URBAN AGENCY IN ORANGE COUNTY

by

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ABSTRACT

The postsuburb, a population distribution common to matured suburbs and new rapid growth areas is often criticized through a simplistic lens of urban bias. As an organizational space, the postsuburb is at a developmental junction. Its horizontal population expansion is reaching a logical extent, its growth now generating from within rather than accumulating at the edges. This transitive stage in the ongoing maturation of the postsuburb provides the opportunity to consider speculative urban agency; specifically the consequence of inserting light rail transit directly into Orange County, California, the emblematic postsuburb.

Southern California's Orange County is often disparaged for its horizontality and a perceived placelessness. Emblematic of suburban sprawl, Orange County has matured and coalesced into a diverse network, resulting in a multivalent polycentric blanket. It is no longer truly suburban, dependent on an urban core, yet it is not traditionally urban either, shunning age-old relationships of city growth. Existing methods of analysis and criticism of the North American suburbs are problematic and simplistic, often relying on outmoded urban referents as the prescriptive model for a purportedly lost sense of place. These methods lack instrumentality because deliberately working with the postsuburb's existing horizontal structure requires an acceptance of it not as permanent, synthetic, and immutable topography, but as a medium of operating potentials. There are opportunities at multiple scales to modify, sculpt, and interact with the broad postsuburban fabric, always mindful of the dynamic composition of this place. This concept can be developed around a composite approach to the postsuburb, using both an ecological and typological understanding of the existing constructed and tempered environment to permit the formative, underlying, and particular structure of a place to be influential in the development of an architecture that is transitive in scale, whether it be building, landscape, infrastructure, or a blend of all three. It also facilitates future development aimed at maintaining the benefits of a postsuburban region through informed layered growth, the inevitable recourse of an expanding population.
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CHAPTER I The Emblematic Postsuburb

The development of the suburbs in the United States and the subsequent evolution to the postsuburbs is a phenomenon of interwoven forces, events, and policies. Yet most projects that aim to involve a refashioning of the suburbs fail to accommodate the formative or existing characteristics of the regional model, basing most of their suggestions on visual preference and referents embedded in other times and places. It is important to investigate the structuring of the suburbs from its origins and major infrastructures to understand the causality that underpins the most dominant form of population organization and it's support in the contemporary United States.¹

Suburban growth in North America is a topic with a range of sources from historic to polemic and everything in between. Kenneth T. Jackson discusses the urban transformation of America that left it in a predominantly suburban manner, taking the point of view that the organizational patterns of our lives begin to affect the ways that we live, "to condition our behavior."² He then approaches the non-urban-non-rural with three distinguishing elements that those patterns particularly suburban, but more specifically North American: low residential density and blurred distinctions between town and country, a strong desire for home ownership, and the socioeconomic gap between the center and the periphery.³ Now these regions are broad and polycentric, according to Rob Kling, "organized around many distinct, specialized centers."⁴ These larger, more mature, and more complex regions have begun to shed many of the labels that characterized them in the years following World War Two: homogenous, provincial,⁵ and culturally stunted. Many of these labels are still applied although they have little to any credence left in them, falling instead to the dubious value of a stereotype. Now the postsuburb maintains large inclusive populations that have taken on characteristics of diversity and economic vigor previously only applied to traditional urban areas.⁶ With these economic successes and increased diversity the transformation of the suburbs has not been a neutral process. The advancement amongst social, ethnic, and economic populations paralleled an increase in suburban problems, including crime, congestion, and pollution. Where once the suburb was predominantly white and middle-class, it is now absorbing populations from the margins just as the urban realm has before it. Since the suburban transformation has not resulted in a concrete expression of a utopian vision of life or maintained its position as a direct escapist extension of the urban city it should be evaluated both from its origins to its resultant and current directions.⁷
Due to the constant expansion of suburban growth within the United States it is increasingly relevant to consider the suburbs as worthy of critical attention as the varied strains of suburbia are the dominant model for Western life. There are few signs of it diminishing or ceasing throughout North America and now in Europe as well, a region often romanticized for its steadfast adherence to traditional urban/rural relationships. The evolution of the suburb's spatial organization into one that is polycentric also indicates the importance of investigating this mode of development, while generating ideas for modulation to improve a situation that never reached its proposed idyllic state. Corner sums it up well saying, "the contemporary metropolis has nothing to do with the traditional town or city."

As these suburban systems cover more land than ever before, traditional dialectic relationships of pure city and raw countryside, closed and open, full and empty all no longer apply. These regions of diverse and large populations require new methods of discovery and analysis especially in a time where it is almost as if the suburb is turning back in on itself, having reached the seemingly illogical extents of convenience and proximity. Not only are many traditional urban centers experiencing greater growth, many new specialized nodes are forming within the postsuburbs themselves. It is imperative to move to action within the existing and diverse contexts and spreads of the postsuburb. All the while looking toward a dynamic future whereby the postsuburb can continue to be inhabited and evolve, without expanding unnecessarily beyond its boundaries.

Orange County is located in Southern California between the counties of Los Angeles and San Diego to the north and south, respectively (fig. 1). It is a 798 square mile climatically mild coastal expanse with a population nearing three million. Long the derided

figure 1.1 – Orange County's context
subject of architects, planners, and others. Orange County has surfaced in recent years in the venue of popular culture with multiple television series ranging from drama, to comedy, to reality.

Orange County itself is important because of its emblematic nature within the suburban paradigm, its transformation leading and reflecting the development of scores of other regions within the United States. Its development was and continues to be incredibly vigorous, ballooning from a population under 150,000 to near 3 million within a span of sixty years. Its landscape changed from fertile agriculture fields, petroleum extraction sites and small bedroom communities to a significant player in international trade, information technologies, and copious tracts of single-family homes and lifestyles. It is a highly successful region amongst social and economic institutions as academic scores are routinely high and unemployment is routinely low, for example. The county's economic power places it within the top thirty global economies. In spite of these successes political novelist Robert Kaplan mentions, "Orange County stands for what everybody hates about the suburbs" such as homogeneity and boredom. He "was prepared to hate Orange County, [yet] came away respecting it...Parts of Orange County seemed beautiful to [him]." This paradigmatic nature and the often contradictory interpretations of the region further indicate its relevance for deeper exploration. Positions developed here could potentially be applied to other regions as well as they evolve from suburban dependency to postsuburban self realization.
CHAPTER II Ecology + Typology

2.1 A Method for Focus

When approaching a region as large and populous as Orange County, it is necessary to pursue alternative methods of analysis to yield results that move beyond the capacity of generalization and stereotype. As a way to better understand the constructs and organizations of Orange County it can be viewed as a collection of ecologies and a dominant set of typologies to analyze and serve both regional and local conditions.

2.2 Ecology

The notion of ecology for Reyner Banham was to "present the architecture within the topographical and historical context of the total artefact." Here, ecology is employed as the regional structure of the sustained systems of support, delineated by the causes and effects of a population's spatial distribution. This serves to quantify tributary areas to a locus of place which can include industry, cultural division, climate, topography, and the major ordering system of transportation infrastructure. About Los Angeles Banham said, "within its vast extent can be seen its diverse ecologies of sea-coast, plain, and hill; within that diversity can be seen the mechanisms, natural and human, that have made those ecologies support a way of life." Similarly, Orange County can be divided into four ecologies: the Grid, the Pod, the Crust, and the Preserve (fig. 2.1). The Grid and the Pod roughly divide Orange County north and south defined by the northwestern edge of the Irvine Ranch which in 1971 Banham identified as the "traditional barrier to the growth of Los Angeles." That still holds true today though the area of the Irvine Ranch and beyond has developed over the last 15 years into the Pod, serving as a model for other aspiring master planned suburbs.

The Grid (fig. 2.2) occupies the northwest portion of Orange County that borders Los Angeles County and extends all the way to the edge of the Irvine Ranch. It was first developed as the complementary suburbs of Los Angeles and as support communities for regionally dispersed agriculture and petroleum resources. As such, it is comparable to (if not part of) Banham's "plains of id," a dense interlinking of grid infrastructure crossed and divided by the many freeways into an array of residential and commercial deltas. Originally part of Los Angeles County, this was the first region of Orange County to develop, starting in the early 1900's in step with the laying of the Pacific Electric Railroad. Because of the age of many of the grid overlaid parts of the County, trace amounts of more traditional urbanity is
figure 2.1 – Orange County's four ecologies
figure 2.2 – the Grid, top photo Bryan Ridley, bottom photo Google Earth
perceivable in more concentrated areas. Older municipalities that were originally located around natural resources such as Santa Ana, Huntington Beach, Seal Beach, and Fullerton all have traditionally recognizable downtown areas although their redevelopment in recent years has led them to parallel other retail and entertainment centers throughout younger realms of the County. Over time, in light of diminishing petroleum resources it has developed its own measure of industry and commerce. Topographically the Grid is flat which permitted and perhaps encouraged the layout of an extensive cardinal grid of roads that are then crossed and divided by many freeways. In this ecology, the freeways were implemented primarily by superposition, overlaid on the grid to accommodate flow to and from growth while generating new relationships over long distances.

The Pod (fig. 2.3) includes the Irvine Ranch and extends to the southern edges of Orange County. It tends toward less density than flatter developments and rely on a great deal of topographical sterilization. Rather than addressing the terrain with a solution of building, it was addressed through severe grading to permit standard modes of light wood balloon frame construction. Thus, where once there were rolling hills defined only by the evolution of the Earth's surface now exists a rhythm of gigantic steps. They are paved with alternating asphaltic concrete, nearly identical homes, and landscaping strips. This is where most new development has been concentrated in the last fifteen years and where the Irvine Company began its immense and influential land development enterprise. The roads are incessantly hierarchical and are built in sequence from largest to smallest in anticipation of future and predetermined growth factors which in these areas is done by multi-acre conglomerations rather than in any parcel by parcel fashion. Here the freeways come first and everything else follows.

The Crust (fig. 2.4) exists as a variant in both the Grid and the Pod. As development hits the physical boundary of the Pacific Ocean, density increases and creates a thickened edge where suburb hits the sea, a density driven by desire and by land prices. This ecology has an important characteristic not found in the previous two, its distinct physical limit. The densities experienced here are by no means close to an urban center but offer a significant increase over the common densities of the postsuburb.

The eastern corner of Orange County, the Preserve (fig. 2.5) is composed of steep hills, small mountains, and the Cleveland National Forest. All of these are instrumental factors in limiting growth in this area creating an ad hoc zone of preservation at least in part
figure 2.3 – the Pod, top photo Bryan Ridley, bottom photo Google Earth
figure 2.4 – the Crust, top photo Bryan Ridley, bottom photo Google Earth
figure 2.5 – the Preserve, top photo Bryan Ridley, bottom photo Google Earth
governed by prohibitive cost. The Preserve is a natural boundary within the County to its own
growth, that along with the Marine Base Camp Pendleton to the south is the only thing
keeping Orange County and San Diego County from blurring their boundaries.

Using ecologies as a strategy for division provides a manageable and quantifiable
framework for understanding the breadth, dispersion, and diversity of the postsuburb, an
organizational space that often struggles with its own definition.

2.3 Typology
As an extension of the ecological with another degree of specificity and diminishing scale
there is the typological. Here, typology is a distilled version of a standard representational
built-form. As Moneo would have it, "a concept which describes a group of objects
characterized by the same formal structure."\textsuperscript{21} Derivative of Peter Rowe's suggestion for
suburban typologies of the single-family house, retail development, modern workplaces, and
modern roadways,\textsuperscript{22} there are five dominant typological groups to explore in Orange County.
They are Home, Shop, Work, Black, and Green. The first four coincide with Rowe's
suggestion, and the fifth, Green, considers the varieties of allocated and primarily
manufactured green (natural) spaces throughout the region. Due to its horizontal
predilections and heavy zoning protocols Orange County is a place of much typological
segregation. Large areas of land are dedicated to one typology and exclude the others, except
where there are small concentrations and intersections. Three main typologies are organized
in exclusive patches of Home, Work, and Shop.

Home (fig. 2.6) is primarily of the single-family variety, but also is expressed in small
scale apartment projects tailored to young families and the workforce. In recent years there
has also been a lot of attention given to town homes and other condominium configurations
as density has become a more profitable and affordable mode of development during periods
of insatiable land value increases. Shop (fig. 2.7) is the dominant social space of Orange
County, composed of strip malls large and small as well as regional shopping centers such as
South Coast Plaza which is internationally renowned for its selection of expensive wares and
dominates total sales figures for the nation nationally.\textsuperscript{23} Work (fig. 2.8) is a typology of office
towers and office parks, buildings and space of singular function and a diurnal functionality-
occupied during business hours and entirely vacant at night (save only the cleaning crews).
These typological patches are then distributed and accessed by the typology of Black (fig. 2.9), the expression of the region's paving lust and undeniable dependence on the automobile. Black includes everything from roads to parking lots and includes the secondary infrastructure that is created to support the consequences of such extensive impermeable surfaces. This includes drainage channels, rivers paved with concrete, and various basins, all attempting to limit the flooding that occurs during rain storms. Green (fig. 2.10) is mostly an infill typology of manufactured and manicured nature expressed in recreational parks, median strips and golf courses. It is a typology tailored less to experience and more toward appearance and is often physically inaccessible.

Using these five typologies within the context and understanding of the ecological investigation begins to construct a testing ground where new architecture and new patterns of growth can be speculated. It also begins to establish a mindset where development can be understood less for what it is and more for what it can do.
figure 2.9 – Black, photos Bryan Ridley

figure 2.10 – Green, photos Bryan Ridley
CHAPTER III Transit and the Bristol Corridor

As Orange County grows, the burden on the transportation systems is ever increasing. Some transit proposals focus on external and interregional solutions, attempting to connect more commuters from outside Orange County with the vibrant job market in Orange County. These include proposals to build a second layer of the 91 freeway which connects Orange County to the Inland Empire county of Riverside and another aims to bore a 12 mile tunnel through the Santa Ana mountains of the Preserve. Aside from these proposals to externally augment transit options for Orange County, there is one proposal for the inception of a light rail line that has the potential of being catalytic as an internal system. Orange County is at a point where it needs to concentrate its growth from within and look toward new organizations and ways of occupation. As an initial project of light rail, as a starter system, the light rail cannot directly serve the entirety of Orange County. What it can do is facilitate an alternative method of development and organization that new populations can take advantage of by establishing a functional example for other areas. The light rail project proposed by the Orange County Transportation Authority (fig. 3.1) and its alignment approved by the constituencies of the host municipalities of Santa Ana and Costa Mesa is 11.4 miles long and comprises 15 stations along its route. The majority of the system is situated in Santa Ana; one of the densest and most Latino areas in Orange County.

The light rail project begins at John Wayne International Airport and heads north and west to pass through a light industrial area (Work), one of the few remaining agricultural fields, the County's Performing Arts Center, South Coast Plaza (Shop), an archetypal field of residential (Home), the county government seat and Civic Center, old town Santa Ana, and the Santa Ana rail depot which connects to the commuter rail line, Metrolink which has seen an increase in ridership in recent years (fig. 3.2). It is proposed to be completely above ground, about 75% elevated and 25% at grade with an extension arm to Santa Ana College to the north, existing entirely in the Grid after experiencing heavy political and voter resistance in the Pod.

The street that the proposed light rail parallels is called Bristol Street and is being expanded into a significant north/south arterial. Previously 2-lanes in each direction (fig. 3.3), it is being expanded to 3-lanes each way with a broad median strip and is referred to as the Bristol Corridor (fig. 3.4). The freeway system under serves the north/south traffic flow in this part of Orange County and the Bristol Corridor is
figure 3.1 - Orange County current and future transit systems
figure 3.2 - Light rail transit alignment, photo Google Earth
figure 3.3 - Bristol Corridor original street section, photo Bryan Ridley

figure 3.4 - Bristol Corridor expanded street section, photo Bryan Ridley
acting more and more as a surrogate in that absence. To facilitate the widening, eminent
domain has been employed, removing property, mostly single family home lots on both sides
of the street. In much of the expanded area this has left a significant vacancy that in some
places exceeds 260 feet in width. While this extra width helps permit the insertion of light
rail infrastructure it has left an inactive void, one ripe with potential to establish new
methods of development and growth for Orange County.
CHAPTER IV Tactical Design Strategies

To bridge the gap between organization and architecture (which in this case references the entirety of the constructed and tempered environment) tactical design strategies are employed. Each has an element of generality to it for flexibility and adaptation while at the same time a factor of specificity to help achieve criteria established in response to the local condition. These strategies endeavor to guide development in a manner that will activate the postsuburban landscape, helping negotiate between the typical binary expression of Orange County as placeless or as a marketable commodity, which eliminates the possibility and growing necessity of instrumental future development. Alex Wall, in "Programming the Urban Surface" refers to the "functioning matrix of connective tissue that organizes not only objects and spaces but also the dynamic processes and events that move through them. This is landscape as active surface, structuring the conditions for new relationships and interactions among the things it supports." 

There are those who have addressed new ground apart from the typical polar response to the postsuburb. James Corner expresses measured optimism about continued polycentrism and the need for complex landscapes such as the postsuburb to be "encouraged to grow and change over time" as they "cannot be designed and controlled as a totality." Similarly, Douglas Kelbaugh’s has outlined a broad and loose method for working parallel to the suburbs rather than directly against it in an effort to emphasize a "spatially coherent and cohesive sense of place."

The tactical strategy of Narrow (fig. 4.1) aims to deal with the problematic breadth of the Bristol Corridor which has generated a space occupied solely by automobiles and left over space that has been visually washed with an implementation of the typology Green yielding unusable patches of grass and rows of tall palms. It is intended that by creating architecture that can develop edges to narrow the corridor that more diverse and discrete areas of occupation can be created while developing a transitional constructed landscape between the corridor and the existing residential neighborhoods.

Stitch (fig. 4.2) is intended to remove some of the existing fabric for the benefit of the larger community fabric as a whole, creating pedestrian and spatial linkages between the new intensity of the corridor and the space of the existing neighborhoods. There is the potential to also insert a higher density residential element into the fabric of the existing
figure 4.1 – Narrow

figure 4.2 – Stitch
homes to reduce any burgeoning polarity between the corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods while fostering future growth and concentrations.

Stack (fig. 4.3) aims to build more vertically than horizontally which can lead to an increase in horizontal opportunities and for mixed use typological diversity while limiting the diurnal activity flux common to the typological segregation. As it is now, large typological areas sit dormant during one part of the day while their counterparts are entirely full and active. The intense and immense transit needs generated by this organization (most commonly seen in the relationship of housing to the workplace) are the impetus for Stack.

Resurface (fig. 4.4) moves away from functionless paving to establishing surface of instrumentality. It provides function to roofs, outdoor areas, and other surfaces that are typically and consistently impermeable. This can directly help with the urban heat island effect which affects areas such as Orange County that are dominated by pavement and other impervious horizontal surfaces which in postsuburban areas amounts to about fifty percent. Storm water runoff is another problem for the area that could be reduced with the implementation of surface that could aid in water absorption. Water treatment is another
possibility, which could help with the County's burgeoning desire to wean itself off of the water sourced from other regions of California and other states. There is also the possibility of energy benefit opportunities through the use of photovoltaic panels.

![figure 4.4 - Resurface](image)

Alt-ground (fig. 4.5) provides a vertical separation between different horizontal planes while opening up new relationships in a dimension mostly foreign to the horizontal distribution of Orange County. One opportunity to directly impact with this tactic is the separation of vehicular and pedestrian movement which in some cases is encouraged but in others creates an uncomfortable relationship, particularly where an intense vehicle corridor is flanked by a narrow and adjacent sidewalk. It also offers the chance to increase the number and quality of publicly usable areas and it gives a deliberate and spatially represented priority to the pedestrian and public environment, both of which are under attended to in the current version of Orange County. Simultaneously, it requires "the multilevel movement of people together with the connector flows of elevators, moving stairs, ramps, and so on," which "creates a marvelous spectacle in the city."33

Grain (fig. 4.6) provides dense and potentially flexible elements, furnishings, and objects34 throughout for the definition of public areas and to provide a scale of interaction tailored to the user rather than a persistent acquiescence to the scale of the automobile or the newly injected light rail. As the density increases in Orange County the traditional amenities of private yard and extra space within a single family home will diminish in size and the need for communal outlets in the form of public space will increase in the absence of private space which was previously and ubiquitously available.
These are instrumental strategies that are locally beneficial and effective, which suggests that their implementation across many areas could lead to a fundamental change in many of these issues. These strategies represent a starting point and may best be implemented in concert with each other for maximum potential.

Figure 4.5 – Alt-ground
figure 4.6 - Grain
CHAPTER V  Three Nodes

5.1  Identifying the Nodes

The focused project area of the light rail is a 3 station 1.5 mile long portion of it in Santa Ana (fig. 5.1). This area is predominantly residential and features an organization that is archetypal to the Grid and occurs throughout that ecology. What is less archetypal is the occupation of this area where single-family homes have been occupied as multi-family homes. It is also an area of intense Latino concentration where many immigrant families have made their homes and transposed culture. The archetypal organization allows for this project to produce lessons and strategies that could be applied in other similar areas while the specificity of this locality requires a more deliberate and focused programmatic response.

Two primary systems of movement undergird all of the development for the future of this site. These come from the grid network of hierarchical roads and from the future linear network of light rail transit. The grid network (fig. 5.2) creates nodes of activity defined by intersection of major roads and diminishes at the intersections of roads lower in the hierarchy. The fundamental layout of the Grid in Orange County features primary roads on a 1 mile interval and secondary roads on the half mile interval in between is the consistent generator of this pattern. The space in between is mostly reserved for patches of typological uniformity. The linear network (fig. 5.3) creates nodes of activity where the train stops and passengers concentrate and disperse in a mostly concentric fashion that may be eccentric in the direction of the system's traffic flow (in this case along the corridor rather than perpendicular to it). It is the superposition of the linear network of light rail over the grid network of the roads where new opportunities arise, not just for transit, but for occupation, one that favors a denser and more fluid organization allowing for more local activity while linking and reinforcing existing nodes. It is a local solution with regional implications seeing that "the design and integration of new transportation infrastructure is central to the functioning of the urban surface."35
Figure 5.1 – LRT local alignment, photo Google Earth
figure 5.2 – Grid network

figure 5.3 – Linear network
5.2 Programming the Nodes

The typology map (fig. 5.4) demonstrates the dominance of the Home typology and suggests the activity concentration patterns that occur at intersections throughout the Grid. At these regular intervals of concentrated movement and activity there are instances of Shop and Work present, varying in scale depending on the hierarchy of the intersection in question. The consistency of the typological spreads begins to erode approaching First Street, where Work and Shop spread and form a more dominant presence against the omnipresence of Home.

As a derivative of the typology map and an understanding of specific local conditions, a program map (fig. 5.5) was created for speculative development catalyzed by the future implementation of light rail transit along the chosen segments of the Bristol Corridor.

At node number eight (fig. 5.6), the intersection of Bristol and Edinger, the southwest corner is occupied by a couple of supermarkets, other smaller shops, and a large parking lot. Other corners of this intersection feature some small retail, a private high school, and another parking lot. Aside from the southeast corner of the street which is the site of the high school, the other three corners are mostly vacant and heavily paved, places ripe for change and intensification. Because of this, this project proposes to shift the alignment of the light rail transit to the west to engage the two western corners of this intersection before returning to the center line of the corridor. The station will sit on the southwest corner of this node. Program that will be added at the southwest corner of the site includes independent retail, a recreation center, outdoor play fields, a passive park, a community and commuter parking structure, and a multi-family residential component at a density of 30-35 units per acre. The northwest corner of the site is intended to become an extension of the community college campus a couple of miles to the north with an integral public space and local retail. Retail is intended to be occupied by local and independent retailers, strengthening the trends within the existing community and stifling the current method of providing retail space that only national and international chain stores can afford to occupy. Public space is a critical component of all of the growth proposed here as it is generally absent from the fabric of the postsuburb. In the current idiom, public spaces are shopping spaces. The southeast corner of this node will be left alone, while the northeast corner becomes a site for multi-family housing at a density of 45-50 units per acre and a park integrated with the new housing and the existing Home fabric to the east.
figure 5.4 – Typology map
Node eight is the most heavily programmed as it offered up the most raw space to work with by virtue of its multiple spatial vacancies, its relative midpoint location along the light rail transit alignment, and its proximity to a permanent establishment such as the private high school.

At node number nine (fig. 5.7), the intersection of Bristol and McFadden, all four corners are occupied with parking lots, demonstrating the typical suburban relationship of buildings set back from the street. The southwest corner is a large shopping center in a linear arrangement. The other three corners are small retail structures for specialty wares. Here the light rail transit station will stay at the center line of the corridor and be accessed from the median. This node is a less intense intersection as McFadden is not a primary east/west arterial. Instead it serves more as a local collector to the larger roadways. This node will be altered through the addition of a canopy system over approximately 50% of the existing parking area, a passive augmentation to the existing condition. This canopy will serve multiple functions. The primary use will remain as parking for the adjacent shops and also for people driving to this transit stop. Periodically it will also serve as a veil for a semi-
open air market place. Adding to the multiplicity of this site, the veil of the canopy will be made of solar panels to harvest energy from the persistent local sun.

At node number ten (fig. 5.8), the intersection of Bristol and First, there are vacancies on three corners and a dilapidated church set back to the northwest. Currently, this portion of Bristol Street has not been widened, but the impacts of its coming are easily visible as many of the parcels near this intersection have been vacated in coerced anticipation. First Street which runs perpendicular to the Bristol Corridor is an important avenue in this area. It is reinforced by an abundance of Shop and Work and connects to the Civic Center east of Bristol. To reinforce the importance of First Street, which parallels the light rail's alignment one block to the north, the light rail transit station will span the intersection giving spatial preference to the east/west axis. At the two southern corners and extending cardinally along First Street the existing typologies of Shop and Work will be reinforced with additional stories of building and the integration of an embedded park. On the northwest corner the existing decaying church will be replace with an ecclesiastical
cluster to be opposed to the northeast by a community health clinic. Currently there are many clinics in the area but they are distributed and disparate. Centralizing these clinics and providing adjacency to the light rail transit will benefit those who need to use their resources.

Each of the nodes represents a different approach to development relative to their current conditions and capacity for change. While much of what is proposed is a significant departure from the current model of building in the postsuburb, it is intended to not displace or isolate the existing conditions, but augment and strengthen them. Node eight is an aggressive program to intensify community space and facilities in this locality while highlighting the importance and the opportunity of the light rail. Node nine is more of a passive approach, modifying what is already there with a broad gesture and getting much more out of it than ever before. Node ten is tailored to integrating other major systems of organization and connection in the area, allowing the new corridor to spread out and refrain from being limited to a corridor of density embedded in a suburban fabric.
5.3 Constructing the Nodes

Node eight (fig. 5.9) has many interwoven components, derived from the tactical design strategies and blended with the new programming for the site. The primary component of the site is the light rail transit station that anchors the south west portion of the intersection, hovering above the integral bus stop and the main entrance to this portion of the site (fig. 5.10). Docked into the station is a multilevel parking structure that features parking levels either above or below pedestrian levels of circulation, keeping the realm of the automobile as spatially removed as possible without compromising convenience [Alt-ground]. The top of the parking garage is a large play field with enough space for a soccer field and more. Unlike most of play fields in the surrounding areas, this one will be available to the community instead of being secluded on school property. The field bends down at the transit station, connecting to the main entry and parking. In this area, people can take the vertical circulation up to catch a train, visit some small retail venues, or proceed further down the block to the enclosed community recreation center. At the far west of this node there are three multi-family buildings that integrate with the passive park, over retail, and negotiate the transition in scale to the existing residential neighborhood. The northwest corner of the site features a broad inclined plaza that raises from the intersection to the north where it engages the community college buildings and exposes a level of subterranean parking. The provision of an open public gathering space is critical at a hub of this much activity and will be enlivened by the retail there as well. The northeast corner of the intersection features a row house organization that fronts along the Bristol corridor. The multi-family building (fig. 5.11) is organized with flats oriented toward Bristol on the lowest floor and two-story town homes above that oriented toward the existing residential fabric. The sidewalk is broad and raised above the street which provides a degree of separation from the pace of the roadway and articulates the foreground as being territory for the occupants of the housing. Where there are breaks in between the strip buildings there will be small stores where community activity can focus. In tandem with one of those building breaks is an implementation of the design strategy Stitch where a park has been grafted into the existing organization connecting the old with the new and encouraging the activation of the single-family residences along with the growth of the corridor. It is important that the growth of these areas be concurrent to be most effective and most supportive of the light rail.
figure 5.9 – Node eight aerial
figure 5.10 – Node eight transit station and community facilities
figure 5.11 – Node eight corridor residential
Node nine (fig. 5.12) is a simpler imposition on the existing site than the other two nodes in question. The station here is above the median, with the tracks bending out and around to accommodate the vertical circulation from the center of the street. The canopy (fig. 5.13) over the existing parking lot ties into it as a system of measure so as to preserve its stowage capacity. Under the canopy and toward the street edge there is a linear block of permanent market infrastructure that houses facilities needed for cooking, storage, and refrigeration, to encourage and support the semi-open air market program. The area under the solar canopy is inherently veiled in a silky shade through the translucency of the photovoltaic panels.
figure 5.13 – Node nine marketplace
Node ten (fig. 5.14) aims to maintain and reinforce the importance and activity of First Street which runs perpendicular to the Bristol Corridor. The light rail transit station spans First Street and is accessed by vertical circulation elements from any of the four corners. All of the building along First street come out toward the street and establish a visual favor toward the east/west axis. The southern portions of the node are occupied by stacked retail and commercial space tied together with a park area that adjoins the neighborhood and also covers the parking for the increased density of occupation. The northeast corner contains the community health clinic which has a direct connection to the rail station. Also directly connected to the rail station is the ecclesiastical cluster (fig. 5.15) to the northwest which features a main church building and multiple ancillary uses tucked in and around for other community and religious uses.

*figure 5.14 – Node ten aerial*
figure 5.15 – Node ten ecclesiastical cluster
Again from Alex Wall, "the design is at first a tactical strategy, anticipating the uncertainties of future development." This project is an anticipation, one of many scenarios, but one that aims to take advantage of the catalytic potential of infrastructure, specifically by adding to and transforming the Bristol Corridor. By no means is this a brief program of growth but a lengthy process that hopefully can evolve as the postsurburb continues to grow, shift, mature, and redefine itself.
NOTES

CHAPTER I
3. Ibid., 6-8.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. Ibid., 9.
12. Ibid., 3-4
14. Ibid., 91.

CHAPTER II
16. Ibid., 235.
17. Ibid., 55.
18. Ibid., 143-159.
19. Key to the City, "Key to the City: USA City Information for Nearly Every City & Town in the USA," http://www.usacitiesonline.com (Key to the City, 2004), Orange County Section.

20. Kling, plate #4; chapter 2. Development of the Pod is of particular interest as the majority of its development over the last four decades there has been directed and conducted by the privately held Irvine Company, the owner and development steward of the Irvine Ranch. The Irvine Ranch is a behemoth mass of territory that bisects and covers nearly one-fifth of the County. Their concepts for development of autonomous communities form a landscape clearly dominated by principles of uniformity and control; countless regulations and restrictions. Indeed, most of the residential developments are subsequently produced in the model put forth and honed by the Irvine Company as their fiscal success has bred many like-minded developers. This large scale master planning has created what is likely the most wholly capitalist and franchised landscape anywhere in the world.


CHAPTER III


27. Ibid., section 5.3.

CHAPTER IV

28. Michael Sorkin, "Density Noodle," Lotus International v.117 (June 2003), 5. The poetry of the text is worth transcribing here: "The mindless profusion of traditional architecture as a cure-all for a culture that no longer lives in anything approaching the patter that produced the forms into which it is being shoehorned is only the most
depressing manifestation of the reduction of architecture and urbanism into consumer goods."


30. Corner, 123.


32. Kelbaugh, 53.

33. Wall, 245.

34. Ibid., 245.

CHAPTER V

35. Wall, 238.

CHAPTER VI

36. Wall, 238.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


