



TRANSFORMATIVE PLACEMAKING: CREATING VIBRANT, INCLUSIVE, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Jennifer S. Vey
April 11, 2023



ANNE T. AND ROBERT M. BASS CENTER FOR
TRANSFORMATIVE PLACEMAKING

Our Mission:

The Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking inspires public, private, and civic sector leaders to make transformative place investments that generate widespread social and economic benefits.



Why transformative placemaking?

-  **New technologies, demographic trends, and economic shifts are altering needs and demands for place**
-  **These trends have yielded positive impacts but are failing to benefit many people and places**
-  **Communities need to invest in transformative, place-based solutions**





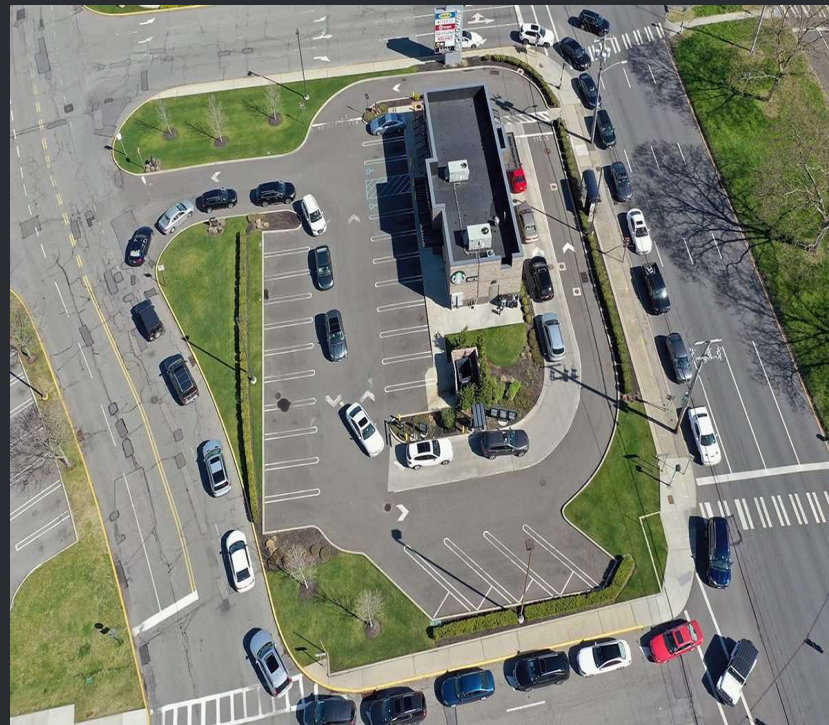
New technologies, demographic trends, and economic shifts are altering needs and demands for place



The relationship between place and economy is constantly evolving

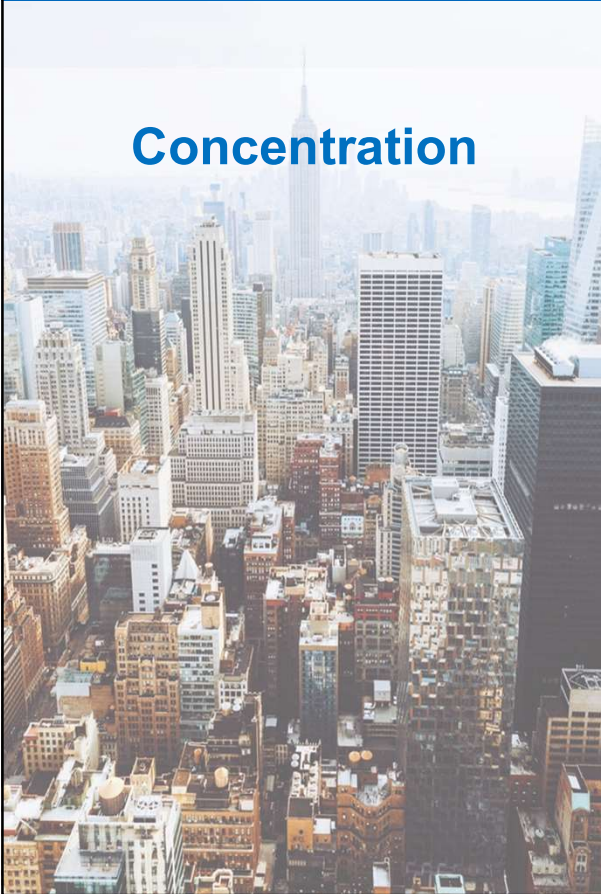


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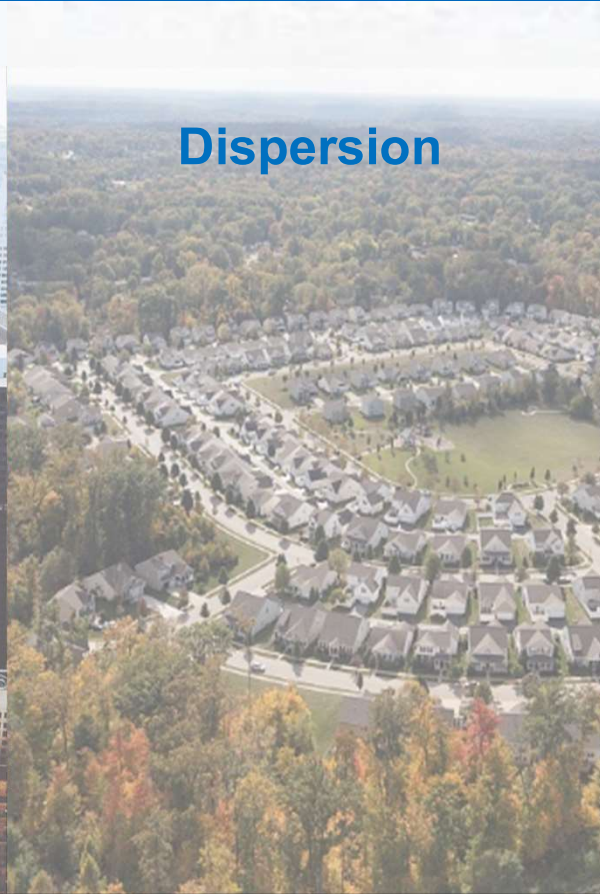


Multiple forces have shaped the American landscape

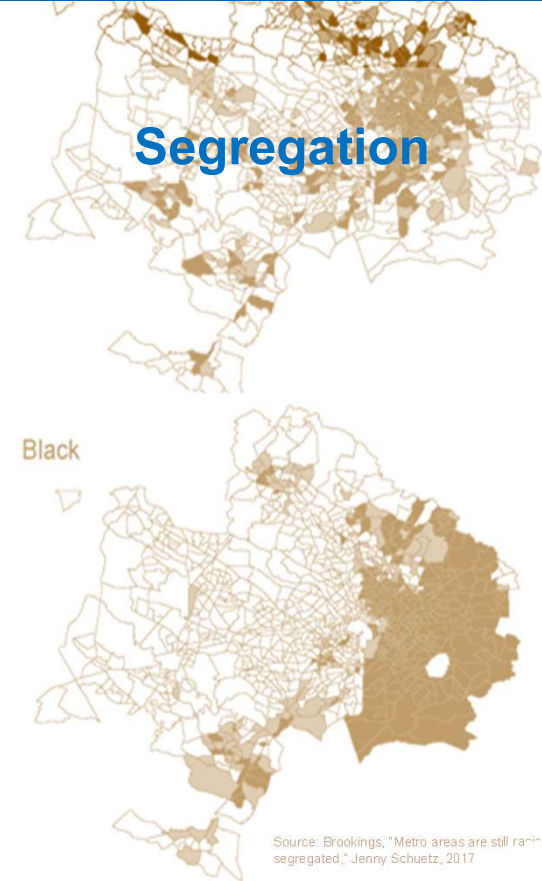
Concentration



Dispersion



Segregation



The digital revolution is impacting growth and development



Photo credit: Unsplash.com and Data Protection Excellence Network



The digital revolution is impacting growth and development

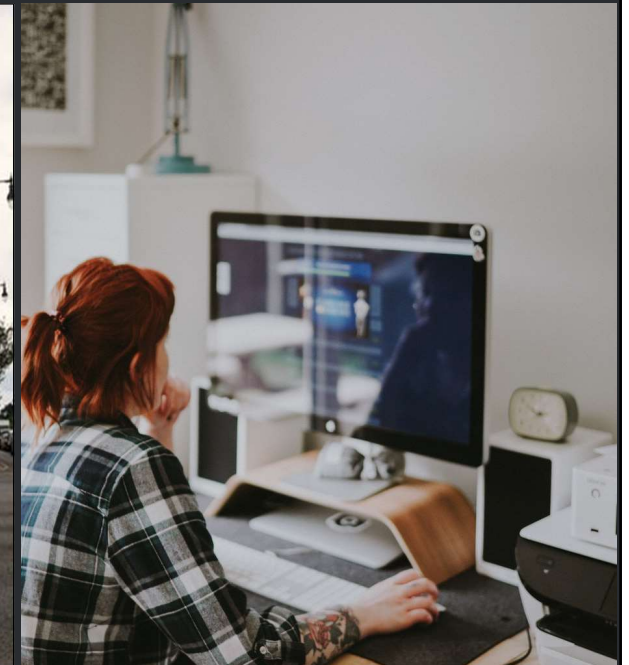
Collaborative



Online



Flexible



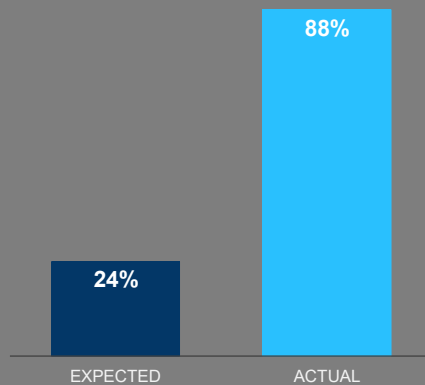
The digital revolution is impacting growth and development

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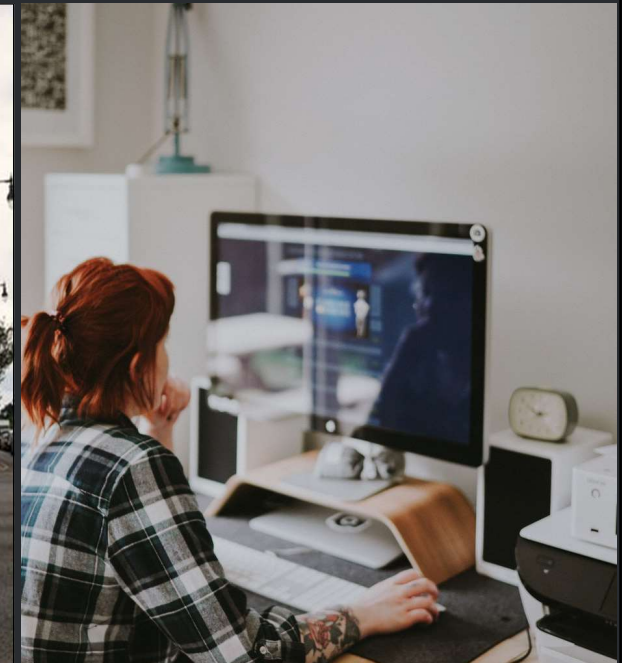
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Flexible

Expected vs. actual change in job density around jobs in information sector, 2004 - 2018



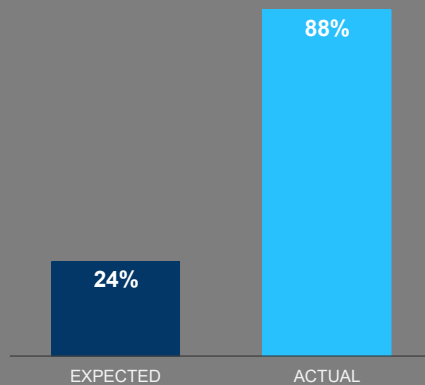
Source: Brookings analysis of Census LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



The digital revolution is impacting growth and development

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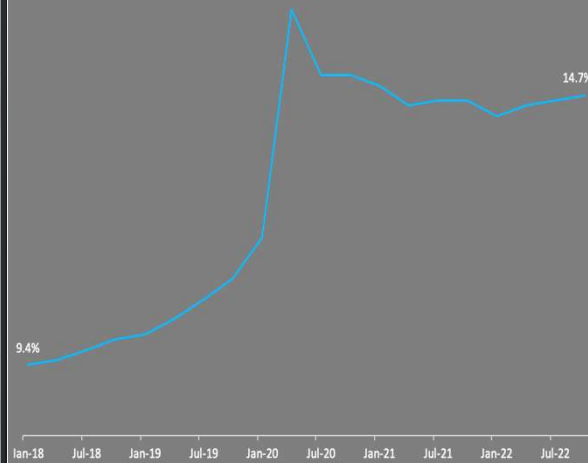
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Online

E-commerce retail sales as a percent of total sales, 2018 - 2022



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. BLS Data via FRED

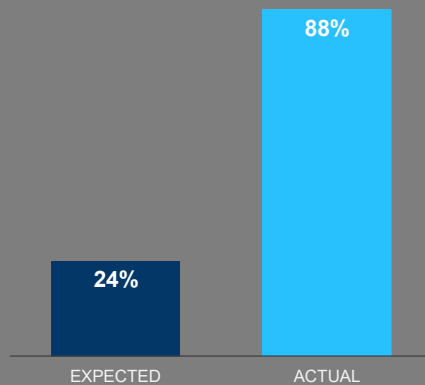
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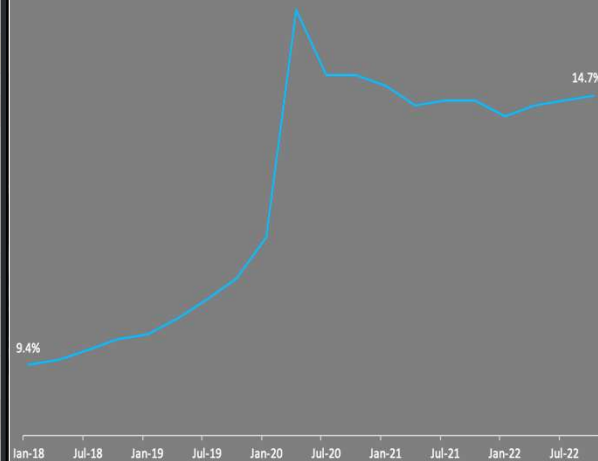
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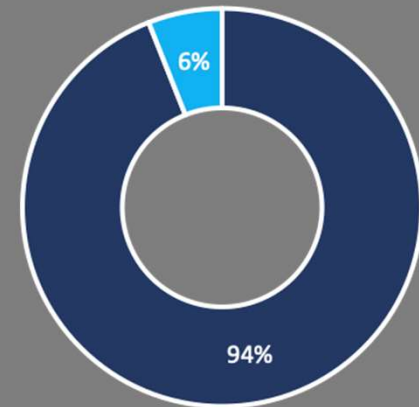
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Flexible

Share of professionals who prefer WFH or a hybrid work model, 2022

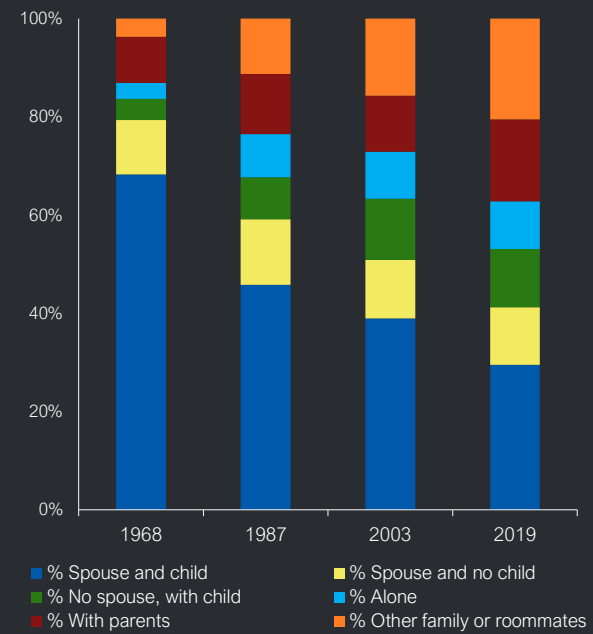


Source: Gallup, "Returning to the Office: The Current, Preferred and Future State of Remote Work"



Our demographic revolution is driving new demands for where people live, work, and play

Household arrangements of Americans aged 23-38
1968 to 2019



Source: Brookings analysis of ACS and Census data via IPUMS





These trends are yielding positive impacts... but are failing to benefit many people and places



JV15 Change the messaging about threats to future

Jennifer Vey, 1/31/2022

Regions comprise multiple activity centers generally surrounded by low density sprawl

Primary Centers concentrate a mixture of different asset types:

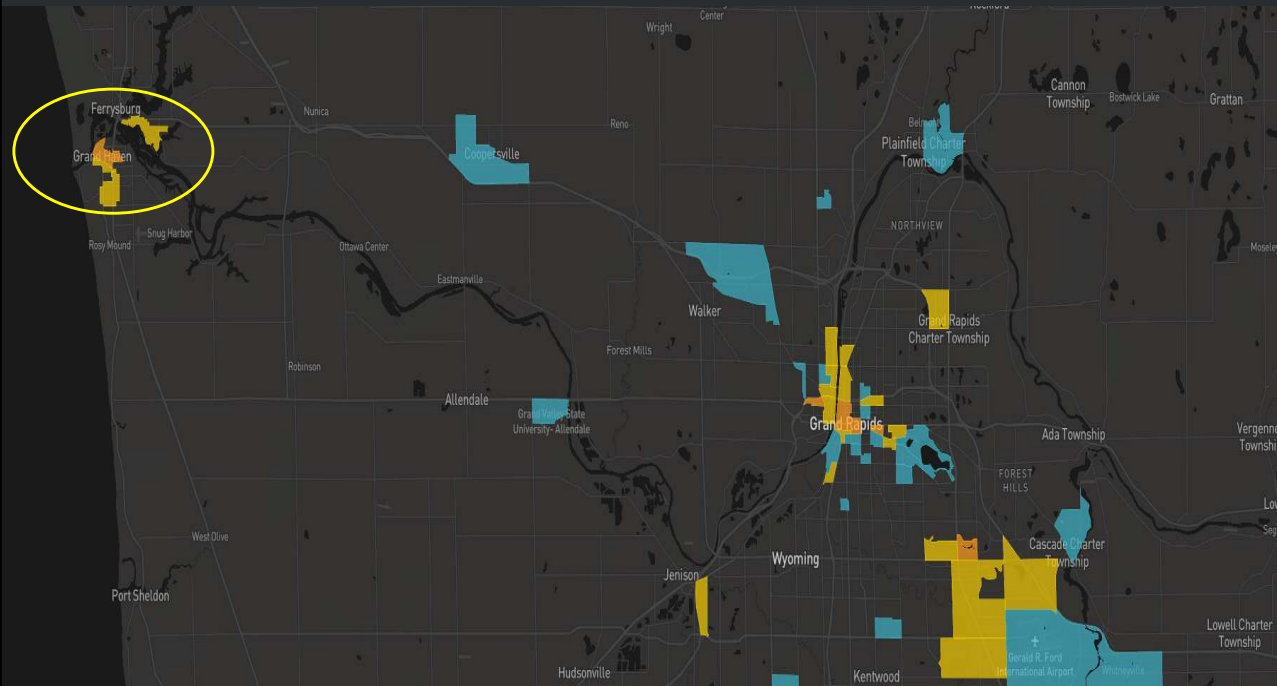
- Downtowns
- Major universities
- Some other asset clusters

Secondary Centers are smaller, but have a similar mixture of assets:

- Neighborhood centers

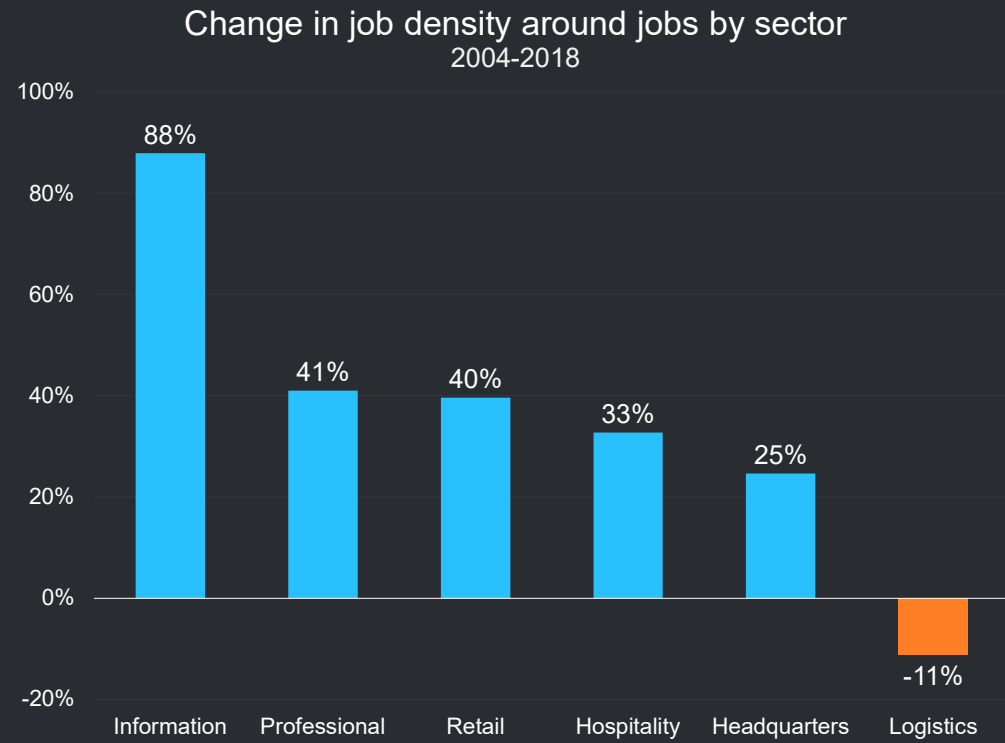
Monocenters concentrate a single asset type:

- Some malls, factories, and office parks.
- Airports



Demand for density is increasing

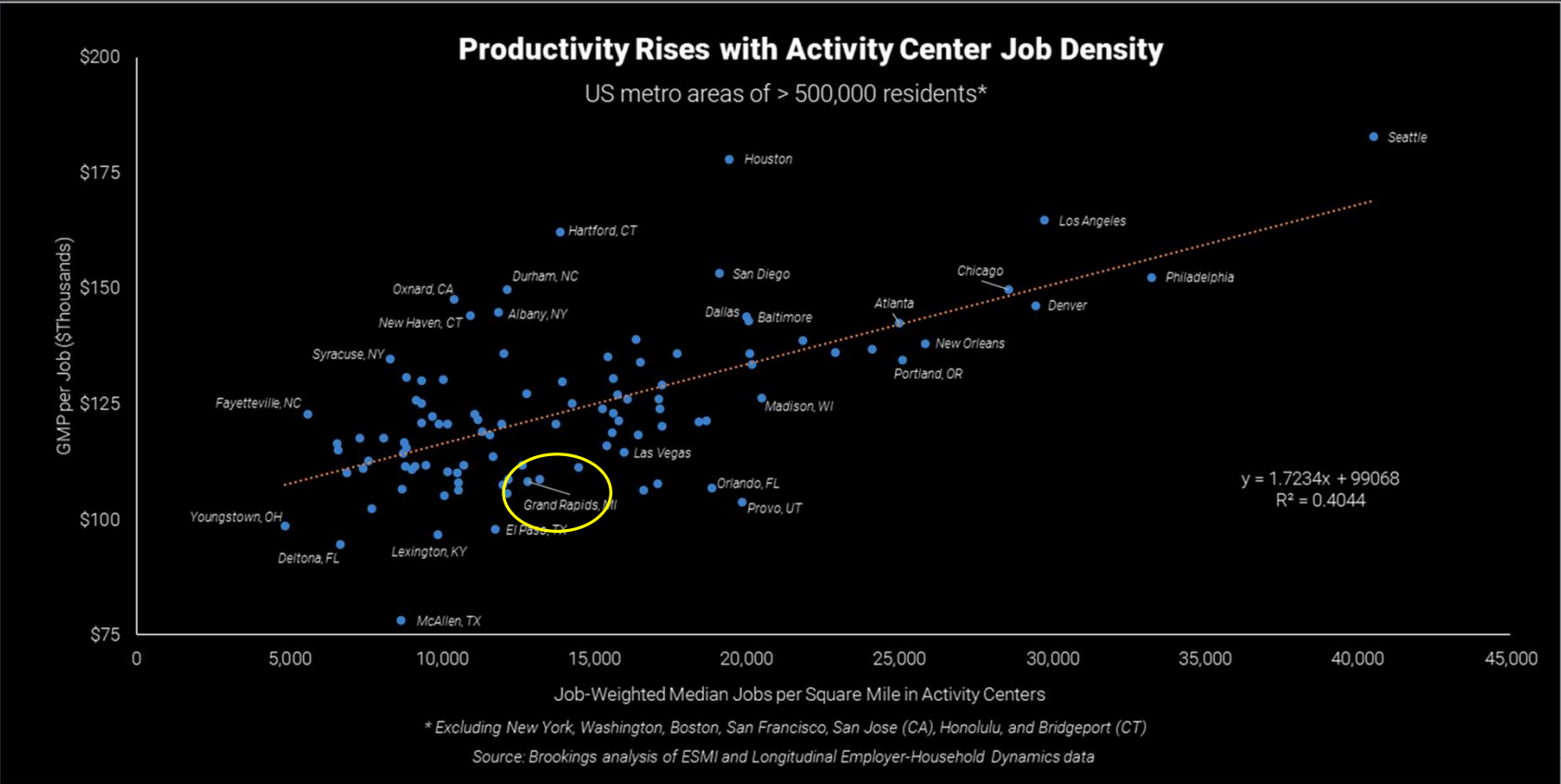
The information sector,
particularly, is demanding
density and proximity



Source: Brookings analysis of Census LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



Job density = Better economic performance



Walkability = Rent premiums (and social, health, & environmental benefits)

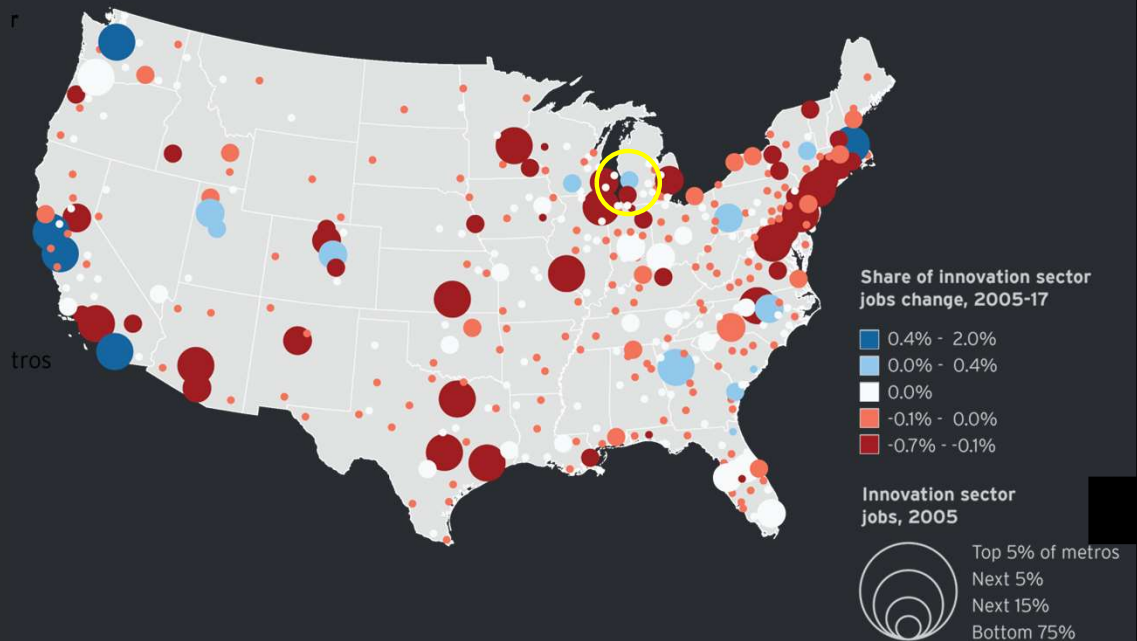


Source: Place Platform and Smart Growth America, "Foot Traffic Ahead," 2023



The knowledge economy is rewarding large places... with some exceptions

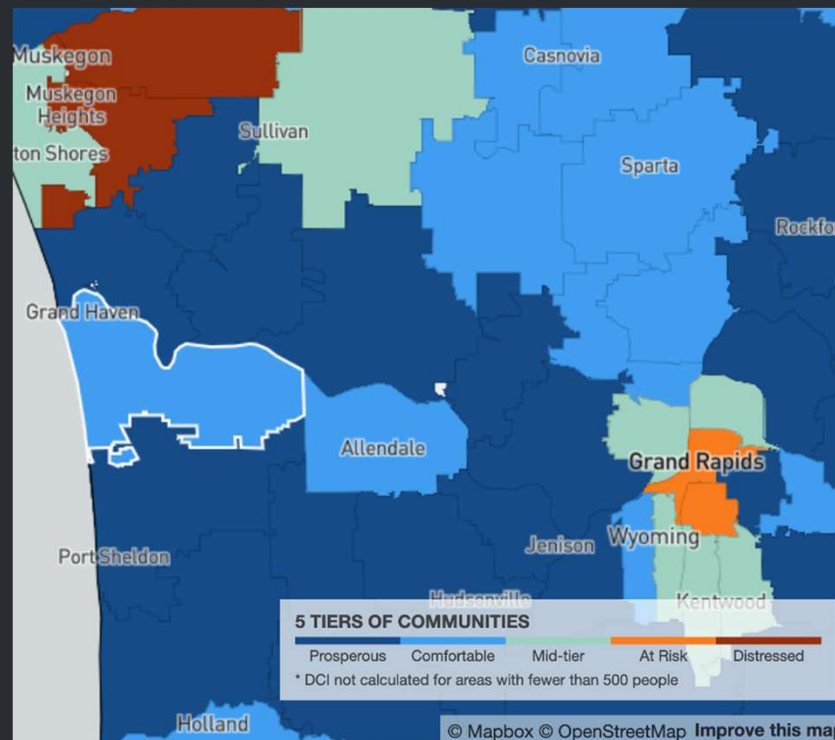
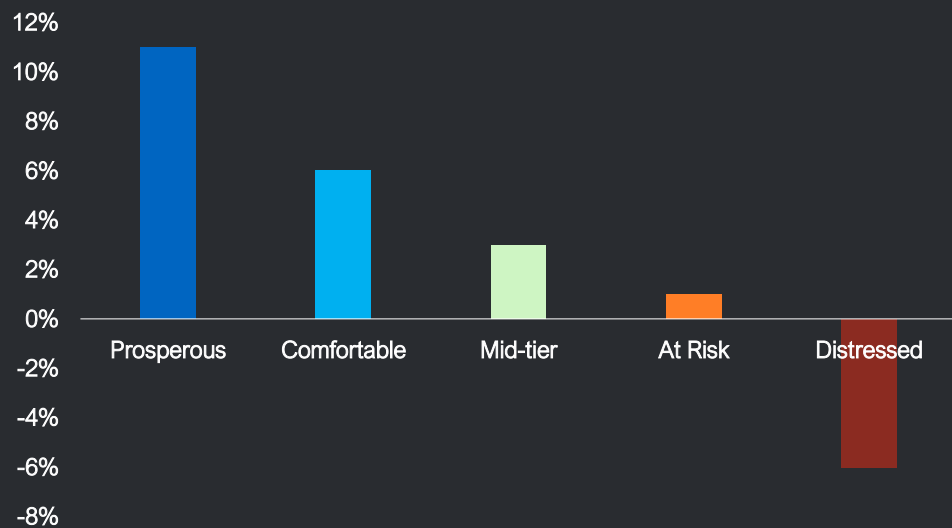
Since 2005, just **5**
“**superstar**” metro areas
accounted for **90%** of all US
job growth in **innovation**
sector



Source: Brookings, "The case for growth centers: How to spread tech innovation across America," 2019

Places of concentrated advantage and disadvantage exist within regions

Change in Business Establishments 2016-2020



Source: Economic Innovation Group, "Distressed Communities Index."

Places of concentrated advantage and disadvantage exist within regions

	Low Income Community (LIC) tracts	Tracts with no high-need designation
% in service occupation	19.1% (+1.2%)	10.9% (-7%)
% with no Internet access	22.9% (+7.1%)	10.7% (-7%)
% owner occupied	49.4% (-14.4%)	74.6% (+10.8%)

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

Difference from U.S. average shown in parentheses.

Across various measures of need, **disadvantage concentrates** in low-income tracts

Places of concentrated advantage and disadvantage exist within regions

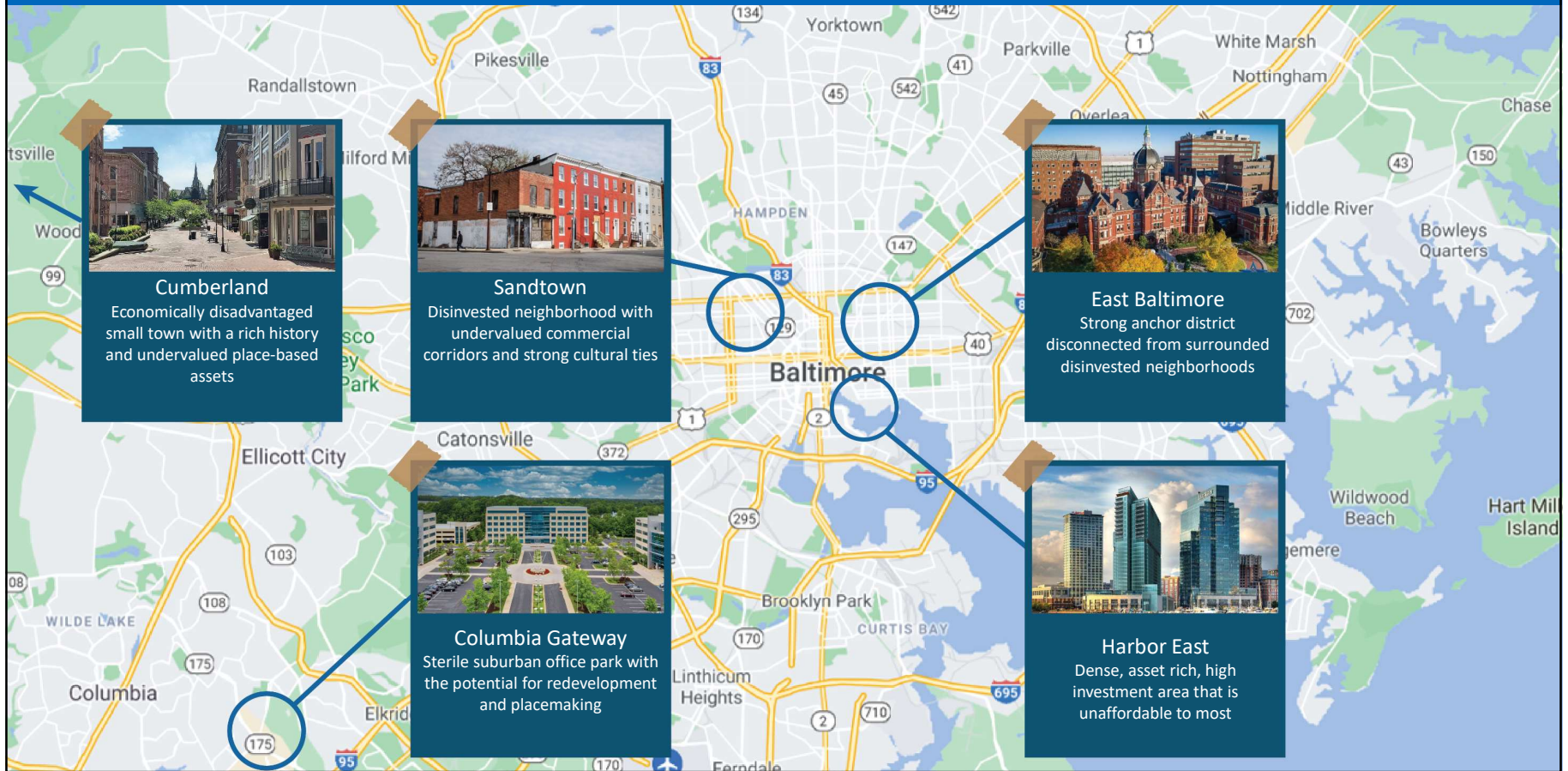
	Low Income Community (LIC) tracts	Tracts with no high-need designation
% White	44.7% (-16.4%)	72.2% (+11.1%)
% Black	20.3% (+8%)	6.8% (-5.5%)
% Hispanic/Latino	26.9% (+9.1%)	11.6% (-6.2%)

Advantage disproportionately concentrates in **white communities**, while disadvantage concentrates in **communities of color**.

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

Difference from U.S. average shown in parentheses.

The upshot: Too many places are failing to meet the needs of people



Our current systems are too siloed to address key challenges

Economic development often lacks a focus on place, placemaking, and (far too often) racial equity.

Community development often lacks a focus on economic development.

Land use planning often lacks a focus on racial equity, economic, and community development.

Traditional placemaking is limited in scope and scale.



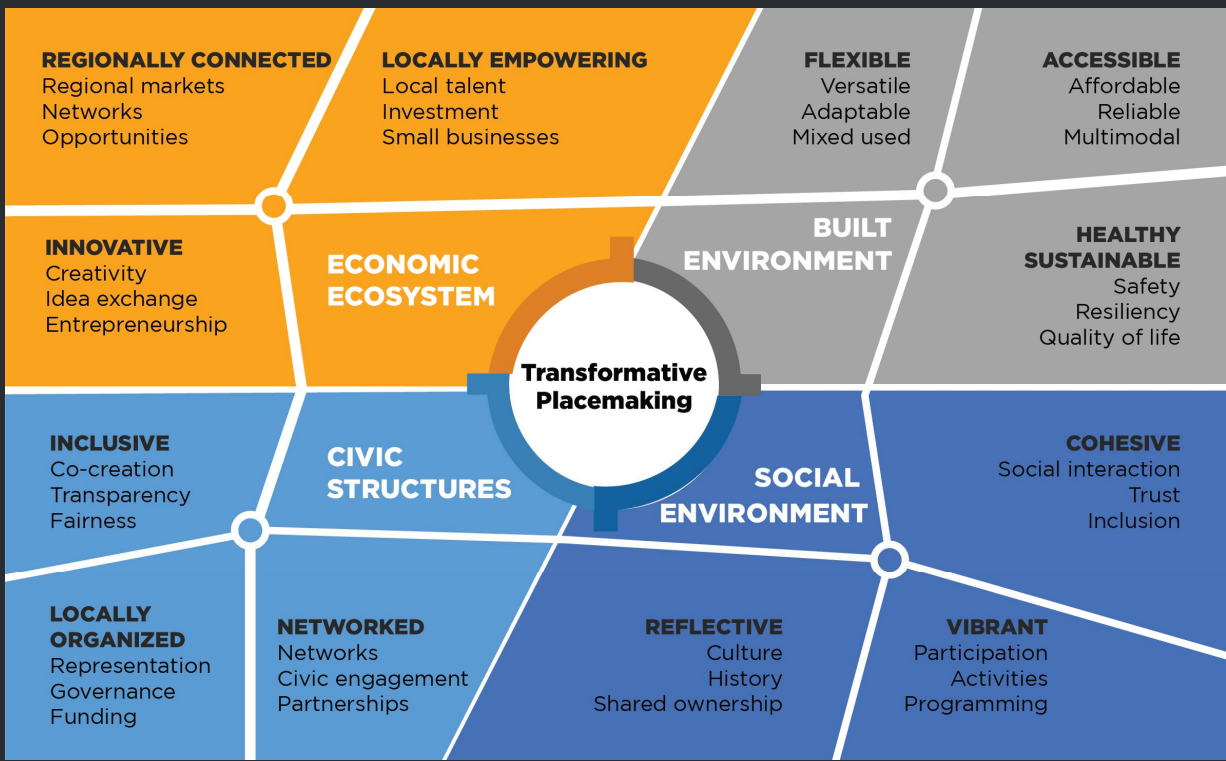


**Communities need to invest in
transformative, place-based solutions**



Communities need to invest in transformative, place-based solutions with an integrated approach

Transformative placemaking leads to **four critical outcomes** that together foster communities of opportunity and wellbeing.



For example:



Wytheville, VA



Supporting local entrepreneurship by:

- Providing access to capital
- Offering free business classes
- Providing mentorship and networking opportunities



Memphis River Parks



Increasing connectivity between neighborhoods by:

- Defining pedestrian and cycling corridors
- Using a long-overlooked park as an anchor for new neighborhood investment

Photo credit: Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices (left), Selavie Photography (right)



For example:



Omaha Mobile Stage



Creating inclusive public spaces by:

- Converting a box truck into a mobile performance space
- Building social capital among designers, performers, and public space advocates
- Increasing social connection among diverse groups



11th Street Bridge Park, Washington, DC

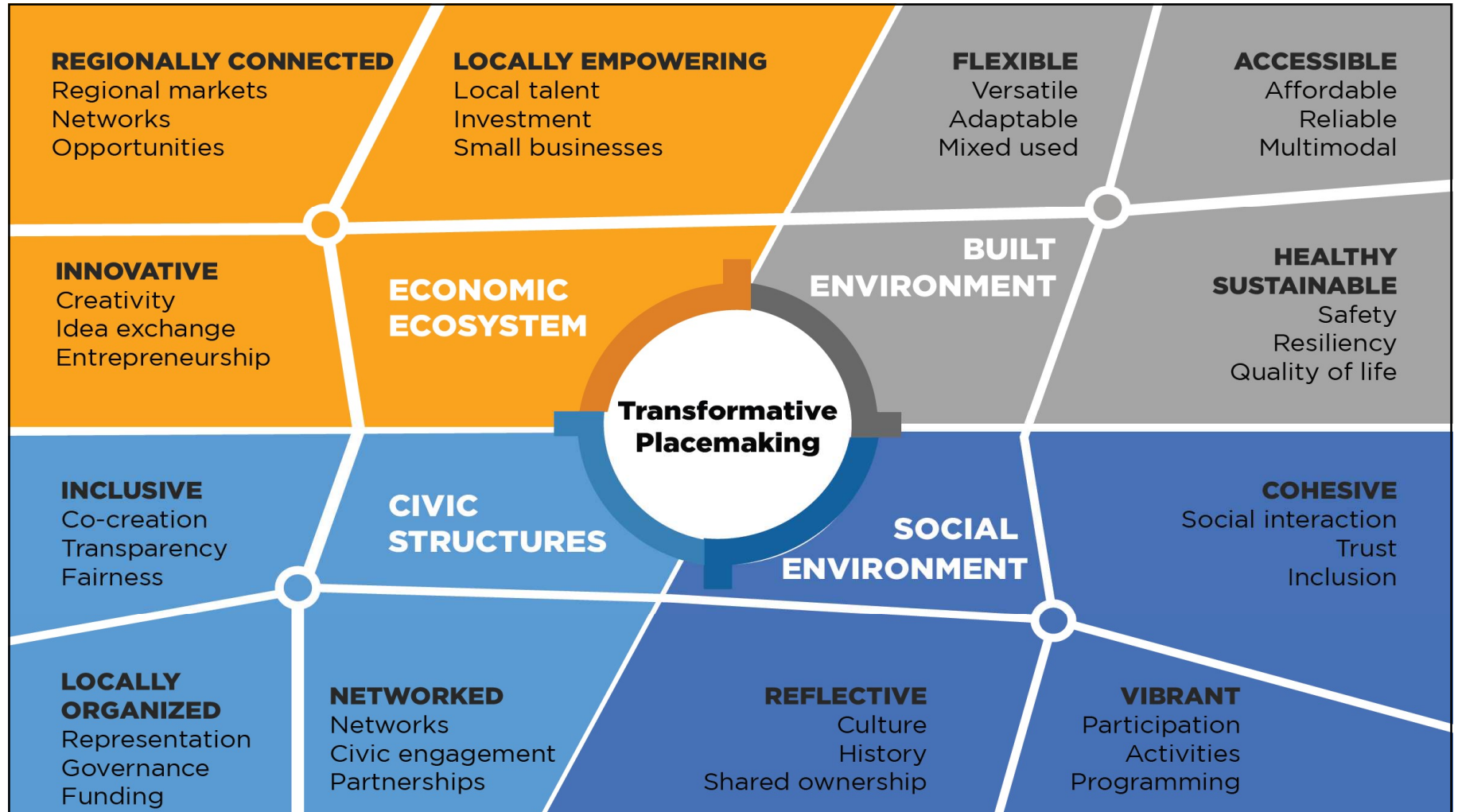


Encouraging locally-managed civic infrastructure by:

- Offering Community Leadership Empowerment Workshops
- Providing resources to develop inclusive plans
- Adapting its development plan to reflect residents' needs

Photo credit: Building Bridge Across the River (right); Omaha Mobile Stage (left)





Transformative placemaking requires **new** ...



Knowledge



**Policies &
investment
strategies**



**Practices
& tools**



Transformative placemaking requires **new** ...



Knowledge

- **Where are economic, physical, social, and civic assets clustered?**
- **What varied and unique roles do these “activity centers” play in the regional economy?**
- **How should this inform where and how to prioritize economic development, infrastructure, and placemaking investments in the region?**



Transformative placemaking requires **new** ...



Policies & investment strategies

- How do we revamp outmoded land use and transportation policies to support dynamic, connected activity centers instead of auto-dependent sprawl?
- How can economic development investments better support the growth of new and existing local businesses?
- How can place-centered investments be more intentional and less reactive to the latest new program or windfall opportunity?



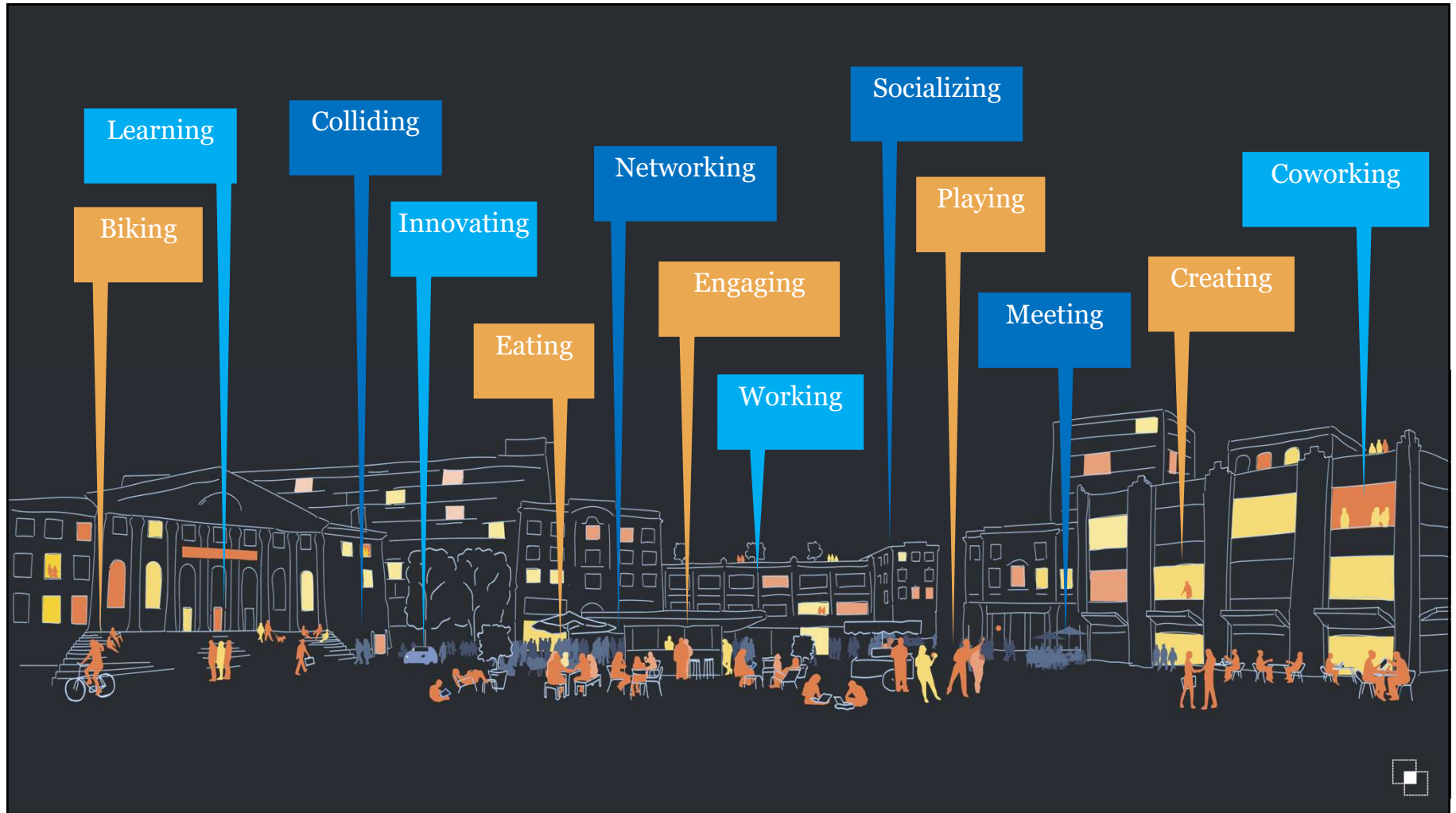
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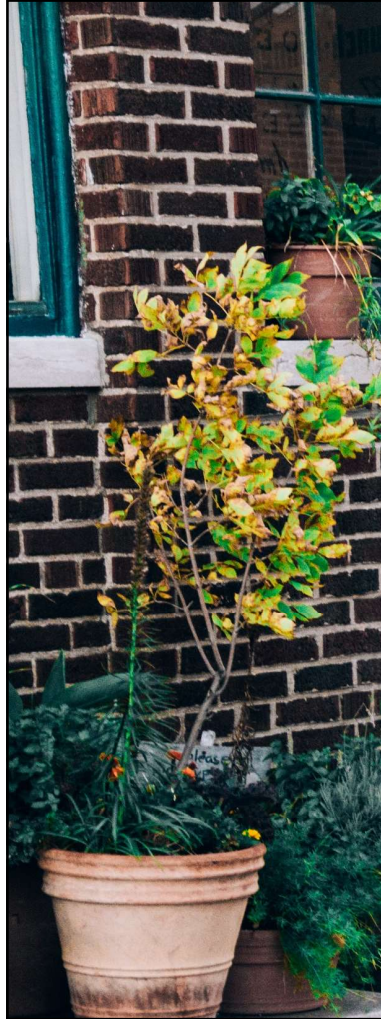


Practices & tools

- How do you adapt and design transformative placemaking practices that help grow connected, vibrant, and inclusive places?
- How do you build the capacity of hyper-local place governance organizations to drive these outcomes?



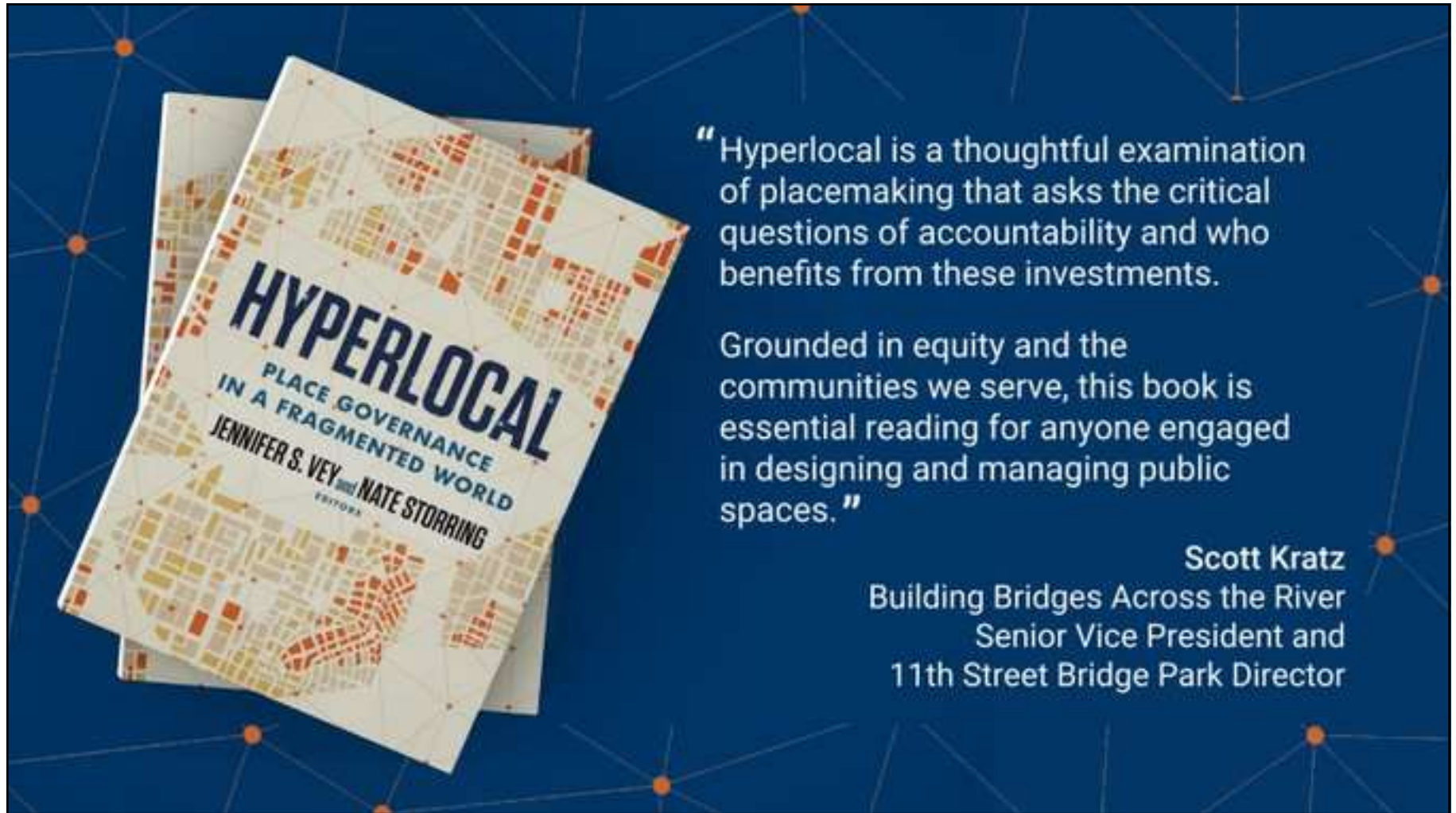




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“Hyperlocal is a thoughtful examination of placemaking that asks the critical questions of accountability and who benefits from these investments.

Grounded in equity and the communities we serve, this book is essential reading for anyone engaged in designing and managing public spaces.”

Scott Kratz
Building Bridges Across the River
Senior Vice President and
11th Street Bridge Park Director