and neighborhood conditions.

- Our cities are creating jobs and drawing billions of dollars in investment

- Yet more people lack jobs and opportunities to improve their condition in life.
Where do we go from here?
Cities used to be about opportunity
What does that mean?

**A decent job**

**A future for one’s children**

**A decent neighborhood to live in**
What is a decent neighborhood to live in?

Homes and public spaces are:
- Safe
- Healthy
- Clean
Vacancies have been rising steadily for more than two decades.

Vacant dwelling units in Dayton 1990 to 2010
Older cities have two separate and distinct vacancy challenges

- Long-term, pervasive hypervacancy in distressed areas
- Growing numbers of vacancies in neighborhoods at risk
Pervasive hypervacancy

Large parts of many older cities have been heavily disinvested with widespread abandonment since the 1960s and 1970s.
Rising vacancies

Many other areas are seeing dramatic increases in vacancy and abandonment as a result of more recent demographic and economic change – these include many middle neighborhoods.
Tackling the vacant property challenge

- Rebuilding broken housing markets in neighborhoods at risk
- Addressing quality of life issues in hypervacant areas
- Think strategically
Rebuilding broken housing markets

- Remove obstacles to reuse
- Creative vacant property reuse strategies
- Increase access to capital
Addressing quality of life issues

- Secure
- Demolish
- Green
- Explore long-term reuse possibilities
Moving forward

✓ Think strategically: integrate rehab, demolition and greening into long-term stabilization and revival strategies.
Focus on what is transformative
Thank you.