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THE SEARCH FOR THE FUTURE INSIDE OURSELVES

Life on the New Frontier

But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory.

—*Huckleberry Finn, at the close of Mark Twain's novel, 1885*

AMERICANS are creating the biggest change in a hundred years in how we build cities. Every single American city that *is* growing, is growing in the fashion of Los Angeles, with multiple urban cores.

These new hearths of our civilization—in which the majority of metropolitan Americans now work and around which we live—look not at all like our old downtowns. Buildings rarely rise shoulder to shoulder, as in Chicago's Loop. Instead, their broad, low outlines dot the landscape like mushrooms, separated by greensward and parking lots. Their office towers, frequently guarded by trees, gaze at one another from respectful distances through bands of glass that mirror the sun in blue or silver or green or gold, like antique drawings of "the city of the future."

The hallmarks of these new urban centers are not the sidewalks of New York of song and fable, for usually there are few sidewalks. There are jogging trails around the hills and ponds of their characteristic corporate campuses. But if an American finds himself tripping the light fantastic today on concrete, social scientists know where to look for him. He will be amid the crabapples blossoming under glassed-in skies where America retails its wares. We have quaintly if accurately named these places after that fashionable tree-lined promenade created in the late 1600s—the Mall in London's St. James's Park. Back then, its denizens even had a name for the hour when the throng of promenaders "giggling with their sparks" was at its height. They called it High Mall. Pity we've not picked up that usage. We have certainly picked up the practice, because malls usually function as the village squares of these new urbs.

Our new city centers are tied together not by locomotives and subways, but by jetways, freeways, and rooftop satellite dishes thirty feet across. Their characteristic monument is not a horse-mounted hero, but the atria reaching for the sun and shielding trees perpetually in leaf at the cores of corporate headquarters, fitness centers, and shopping plazas. These new urban areas are marked not by the penthouses of the old urban rich or the tenements of the old urban poor. Instead, their landmark structure is the celebrated single-family detached dwelling, the suburban home with grass all around that made America the best-housed civilization the world has ever known.

I have come to call these new urban centers Edge Cities. Cities, because they contain all the functions a city ever has, albeit in a spread-out form that few have come to recognize for what it is. Edge, because they are a vigorous world of pioneers and immigrants, rising far from the old downtowns, where little save villages or farmland lay only thirty years before.

Edge Cities represent the third wave of our lives pushing into new frontiers in this half century. First, we moved our homes out past the traditional idea of what constituted a city. This was the suburbanization of America, especially after World War II.

Then we wearied of returning downtown for the necessities of life, so we moved our marketplaces out to where we lived. This was the malling of America, especially in the 1960s and 1970s.

Today, we have moved our means of creating wealth, the essence of urbanism—our jobs—out to where most of us have lived and shopped for two generations. That has led to the rise of Edge City.

Not since more than a century ago, when we took Benjamin Franklin's picturesque mercantile city of Philadelphia and exploded it into a nineteenth-century industrial behemoth, have we made such profound changes in the ways we live, work, and play.

Good examples of our more than two hundred new Edge Cities are:

- The area around Route 128 and the Massachusetts Turnpike in the Boston region that was the birthplace of applied high technology;
- The Schaumburg area west of O'Hare Airport, near which Sears moved its corporate headquarters from the 110-story Sears Tower in downtown Chicago;
- The Perimeter Center area, at the northern tip of Atlanta's Beltway, that is larger than downtown Atlanta;
- Irvine, in Orange County, south of Los Angeles.*

By any functional urban standard—tall buildings, bright lights, office space that represents white-collar jobs, shopping, entertainment, prestigious hotels, corporate headquarters, hospitals with CAT scans, even population—each Edge City is larger than downtown Portland, Oregon, or Portland, Maine, or Tampa, or Tucson. Already, two thirds of all American office facilities are in Edge Cities, and 80 percent of them have materialized in only the last two decades. By the mid-1980s, there was far more office space in Edge Cities around America's largest metropolis, New York, than there was at its heart—midtown Manhattan. Even before Wall Street faltered in the late 1980s there was less office space there, in New York's downtown, than there was in the Edge Cities of New Jersey alone.

Even the old-fashioned Ozzie and Harriet commute from a conventional suburb to downtown is now very much a minority pattern, U.S. Census figures show. Most of the trips metropolitan Americans take in a day completely skirt the old centers. Their journeys to work, especially, are to Edge Cities. So much of our shopping is done in Edge Cities that a casual glance at most Yellow Pages shows it increasingly difficult in an old downtown to buy such a commodity item as a television set.

These new urban agglomerations are such mavericks that everyone who wrestles them to the ground tries to brand them. Their list of titles by now has become marvelous, rich, diverse, and sometimes unpronounceable. The litany includes: urban villages, technoburbs, suburban downtowns, suburban activity centers, major diversified centers, urban cores, galactic city, pepperoni-pizza cities, a city of realms, superburbia, disurb,

* For quick information on sources, calculations, and methods, see "The List," "The Words," "The Laws," and the Notes at the back of this book.

service cities, perimeter cities, and even peripheral centers. Sometimes it is not clear that everybody is talking about the same thing. My heart particularly goes out to the San Francisco reporter who just started calling whatever was seething out there, past the sidewalks, Tomorrowland.

The reasons these places are tricky to define is that they rarely have a mayor or a city council, and just about never match boundaries on a map. We're still in the process of giving each Edge City its name—a project, incidentally, that could use more flair. In New Jersey, for example, there is one with only the laconic designation "287 and 78." The reason there are no "Welcome to" signs at Edge City is that it is a judgment call where it begins and ends.

Take the traditional measure of urban size—population. The out-counties where Edge Cities now rise are almost by definition larger than the cores they surround. After all, these places we thought of until recently as suburbs are where the majority of Americans have been living for decades. Fairfax County, Virginia, is more populous than either Washington, D.C., or San Francisco. Ninety-two percent of the people in the New York metropolitan area do not live in Manhattan.

A more narrow, and I think more accurate, comparison is to take Edge City—that acreage where the huge growth in jobs and other truly urban functions is centered—and compare it with the old central business district, the old downtown. Even by that tight measure, Edge City is almost always more populous. How many people in America, after all, live right in the old downtown? Fewer than live within sight of that Edge City landmark—the office monument so huge it would have been unthinkable to build one anywhere but downtown only thirty years ago.

That is why I have adopted the following five-part definition of Edge City that is above all else meant to be functional.

Edge City is any place that:

- *Has five million square feet or more of leasable office space—the workplace of the Information Age.* Five million square feet is more than downtown Memphis. The Edge City called the Galleria area west of downtown Houston—crowned by the sixty-four-story Transco Tower, the tallest building in the world outside an old downtown—is bigger than downtown Minneapolis.

- *Has 600,000 square feet or more of leasable retail space.* That is the equivalent of a fair-sized mall. That mall, remember, probably has at least three nationally famous department stores, and eighty to a hundred shops and boutiques full of merchandise that used to be available only on the finest boulevards of Europe. Even in their heyday, there were not many downtowns with that boast.
- *Has more jobs than bedrooms.* When the workday starts, people head toward this place, not away from it. Like all urban places, the population increases at 9 A.M.
- *Is perceived by the population as one place.* It is a regional end destination for mixed use—not a starting point—that "has it all," from jobs, to shopping, to entertainment.
- *Was nothing like "city" as recently as thirty years ago.* Then, it was just bedrooms, if not cow pastures. This incarnation is brand new.

An example of the authentic, California-like experience of encountering such an Edge City is peeling off a high thruway, like the Pennsylvania Turnpike, onto an arterial, like 202 at King of Prussia, northwest of downtown Philadelphia. Descending into traffic that is bumper to bumper in *both* directions, one swirls through mosaics of lawn and parking, punctuated by office slabs whose designers have taken the curious vow of never placing windows in anything other than horizontal reflective strips. Detours mark the yellow dust of heavy construction that seems a permanent feature of the landscape.

Tasteful signs mark corporations apparently named after Klingon warriors. Who put Captain Kirk in charge of calling companies Imtrex, Avantor, and Synovus? Before that question can settle, you encounter the spoor of—the mother ship. On King of Prussia's Route 202, the mark of that mind-boggling enormity reads MALL NEXT FOUR LEFTS.

For the stranger who is a connoisseur of such places, this Dante-esque vision brings a physical shiver to the spine and a not entirely ironic murmur of recognition to the lips: "Ah! Home!" For that is precisely the significance of Edge Cities. They are the culmination of a generation of individual American value decisions about the best ways to live, work, and play—about how to create "home." That stuff "out there" is where

America is being built. That "stuff" is the delicate balance between unlimited opportunity and rippling chaos that works for us so well. We build more of it every chance we get.

If Edge Cities are still a little ragged at the fringes, well, that just places them in the finest traditions of Walt Whitman's "barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world"—what the social critic Tom Wolfe calls, affectionately, the "hog-stomping Baroque exuberance of American civilization." Edge Cities, after all, are still works in progress.

They have already proven astoundingly efficient, though, by any urban standard that can be quantified. As places to make one's fame and fortune, their corporate offices generate unprecedentedly low unemployment. In fact, their emblem is the hand-lettered sign taped to plate glass begging people to come to work. As real estate markets, they have made an entire generation of homeowners and speculators rich. As bazaars, they are anchored by some of the most luxurious shopping in the world. Edge City acculturates immigrants, provides child care, and offers safety. It is, on average, an *improvement* in per capita fuel efficiency over the old suburbia-downtown arrangement, since it moves everything closer to the homes of the middle class.

That is why Edge City is the crucible of America's urban future. Having become the place in which the majority of Americans now live, learn, work, shop, play, pray, and die, Edge City will be the forge of the fabled American way of life well into the twenty-first century.

There are those who find this idea appalling. For some who recognize the future when they see it, but always rather hoped it might look like Paris in the 1920s, the sprawl and apparent chaos of Edge City makes it seem a wild, raw, and alien place. For my sins I once spent a fair chunk of a Christmas season in Tysons Corner, Virginia, stopping people as they hurried about their holiday tasks, asking them what they thought of their brave new world. The words I recorded were searing. They described the area as plastic, a hodgepodge, Disneyland (used as a pejorative), and sterile. They said it lacked livability, civilization, community, neighborhood, and even a soul.

These responses are frightening, if Edge City is the laboratory of how civilized and livable urban American will be well into the next century. Right now, it is vertigo-inducing. It may have all

the complexity, diversity, and size of a downtown. But it can cover dozens of square miles, and juxtapose schools and freeways and atria and shimmering parking lots with corporate lawns and Day-Glo-orange helicopter wind socks. Its logic takes a while to decode.

Will we ever be proud of this place? Will we ever drag our visiting relatives out to show off our Edge City, our shining city on the hill? Will we ever feel—for this generation and the ones that follow—that it's a good place to be young? To be old? To fall in love? To have a Fourth of July parade? Will it ever be the place we want to call home?

Robert Fishman, a Rutgers historian who is one of the few academics successfully to examine Edge City, thinks he knows the answer. "All new city forms appear in their early stages to be chaotic," he reports. He quotes Charles Dickens on London in 1848: "There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the earth, moldering in the water, and unintelligible as in any dream."

That is also the best one-sentence description of Edge City extant.

Edge City's problem is history. It has none. If Edge City were a forest, then at maturity it might turn out to be quite splendid, in triple canopy. But who is to know if we are seeing only the first, scraggly growth? I once heard an academic with a French accent ask Fishman, seriously, what the *ideal* of an Edge City was. What a wonderfully French question! Who *knows* what these things look like when they grow up? These critters are likely only in their nymphal, if not larval, forms. We've probably never *seen* an adult one.

If Edge City still gives some people the creeps, it is partially because it confounds expectations. Traditional-downtown urbanites recoil because a place blown out to automobile scale is not what they think of as "city." They find the swirl of functions intimidating, confusing, maddening. Why are these tall office buildings so far apart? Why are they juxtaposed, apparently higgledy-piggledy, among the malls and strip shopping centers and fast-food joints and self-service gas stations? Both literally and metaphorically, these urbanites always get lost.

At the same time, Edge City often does not meet the expectations of traditional suburbanites, either. Few who bought into the idea of quarter-acre tranquillity ever expected to take a winding turn and suddenly be confronted with a 150-foot colossus looming over the trees, red aircraft-warning beacons flashing, its towering glass reflecting not the moon, but the sodium vapor of the parking lot's lights.

The question is whether this disorienting expectation gap is permanent or simply a phase, a function of how fast we've transformed our world. I discussed this with scholars who had examined the history of Venice. Venice today is venerated by American urban planners as a shrine to livability. What was Venice like when it was new?

"People forget that Venice was built by hook or by crook," replied Dennis Romano, a social historian of the early Renaissance. "Venice was just as mercantilist as Tysons. It was full of land speculators and developers. The merchants' primary concern was the flow of goods, of traffic. Those who now romanticize Venice collapse a thousand years of history. Venice is a monument to a dynamic process, not to great urban planning. It's hard for us to imagine, but the architectural harmony of the Piazza San Marco was an accident. It was built over centuries by people who were constantly worried about whether they had enough money."

In his plan for the urban future that he christened Broadacre City, that most relentlessly American of urban visionaries, Frank Lloyd Wright, anticipated with stunning accuracy many of the features of Edge City.

"Nonsense is talked by our big skyscraperites in the blind alley they have set up, defending urban congestion by obscuring the simple facts of the issue," he trumpeted in the 1950s in *The Living City*. "Their skyscraper-by-skyscraper is . . . the gravestone of . . . centralization."

Wright viewed as interchangeable the concepts of individualism, freedom, and democracy. He saw them as fundamentally in opposition to the despised, exploitative "monarchy" of the old downtowns. He yearned for a system in which all men fled the evils of big capital, big authorities, big cities—troglodytes of every stripe—for a connection with nature, the earth, the ground. He thought an acre per person was about right. He saw individuals newly freed coming back together in totally modern

agglomerations, on new terms, stronger, growing together "in adequate space." He saw the automobile and aircraft as the glorious agents of that dispersion and reintegration, and he knew exactly what would happen when, inexorably, we blew Edge City out to their scale:

"After all is said and done, *he*—the citizen—is really the city. The city is going where he goes. He is learning to go where he enjoys all the city ever gave him, plus freedom, security, and beauty of his birthright, the good ground."

How *about* that. We've done it! Just as he said. But are we in our new Edge Cities ever going to reap the benefits of what he knew we'd sow?

"Try to live . . . deep *in* nature," he exhorted us. "Be native as trees to the wood, as grass to the floor of the valley. Only then can the democratic spirit of man, individual, rise out of the confusion of communal life in the city to a creative civilization of the ground."

Edge City has quite clearly released us from the shackles of the nineteenth-century city—out into that valley and wood, just as Wright foresaw. It is common for a first-generation Edge City to arise ten miles from an old downtown, and a next-generation one twenty miles beyond that, only to attract workers from distances forty-five minutes beyond that. At this rate, it is easy to see how a field of Edge Cities can easily cover more than ten thousand square miles. This is why the San Francisco area now statistically is measured as halfway across California, pulling commuters out of Stockton, in the Central Valley, into its Edge Cities east of Silicon Valley.

Whether that spatial liberation leads to Wright's "creative civilization of the ground," however, came to be my main concern, for it is central to the battles being fought in America today over such amorphous essentials as "growth" and "quality of life."

The forces of change whose emblem is the bulldozer, and the forces of preservation whose totem is the tree, are everywhere at war in this country. The raging debate over what we have lost and what we have gained, as we flee the old urban patterns of the nineteenth century for the new ones of the twenty-first, is constant. Are we satisfying our deepest yearnings for the good life with Edge City? Or are we poisoning everything across which we sprawl?

Getting to the bottom of those questions leads directly to issues of national character, of what we value. They come down to who we are, how we got that way, and where we're headed. It is why, when the reeling feeling caused by Edge City finally subsides, I think it is possible to examine the place as the expression of some fundamental values. Nowhere in the American national character, as it turns out, is there as deep a divide as that between our reverence for "unspoiled" nature and our enduring devotion to "progress."

In *The Machine in the Garden,* the cultural historian Leo Marx writes about our complicated attitudes toward utilitarian versus pastoral landscapes. For Americans, he observes,

> regenerative power is located in the natural terrain: access to undefiled, bountiful, sublime Nature is what accounts for the virtue and special good fortune of Americans. It enables them to design a community in the image of a garden, an ideal fusion of nature with art. The landscape thus becomes the symbolic repository of value of all kinds—economic, political, aesthetic, religious . . .
>
> A strong urge to believe in the rural myth along with an awareness of industrialization as counterforce to the myth—since 1844, this motif appears everywhere in American writing . . . It is a complex distinctively American form.

One springtime, over lunch near his MIT office, Marx observed that Edge City represents "an escape from the negative aspects of civilization. Too much restraint, oppression, hierarchy—you justify building out there in order to start again and have another Garden. You want the best of both worlds. This would be Thomas Jefferson's Virginia; he very explicitly wanted a land that is midway between too much and too little civilization."

In fact, says Marx, the whole thing goes back to the very dawn of our civilization. Captain Arthur Barlowe, captain of a bark dispatched by Sir Walter Raleigh, described Virginia in 1584 in what became a cardinal image of America: an immense garden of incredible abundance. Virginia is a land of plenty; the soil is "the most plentifull, sweete, fruitfull, and wholsome of all the worlde"; the virgin forest is not at all like the "barren and fruitles" woods of Europe. We "found shole water," Barlowe wrote, "wher we smelt so sweet and so strong a smel, as if we had bene in the midst of some delicate garden abounding with all kinde of odoriferous flowers . . ."

What Barlowe was describing, of course, was Eden. That image inflamed the popular imagination as the first English settlement succeeded in America, in Jamestown, Virginia, 1607. It drove Shakespeare when, three years later, he wrote *The Tempest.*

What is so striking about these reports depicting Virginia as Paradise Regained—tapping a deep and persistent human desire to return to a natural idyll—is how sharply they conflict with the views of the second set of Englishmen to show up in America to stay. Those were the Pilgrims of the Massachusetts Bay. When the *Mayflower* hove to off Cape Cod in November 1620, what William Bradford saw shocked him. He described it as a "hidious and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and willd men." Between the Pilgrims and their new home, he saw only "deangerous shoulds and roring breakers."

This wasn't heaven. Quite the opposite.

"Which way soever they turnd their eys (save upward to the heavens) they could have litle solace or content . . . The whole countrie, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage heiw."

His people, said Bradford, had "no freinds to wellcome them, nor inns to entertaine or refresh their weatherbeaten bodys, no houses or much less townes to repaire too, to seeke for succoure."

There was, in short, no civilization. Bradford found this void horrifying, hellish.

Here, then, is established the enduring divide in the way Americans have related to their land ever since. The hideous wilderness appears at one end of the spectrum, and the Garden at the other. These are such antithetical ways for man to understand his relation to his environment that Leo Marx calls them "ecological images. Each is a kind of root metaphor, a quite distinct notion of America's destiny." These vastly different systems of value, noted Ralph Waldo Emerson, would "determine all their institutions."

It comes to this. One vision of the American natural landscape was that it had inherent value and should be treasured for what it already was and had always been. The other saw in the land nothing but satanic wastes; there could be placed on it no value until it was bent to man's will—until civilization was forced into bloom.

The history of America is an endless repetition of this battle. We are fighting it to this day, nowhere more so than in our current frontier, Edge City. In the unsettled, unsettling environment of Edge City, great wealth may be acquired, but without a sense that the place has community, or even a center, much less a soul. And the resolution of these issues goes far beyond architecture and landscape. It goes to the philosophical ground on which we are building our Information Age society. It's possible that Edge City is the most purposeful attempt Americans have made since the days of the Founding Fathers to try to create something like a new Eden.

Edge City may be the result of Americans striving once again for a new, restorative synthesis. Perhaps Edge City represents Americans taking the functions of the city (the machine) and bringing them out to the physical edge of the landscape (the frontier). There, we try once again to merge the two in a newfound union of nature and art (the garden), albeit one in which the treeline is punctuated incongruously by office towers.

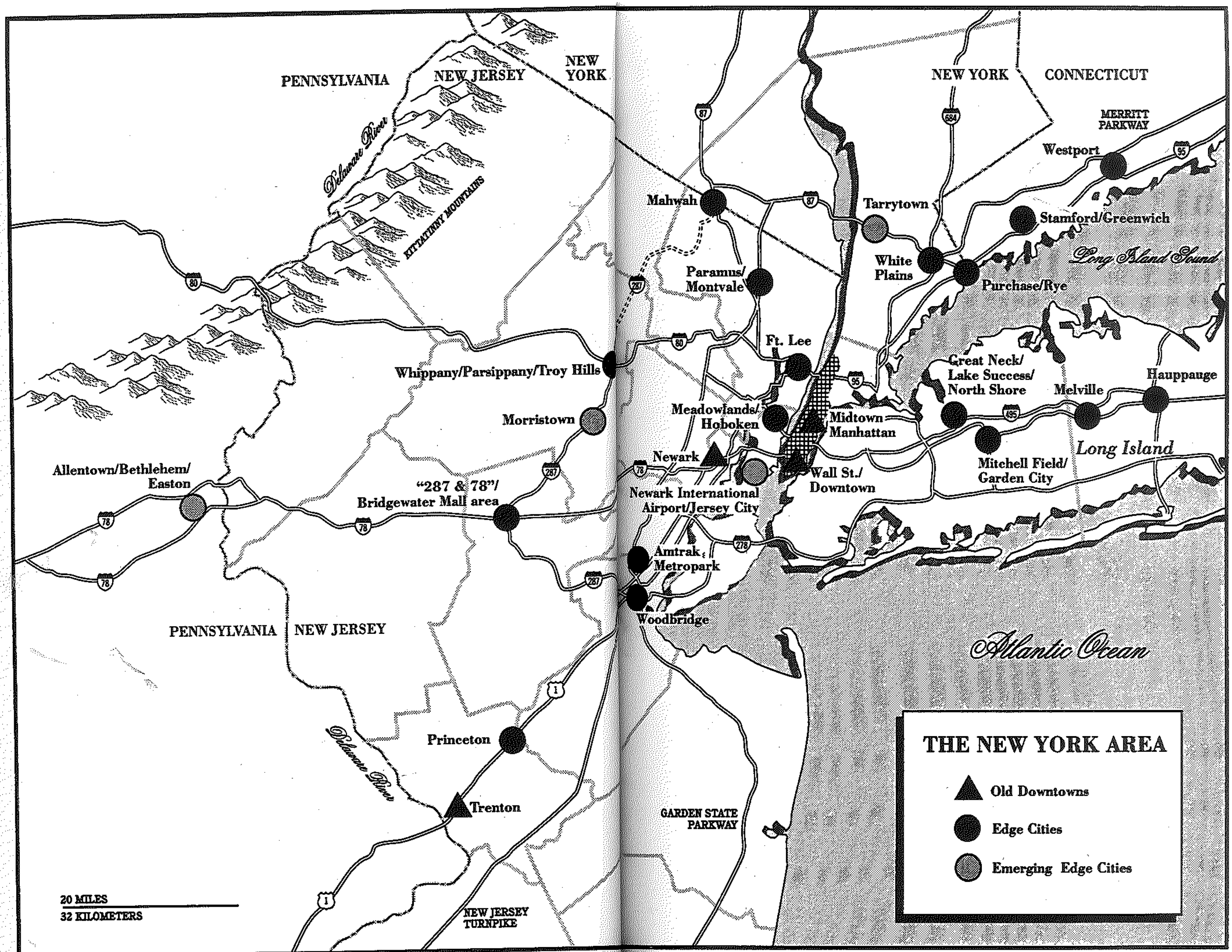
If that is true, Edge City represents Americans once again trying to create a new and better world—lighting out for the Territory, in the words of Huckleberry Finn. If that new world happens to be an unknown and uncharted frontier, well, that's where we've headed every chance we've had—for four hundred years. Frank Lloyd Wright genuinely believed that Americans continued to be the sons and daughters of the pioneers. He called us "the sons of the sons of American Democracy." Wright saw us as heading out of our old cities, freed from old verities, creating a new spiritual integrity in community. The enduring, exhilarating, and frightening themes to be examined in Edge Cities are if, whether, and how we are pulling that Utopian vision off.

This goes to the ultimate significance of Edge City. The battles we fight today over our futures do not have echoes only back to 1956, when Dwight D. Eisenhower changed America forever with the creation of the interstate highway program. Nor does it go back only to the New Deal of the 1930s, during which Frank-

lin Delano Roosevelt shaped America into a society of homeowners. It goes to the core of what makes America America, right back to the beginning, with the Pilgrims in 1620 and the Virginia Cavaliers of 1607.

It addresses profound questions, the answers to which will reverberate forever. It addresses the search for Utopia at the center of the American Dream. It reflects our perpetually unfinished American business of reinventing ourselves, redefining ourselves, restoring ourselves, announcing that our centuries-old perpetual revolution—our search for the future inside ourselves—still beats strong.

It suggests that the world of the immigrants and pioneers is not dead in America; it has just moved out to Edge City, where gambles are being lost and won for high stakes. It adds another level of history to places already filled with ghosts. That is why one day Edge City, too, may be seen as historic. It is the creation of a new world, being shaped by the free in a constantly reinvented land.


THE NEW YORK AREA
Old Downtowns
Edge Cities
Emerging Edge Cities
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK
CONNECTICUT
Delaware River
KITTATINNY MOUNTAINS
MERRITT PARKWAY
Westport
Mahwah
Tarrytown
Stamford/Greenwich
Long Island Sound
White Plains
Purchase/Rye
Paramus/ Montvale
Ft. Lee
Whippany/Parsippany/Troy Hills
Great Neck/ Lake Success/ North Shore
Melville
Hauppauge
Morristown
Meadowlands/ Hoboken
Midtown Manhattan
Long Island
Newark
Wall St./ Downtown
Mitchell Field/ Garden City
Allentown/Bethlehem/ Easton
"287 & 78"/ Bridgewater Mall area
Newark International Airport/Jersey City
Amtrak Metropark
Woodbridge
Atlantic Ocean
Princeton
Trenton
GARDEN STATE PARKWAY
NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE
20 MILES
32 KILOMETERS
80
87
684
95
287
495
78
278
1

THE SEAFOOD COUNTER alone is world class. Even in the New York area, an emporium grabs one's attention when, for eighty linear feet, it spreads out not only six *different* kinds of sliced octopus—fresh—but snow crab legs next to broiled eel near Chilean abalone next to geoduck sashimi, adjacent to a display of spiny sea urchins with golden, creamy, sensuous interiors intended to be eaten raw.

The fashion plaza, too, is dazzling. Amid cascades of gold and stacks of high couture, a mannequin sports a sexy red jogging suit with this precise mystery across its chest: "Don't Take It Easy: To Be Frank With You I'm Afraid of You at First But, Now Become Changed We Are Great Member."

The electronics mart sprawls under the name Saiko, which connotes "fantastic" in Japanese, and it is. Amid the televisions with vast screens and camcorders that fit in a palm, there are household appliances so unusual that, like the Zojirushi electric airpot, its very function is unfamiliar. Not distant, there is a display of $149.95 Sony Repeat Learning Systems, designed to teach English to Japanese. Sample sentences: "There's something about him that rubs me the wrong way," and "I'm under a lot of pressure."

But the real show-stopper of this sophisticated megamart is actually out in the Hudson River. It stands on piers, with a panoramic view of the skyline. It is the Chinzan-So restaurant, built in the gracefully curved pyramidical image of Rokuon-ji, a fifteenth-century temple. Amid pools of quiet, reflective water is —inside—a two-story, ten-ton pile of volcanic boulders freighted from the side of Mount Fuji. Its Kaiseki cuisine, developed through the centuries by great masters of the tea ceremony, is the height of Japanese culinary creativity. The Aoi entrée is $100. For one.

This strange, fascinating, and wondrous display is the Yaohan Plaza–New York. It is one of the largest such all-Japanese hypermarkets in the world. It features everything from a Japanese bookstore to the Pony Toy Go Around toy store, to a Super Health drugstore that offers cotton gauze masks to people with colds who might be riding the subway, to a bakery producing breads shaped like alligators. Tokyo Gardens sells bonsai junipers. The Promotion liquor mart flaunts an astounding variety of sake. The produce market features everything from ohba leaves to pears flown in from Japan in mesh plastic nests. The UCC Cafe Plaza window displays uncannily realistic plastic models of its offerings. One is labeled HAM SANDWICH.

The Yaohan Plaza–New York organization runs twenty-three such malls worldwide, from Brazil to Hong Kong, and ninety in Japan. This extravaganza, which opened in 1988, is exactly the same as would be found in Tokyo, say its founders. Except, of course, it has more variety. After all, it is almost five times bigger than average. The typical sale in the grocery areas alone is over $100. This should come as no surprise. Yaohan Plaza–New York is serving one of the most cosmopolitan metropolitan areas on the globe, right? Why shouldn't it be the height of sophistication?

This leaves, perhaps, only one question.

Why is it in New Jersey?

Why put such an exotic creation a full $50 cab ride from the presumed worldliness of midtown Manhattan? In the Edge City of Fort Lee? On the far side of Harlem?

Hiroaki Kawai, Yaohan Plaza's spokesman, seems a little perplexed by the question. The answer is perfectly obvious to him. Forty percent of Yaohan Plaza's business comes from the sixty thousand Japanese working for their global companies in the New York area, he patiently explained. Few of them live in Manhattan. He is startled that anyone would think otherwise. Why would a Japanese come to America to live in a cramped apartment?

They live around here, in Fort Lee, he says, where they can have houses and cars and get around. Or in nearby Westchester

County, New York, around the Edge City of White Plains, proximate to the world headquarters of IBM.

Another thing, he says: Look at the size of Yaohan Plaza. It would not be possible to build something like this in Manhattan. Where would you park the cars? A place this large and sophisticated needs support from people all over the region. Even here, the major problem is that there are only four hundred parking spaces, and they are so full now on weekends, what with chartered buses arriving from as far away as Philadelphia and Washington, people sometimes have to wait thirty minutes for a spot to open up. What is really needed is at least eight hundred slots, he says, plus more space on which to build. His consortium covetously eyes the riverfront land next door occupied by the looming Hills Brothers coffee plant, which fills the salt air of Yaohan Plaza's parking lot with the fresh aroma of roasted brew. Knock that flat and you could build a brand-new world out here, with attractions that dazzle the mind, Kawai explains matter-of-factly. A Japanese culture center, a Japanese hotel, amusement facilities, all nice and safe, marked by abundant free parking.

His English is quite fluent, but Kawai nonetheless occasionally stops to ask his listener if he is using the right words to get his points across. He seems to find it curious that anybody would find the Yaohan Plaza's location curious. Oh yes, he says, we've already opened several such hypermarts in North America, and have plans to open ten more in the next ten years. He starts ticking off the locations. Costa Mesa—an Edge City in Orange County, south of Los Angeles. San Jose—an Edge City in Silicon Valley. Arlington Heights, near Schaumburg—an Edge City of Chicago. "In old downtowns it is very difficult to find enough space for us," he says. "So we go out to new towns, where there is plenty of space." Kawai is so engrossed with his Edge City locations around North America that I finally ask, "Who did your site location research for you? Did somebody coach you on this, or did you figure it out all by yourself?"

We figured it out all by ourselves, he says. Japanese people who were familiar with the States because they had gone to school here were a big help. But to him the logic of locating in an Edge City rather than an old center like Manhattan is patent. If you look at the way people live in this country, the land of opportunity is New Jersey.

Joel Kotkin is the California co-author, with Yoriko Kishimoto, of *The Third Century: America's Resurgence in the Asian Era*. Kotkin is bullish on America's future because of its ability to be flexible and innovative and because it is capable of assimilating waves of immigrants who supply immense entrepreneurial energy—especially, in this era, Asians. But even he guffaws when told that the Yaohan Plaza–New York is actually in Edgewater, New Jersey. "When I was growing up," says the transplanted New Yorker, "being from New Jersey was a social disease."

But it is no surprise that Hiroaki Kawai feels at home in New Jersey. New Jersey is, in many respects, America's urban future. It is the first state in the Union to be more densely populated than Japan. It is also the first state in the Union to be more urban.

And in countless ways, if this is America's urban future, the future is bright. Not only is New Jersey headquarters to dozens of Fortune 500 companies, as well as thousands of entrepreneurial start-ups; it is a place of immense diversity, from the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, which cradled Albert Einstein, to ethnic neighborhoods like Trenton's Chambersburg, with memorable restaurants on every corner. New Jersey is a kind of California of the East Coast. It gave birth to fiber optics, the transistor, the solar cell, sound movies, the communications satellite, evidentiary proof of the Big Bang hypothesis of the origin of the universe, and Bruce Springsteen. It has 127 miles of beaches. It is the home of the NFL's Giants, the NBA's Nets, and the NHL's Devils. It is lavishly blessed with jealously guarded natural beauty, from the backpacking country of the Delaware Water Gap and Ramapo Mountains in the Appalachian Highlands to the pristine and solitary Atlantic shores of Cape May. New Jersey is not called the Garden State for nothing. Its truck farms supply local supermarket chains with 35 percent of their produce in season. It is laden with extravagant rolling estates. More than 40 percent of the entire state is still in forest. At one million acres, the spooky and beautiful Pinelands, with peat-stained water the color of tea, is by far the largest such horizon-to-horizon wild area north of the Everglades and east of the Mississippi.

Yet all this variety, beauty, economic prowess, density, and urbanity has been achieved without New Jersey's having within

its boundaries what most people would consider even one major city. Whatever their virtues, Newark and Elizabeth are rarely described as big time. All this proves, however, is that most Americans' idea of what makes up a city no longer matches reality, because it doesn't encompass the central reality of New Jersey: Edge Cities.

An old-fashioned downtown—sporting tall concrete-and-steel buildings with walls that touch each other, laid out on a rectangular grid, accented by sidewalks, surrounded by political boundaries, and lorded over by a mayor—is only one way to think of a city. In fact, it is only the nineteenth-century version. These sorts of cities, epitomized in the United States by Manhattan and San Francisco, are proud places that will always be cherished. But they are relics of a time past. They are the aberrations. We built cities that way for less than a century. Those years, from perhaps 1840 to 1920, were by no means unimportant. They encompassed both the Industrial Revolution and the era of America's Manifest Destiny. Thriving old downtowns that have bright futures because they continue to be rejuvenated still bear their stamp, from Chicago to Seattle.

This does not begin to exhaust the idea of city. From ancient times, what made a city a city was how it functioned, not how it looked. And this is especially true today, for we have not built a single old-style downtown from raw dirt in seventy-five years.

The Edge Cities of New Jersey, instead, represent our new standard. If New Jersey was described by Benjamin Franklin as "a barrel tapped at both ends"—Philadelphia and New York—suddenly New Jersey is the *right* side of the rivers. In the late 1980s, New Jersey's Edge Cities grew more rapidly and generated more jobs than the entire state of New York. These Edge Cities now rise as their own commonwealths, from the one in the Route 1–Princeton area to the office tower forest emerging along Interstates 80 and 287 near Whippany and Parsippany. New Jersey's Edge Cities exemplify the new mix of urbanity, demonstrating what people want, can afford, and can stand. These Edge Cities, in fact, are the fruit of our attempt to strike a delicate balance between the advantages and disadvantages of 19th-century cities and the opportunities and challenges of the coming age. As such, they are being copied all over the world.

Making sense of an Edge City requires the following leap of faith: any place that is a trade, employment, and entertainment center of vast magnitude is functionally a city. That is true no matter how sprawling and strange it looks physically, and no matter how anarchic or convoluted it seems politically. If it is sufficiently diverse, vibrant, and specialized—which mainly is to say huge—it is a city. Conversely, any place that isn't, doesn't qualify: Fort Peck City in Montana is not urban no matter what it is called by its six hundred proud denizens.

Libraries have been written about why humans ever built cities in the first place, but most historians agree that, for the last eight thousand years, cities have been shaped by seven purposes:

- industry,
- governance,
- commerce,
- safety,
- culture,
- companionship,
- religion.*

Edge Cities function along exactly these lines, although the emphasis has shifted provocatively over the centuries. Take the New Jersey Edge City an hour west of Wall Street, around the intersection of Interstates 287 and 78, in the area from Bridgewater to Basking Ridge and from Warren to Bedminster. Tracing the effect of these seven historical forces on the shaping of this Edge City helps reveal what it is this civilization values.

Industry, for example—the creation of jobs and wealth—is the very point of Edge Cities. AT&T's world headquarters is in this "287 and 78" world. It is universally referred to as the Pagoda because it is vaguely Oriental in a Frank Lloyd Wright kind of way. Its tiled, cascading tiers of heavy-lidded roofs and hanging gardens are massive and lavish enough to be the envy of any Chinese emperor.

The Pagoda opened in 1976 in the 287 and 78 neighborhood of Basking Ridge because AT&T thought that was the best place to grow and make money. Although AT&T was founded in Manhattan in 1885 and still uses that as its corporate address, not a

* For quick reference, see the Notes and other sections at the back of this book.

single top executive is permanently located there. In the 1930s, Bell Labs—AT&T's renowned research and development arm—custom-designed for itself an elaborate 1.7-million-square-foot, high-rise headquarters employing fifty-six hundred people on less than four acres of Manhattan. The plans were shucked in 1939. Corporate archives show that even fifty years ago old downtowns were thought to have competitive problems. "High costs of land in Manhattan," "high living costs," and "the urban noise and dirt," as well as the inefficiencies of skyscrapers and the commuting woes on the ferries and tubes, were already major issues, according to corporate documents.

So in the opening days of World War II, Bell Labs moved out to a grandly christened "campus" in Murray Hill, near what is now Interstate 78. AT&T never looked back. In 1977, the Long Lines division—the long-distance operation that is now the bulk of the company's franchise—pulled its headquarters from the bowels of lower Manhattan. It, too, moved to 287 and 78—in Bedminster, near the Far Hills fox-hunt estates of boxer Mike Tyson, the late Malcolm Forbes, and the king of Morocco.

This is no small deal. The two-story Strangelovian "video-wall" control center for AT&T's network linking 146 countries is in the foothills there today. If the future belongs to whoever controls the glass-fiber networks of the multibillion-dollar information marketplace, 287 and 78 someday may erupt like a historic boomtown—Chicago in the heyday of railroads or Detroit when the automobile was new or Houston when oil approached $40 a barrel.

Meanwhile, more than fifty years after Bell Labs made its move—which was back when high technology was a phone you didn't have to crank—New Jersey's Edge Cities have proven sufficiently useful that AT&T has 225 facilities in them. They include the headquarters of each major division. AT&T located enough facilities in the New Jersey Edge Cities in the mid-1970s alone to overflow one of the World Trade Center's 110-story towers. AT&T now occupies twenty-two million square feet of space there. That is more than exists in downtown Seattle. More than fifty-one thousand people are employed by AT&T in New Jersey's Edge Cities.

This is increasingly common. Edge Cities are headquarters to such diverse giants as Motorola (Schaumburg, Illinois), K mart

(Troy, Michigan), Black & Decker (Hunt Valley, Maryland), and —the Greatest Show on Earth—the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus (Tysons Corner, Virginia).* Sears, Roebuck and Company recently pulled its headquarters out of that symbol of old downtowns, the world's tallest building, the 110-story Sears Tower on Chicago's Wacker Drive. After a nationwide search, it located in the Hoffman Estates neighborhood of the Edge City centered on Schaumburg, thirty miles to the northwest. Sears' move illustrated what these corporations are trying to do: heighten competitiveness by consolidating entire operations, save a few bucks, and, it is hoped, enhance the quality of the work force and the living and working environment.

That is why these Edge Cities are hardly one-company towns. A lot of outfits have the same idea. The 287 and 78 area flies the corporate banners of TRW, NYNEX, Chubb, Allstate, Prudential, Beneficial, Bristol-Myers, Hoechst Celanese, Johnson & Johnson, Chase Manhattan, and Dun & Bradstreet. It contains more than sixteen million leasable square feet of office space full of white-collar jobs. That's larger than downtown New Orleans. This Edge City not only has a corporate-jet airfield fifteen minutes away in Morristown; it has achieved such stature that its heavy hitters recently started to feel put upon. It seems that when they returned from Europe and Asia, the federal government had the annoying habit of forcing their private jets to first land at Teterboro, forty miles east. That was the nearest strip with a customs facility. Only after that stop could they fire up the turbines for the five-minute hop to 287 and 78. So the high rollers bought themselves their own customs office for Morristown. This is an airport with no regularly scheduled commercial flights, but it is now in effect Morristown International. They pay for this customs shed, they use it, it's theirs.

(In fact, the rise nationwide of satellite airports with surprisingly high levels of full-blown commercial service is a direct result of Edge Cities. In the orbit of New York's Edge Cities, for example, there are now six airports with serious, scheduled, national-airline jet service. That is because a lot of people in Edge Cities don't want to fight their way into La Guardia, Newark, or JFK. The newly important outer airports include MacArthur in Islip, halfway out on Long Island; Westchester; and Stewart International, in Newburgh, New York, seventy-five miles up the Hudson from Manhattan.)

* For a list of Edge Cities, see Chapter 11.

Although nationally known corporations get a lot of press when they relocate to Edge City, they are not the quoin of capitalism there. It is the young, fast-growing entrepreneurial start-up—especially in high technology—that is the mark of Edge City. *Inc.* ("The Magazine for Growing Companies") in 1989 specifically made the connection. "One lure may lie in the basically unsettled nature of life on the edge," *Inc.* reported. "The people who like the status quo stay downtown where the old elites are. People who are out there redefining themselves, like entrepreneurs, are attracted to places that are new, where things are more flexible."

The creation of enterprise and jobs, and thus cities, has not changed much through history. It's always required a great deal of raw material drawn to one location, to which is added people to shape the material into something different and useful. The result is then shipped back out to an eager world. Today, that location is Edge City.

That's because the raw material has changed. Now that stock is made up of problems. There are so many of them that they come to places like 287 and 78 via huge satellite dishes—the heavy haulers, the railroads of the future. In Edge City, the offices are the factories of the Information Age. That is where problems are accumulated and the information of which they are made is mined for valuable nuggets. There it is digested and decided on by the work force, transformed, and repackaged.

The finished product shipped back out, essentially, is cleverness. It includes everything from decisions to buy and sell, to designs and redesigns, to software, to reports, to legal opinions, to television advertising. The worth of this cleverness can be thought of as independent of the physical object in which it may be embedded. Take the price of a telephone, for example. No one buying one cares about the cost per pound of this lump of plastic and silicon. The value of the phone is in how ingenious it is—how many features it has, how portable it is, how reliable it is. It is measured by how much cleverness it represents.

This shift to Information Age cities is as basic a revolution as the one we went through a century and a half ago at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. In 1850, for example, 85 percent of the U.S. population was rural. Cities, such as they were, were small and mercantile. Their landmarks were the counting houses down by the wharves. There, the riches of the hinterlands were swapped for the complexities of Europe and Asia. By the turn of the century, that had all changed. Mighty cities like Pittsburgh were built not so much on their relationship to farm and woodlands as on the relation of their factories to iron ore, coal, and sweating labor.

Before the Industrial Revolution, a world like today's would have been utterly unimaginable—in which only 3 percent of all Americans farm and more than three quarters are metropolitan slickers. Edge City represents as radical a shift. This is not because America's manufacturing prowess has rusted. Ignore the gloom-and-doom-sayers. The United States is now so technically advanced that it makes a ton of steel with fewer work hours than any nation on earth. From basic metals to chemicals to pharmaceuticals, American industry is strong. The American worker is by far the most productive in the world. Manufacturing jobs in America are actually increasing in absolute numbers.

But the way the world measures success in manufacturing today is by how quickly the number of blue-collar workers per object created can *decline.* That means increased productivity—more output per person—which means competitiveness with the rest of the world. Thus, it is possible to imagine an America with as strong a manufacturing base as there is now an agricultural base, in which the share of people actually turning widgets is astonishingly low. It is already no more than 18 percent of the work force—and it sank below 50 percent for the first time only in 1953.

That leads to the key work location being the office. That *is* industry in the late twentieth century. Instead of actually making airplanes, people more typically are figuring out how to make stronger, lighter composites to translate less fuel into more passengers in airplanes. Or they are supporting the people who do—either directly as researchers or word processors, or indirectly, by delivering their meals, fixing their Xerox machines, or nurturing their children.

That is why five million square feet of leasable office space is the point of critical mass for Edge City. The developer's rule of

thumb is: *One office worker equals 250 square feet.* That's the size of a fair-sized living room, and counts not just the worker's desk area, but her share of reception rooms, file rooms, stockrooms, and Xerox rooms.

Why do Edge Cities seem to hit critical mass at five million square feet of leasable office space? No one knows exactly, at a theoretical level. But the figure does work like crazy as a predictor. When one drives out to see a place so measured, one always finds the same tall buildings, bright lights, and a hustle and bustle that is distinctly urban, albeit a little raw and cracked.

Five million square feet of office is a point of spontaneous combustion. It turns out to be exactly enough to support the building of a luxury hotel. It causes secondary explosions; businesses begin to flock to the location to serve the businesses already there. Five million square feet is a huge number; more than a hundred acres. That much space dwarfs the sizable downtown of Dayton, Richmond, Wilmington, or Spokane. It represents dozens of office buildings that would cover blocks and blocks in an old downtown. The number instantly and decisively rules out our using "city" for any suburban office strip of dentists and cut-rate tax-return accountants. The number represents a reality that is so quantitatively different as to be qualitatively different.

This measure of Edge City is especially useful because it is easily gathered. Edge City is a creature of the marketplace, and commercial real estate agents are its most devoted acolytes. Their mental maps of what constitutes a single commercial real estate "submarket" is usually an exquisite description of the functional outlines of Edge City. If you wish to know whether a place near you is a full-blown Edge City, simply ask a commercial real estate agent to total up the leasable square footage numbers in his computer by submarket.

Interestingly, it has to be office space. Industrial and warehouse space does not create anything urbane. No dense centers ever evolve. Factories usually figure one worker for every forty-five hundred square feet. This is eighteen times less dense than office space. Warehouse space has even fewer workers than that. Only one story high, a warehouse sprawls over the landscape much more than does Edge City. North Carolina is the tenth most populous state in the Union. It has 35 percent of its work force in manufacturing—the highest level in the nation. Yet it has no large downtowns at all, and not much in the way of an Edge City outside the white-collar confines of the Research Triangle: Raleigh–Durham–Chapel Hill. City of Industry, California, aptly named, has a staggering hundred million square feet of factory and warehouse space—almost four square miles under roof. But precious little of that Southern California site passes for civilization. Industrial and warehouse workers rarely demand specialty retail, high-end services, cloth-napkin restaurants, hotels, and bookstores.

With the workplace now centered on offices, cities are transformed. For one thing, "cleverness" is not heavy; it is not measured in tons, like steel or corn or petroleum. Thus, it does not have to be, like an old downtown, near water or rail—the preferred movers of "heavy." Edge Cities, in fact, typically rise at the interchange of freeways. This should come as no surprise. "Whatever its shape, its architecture, or the civilization that illuminates it, the town creates roads and is created by them," Fernand Braudel wrote of the Middle Ages. "We should imagine the great trade route to the East [of the 1500s] as something like today's *autostrada.*"

Cities are always created around whatever the state-of-the-art transportation device is at the time. If the state of the art is sandal leather and donkeys, you get Jerusalem. Even when wheeled vehicles replaced pack animals as the freight technology of choice fifteen centuries after Jesus, Jerusalem remained shaped by its transportation origins.

When the state of the art is carriages and oceangoing sail, you get the compact, water-dominated East Coast cities of Paul Revere's Boston and George Washington's Alexandria. Or Amsterdam and Antwerp.

Canal barge and steamship give you Boss Tweed's New York. Intraurban (the El) and transcontinental rail (the stockyards) yield Bugsy Moran's Chicago. The automobile results in Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles.

When, in 1958, you threw in the jet passenger plane, you got more Los Angeles in strange places—Atlanta, Denver, Houston, Dallas, and Phoenix.

The combination of the present is the automobile, the jet plane, and the computer. The result is Edge City. The proof is

the half-million-square-foot corporate headquarters of Beneficial Corporation, formerly Beneficial Finance. Incongruously located off a two-lane country road one exit north of the interchange of Interstates 287 and 78, Beneficial's headquarters is a complex of low, brooding brick linked by cobblestone courtyards and crowned by an eighty-foot clock tower that management is pleased to refer to as "the campanile." This headquarters looms like a baronial castle over the swale in which the perfect white spire of the Reformed Church marks the picturesque village of Peapack. The effect is supposed to be campus-like. It did indeed overpower one would-be Beneficial executive. At his hiring interview, having seen the place for the first time, he looked out over one quadrangle and couldn't help himself. Out he blurted, "So how's the football team doing?"

The Beneficial site is achingly bucolic. The "guest house" is Hamilton Farm, the former estate of the Brady dynasty, from which sprang Nicholas Brady, secretary of the treasury under George Bush. The sixty-four-room manse is profusely hung with oil portraits of horses with names like Exterminator and Twenty Grand. Out back, the carefully rolled lawn sports a wind sock. For the helicopters. When I mentioned I'd almost clobbered four deer in the driveway, the chairman and chief executive officer, Finn M. W. Caspersen, replied idly, "Only four?" There are usually more, he said, showing only the mildest interest in the fact that there were all these large wild animals bounding around his Edge City.

The deer, after all, are not the stars of the show in these parts. The horses are. The long-time headquarters of the U.S. Olympic Equestrian Team is at Hamilton Farm. The stables, when they were built in 1916, were described as the largest and most lavish in the United States. They have forty ornate carriage rooms, harness rooms, and human bedrooms featuring tile walls, terrazzo floors, and brass fittings. The floors of the fifty-four twelve-foot-square box stalls are made of bricks of cork.

As it happens, Caspersen is a competitor in an event called the "four in hand." That involves making four horses pulling a carriage perform like gymnasts. It is an exotic sport by the standards of fox hunting. When Caspersen beat Prince Philip at it in England to take the world championship, the glass trophy came home next to him in the seat he'd bought for it on the Concorde.

Nonetheless, Caspersen protests it was not he who insisted that the Beneficial headquarters be built next to the headquarters of the U.S. Olympic Equestrian Team. It was just a happy coincidence. The serendipity of corporate decision making.

Caspersen's version of the logic that brought the diversity, complexity, size, and function of a major corporation out to Edge City—of how his Machine of many parts was brought out to the Garden—goes like this:

"We came to the conclusion in the 1970s that the rest of the century was going to put a premium on employees in our business—financial services. And many employees were going to want a life style more than just money—a helpful environment and a pleasant environment.

"We also came to the conclusion that women were becoming more and more of a factor in our business. And when a woman has to combine raising a family and working, there's a very strong argument for being out near where people live.

"And personally, I am not a proponent of skyscrapers. I think there's an impersonal feeling about a skyscraper that makes it very difficult to have any kind of corporate culture. The only time you see people is in the elevator.

"So with that combination, what we were looking for was 80 percent of our people being able to live within twenty miles. That location had to be within three or four miles of a major interstate and it had to have room for expansion. An hour from a major airport—Newark is now thirty-five minutes away. We also wanted to have a railroad nearby. We weren't quite sure what role that was going to play—it turns out not too much.

"And we decided it was time to build a very pleasant workplace, and make it as personalized as possible. A lot of small buildings—that in practice are all connected, underground. A little more square footage than usual per person. But emphasize the outside. Eat outside, set up tables. There's two ball fields. Obviously you have tennis courts. We have a cafeteria here, we have a gymnasium, we have a company store if people need a new razor and wrapping paper or something. We have a barber shop. We have a gas station.

"As a result we've been able to recruit, even at lower salaries, against—certainly against anybody in New York unless you get a dedicated New Yorkerphile—but against most people even out

here. And trying to make quality of life an issue does reduce turnover. Any personnel people will tell you the longer you can keep an able person, the better you are."

The result is over a thousand people working at a corporate headquarters that not only would never have been seen outside an old downtown until recently, but is now located in a part of New Jersey in which the deer are a nuisance and Canada geese on corporate lawns a cliché. The night before I talked to Caspersen, I ended up chatting with a man from Beneficial's Utah offices.

"I like this," he said. "I like this a lot." He couldn't get over the verdant country lanes and all the trees. He knew it was unspeakably craven for a Westerner even to think what he was thinking, but what the hell. He stuck his chin out. "This is enough for me to re-examine my prejudices about the East."

Caspersen, nonetheless, is already looking to move farther out. The corporate goal of having 80 percent of the employees able to live within twenty miles of the office is already a bust. He thinks the number is now no more than 60 percent. The area had so many advantages that even in a sagging Northeast real estate market half a million dollars per house was not unusual. And automobile traffic is a concern. "That may be a fatal defect—the roads. Though what's the alternative? There are the same problems with center city. You have to get there. Mass transit is not a very pleasant circumstance. People don't like it. It's no more pleasant than driving. Things work if there's transportation. They don't if there isn't," says Caspersen, echoing the sentiment of city builders throughout the millennia.

But then he starts talking about Beneficial's computers in a way that reveals how Edge Cities are the creation of a new way of handling ancient transportation concerns. Beneficial's computers allow Caspersen to uncouple the pieces of his corporation and move them around in ways that ground transportation never could.

"Let me explain to you one of our projects," he says. It is called Rapid Refund. "It's a joint venture with H & R Block. For an extra $25, H & R Block will offer to send your tax return into the IRS electronically. You say, 'Why should I do that?' Well, you'll probably get your refund quicker. Then they say, 'By the way, we've got another program. For an extra thirty-five bucks we'll get you your money tomorrow.' "

Here's how it works. The distant office of H & R Block, where the taxpayer is, zaps the return to the H & R Block central computer in Columbus, Ohio. The Columbus computer then zaps the return to an IRS computer in Ogden, Utah; Cincinnati, Ohio; or Andover, Massachusetts; depending on the region in which it originated. If the IRS computer decides it looks like a good return—no liens against the taxpayer, for example—it relays the message back to Columbus. That computer then sends information from the return up to Beneficial's computer at 287 and 78, which decides if it meets their standards for a quickie loan. If so, the Peapack computer instructs the Columbus computer to tell the branch office computer to cut a check. (At the same time, the Peapack computer is taking care of bookkeeping with the Beneficial computer in Wilmington, Delaware, where Beneficial's bank is located.) The taxpayer comes back the next day to the H & R Block office in West Nowhere, Idaho, and picks up his check. "All happens in twenty-four hours. Yes. Just like that," says Caspersen. "And you can do it anywhere. Sure you can. It's all their computers, our computers, and the IRS's computers."

That is why Caspersen is thinking of moving his programmers out of 287 and 78. Theirs, he says, is a highly skilled business. "We're talking average salary, $45,000. They are college educated and have skills that you and I don't. And these are highly transferrable skills, so you really want to keep them happy. If they have a long commute that they don't like, find a place with a comparative advantage."

He thinks the answer may be to locate them nearer the more affordable housing in the Edge City emerging down I-78, across the Delaware River in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania's Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton area. Or, for that matter, in Dallas, Texas. Lot of cheap housing and office space there. "You can set up your programmers really anyplace," he said.

If that's true, I ask him, why bother to have any agglomerations at all? Why bother to have a headquarters? Why build a city of any kind, even an Edge City?

"You know, that's the question of the future. Why don't people all stay at home and work? We've got over a thousand people

here and at least 10 percent of them work through our systems at home. Particularly women when they're on maternity leave will do much of their work at home and use their terminals for that. But there's a line beyond which it really doesn't work. It's different for different people. But you lose that team spirit, the ability to work together, if you don't get the touchy-feely, the face-to-face. You can use it part time, you can use it at night, and you can use it on the weekend. But they still have to come in or you lose that synergy between people, you lose the corporate culture. And the corporate culture is very important."

This turns out to be big news. For all of its attenuation, the bulletin is this: Edge City means density is back. "Maybe the wonder," said the urbanologist Jane Jacobs in an interview, "is how *thin* things got."

Humans still put an overwhelming premium on face-to-face contact. Telephones, fax machines, electronic mail, and video conferencing share a problem: they do not produce intense human relationships. They do not create interactions that end with either a fistfight or an embrace. "Trust" is tough to build over a wire. Edge Cities prove that a market thrives for bringing people together physically. Humans are still gregarious animals.

Edge City is not really a rejection of the nineteenth-century city of Dickens. Nor does it reject the nineteenth-century vision of nature of Thoreau. Instead, perhaps, it strives for a new equipoise, a new but stable urban energy level. Forget our alleged isolation in "automotive cocoons" and "sterile subdivisions." The final value of Edge Cities is—social.

That is why there are more than twenty Edge Cities emerging in the New York area. There are that many huge markets out beyond the old core for this new balance. Ten are in northern New Jersey, two in central New Jersey, one on the border in Pennsylvania, and nine more in nearby New York State and Connecticut. Each of them is or will soon be bigger than Memphis.

Edge Cities are most frequently located where beltway-like bypasses around an old downtown are crossed at right angles by freeways that lead out from the old center like spokes on a wheel. New Jersey can be thought of as having three such beltways that circumvent Manhattan. One is Interstate 95, the East Coast's main drag. In this part of the world, it is called the

New Jersey Turnpike, and it shunts traffic headed south toward Washington or north toward Boston around Manhattan via the George Washington Bridge over the Hudson. The second bypass, which is popular for through traffic because of the congestion of I-95 near Manhattan, is the Garden State Parkway. The third, Interstate 287, the northern leg of which is scheduled to be completed in the early 1990s, is the most obviously beltway-like because it broadly loops halfway around the state, never getting much within an hour of Manhattan.

There are three spokes on the wheel heading west from Manhattan across the Hudson—one bridge and two tunnels. At the New Jersey end of each of these, an Edge City is growing. The northernmost is where Interstate 95 lifts off toward Harlem and the Bronx. That is the high-palisades, high-rise Fort Lee area of Yaohan Plaza fame. The next, opposite midtown via the Lincoln Tunnel, is the Meadowlands, the center of which is the intersection of Route 3 and Interstate 95 at the home of the "New York" Giants and "New York" Jets, as well as the Jersey Nets and Devils. Office plazas are rising all up and down Route 3. Hoboken, which is that part of the Meadowlands Edge City that has the best view of Manhattan because it is right on the Hudson, actually became trendy in the 1980s.

The Edge City opposite Wall Street via the Holland Tunnel is the Newark International Airport area, strategically located at the intersections of Interstates 95 and 78. The civic boosters of the Hudson shore areas of Jersey City are now pleased to call that the Gold Coast. What it really is, is that portion of the Newark International Airport Edge City that has the nicest view of Wall Street, as well as direct PATH train connections to the World Trade Center. That's why some very high-rent residential development, featuring high security and water taxis, was built on the grim industrial waterfront facing Wall Street during its go-go merger-and-acquisition years. When that boom ended in the late 1980s, of course, so did a lot of Wall Street salaries, and it was hello Chapter 11. But, oh well. This place still has a lot of advantages. I bought a sweatshirt there that read "Proud to Be an American. Statue of Liberty State Park. It's in New *Jersey.*"

On the second bypass road, the Garden State Parkway, there are three more Edge Cities. From south to north, the first is the Woodbridge Mall area. This is the place just above New Brunswick where you turn off the cruise control and shut up the kids. That is where all the major north-south highways on the East Coast merge, scramble, and peel off. Menlo Park is here, where Thomas Edison invented the twentieth century. Even the *New York Times* has figured out this place enough to stake a turnpike claim on a massive building.

The second Edge City on the Garden State is just north at a curious place called Metropark. This has been described as the first Edge City in the world to grow from a parking lot. That may be true, but this parking lot had a lot of advantages. Metropark is still one of the fastest, safest, and cheapest places to change modes of ground transportation in the Northeast. Leave your car there at Iselin and pick up either good short-haul train connections into Manhattan or Amtrak long-haul. To as distant a destination as Washington, the high-speed Metroliner competes successfully with shuttle jets.

There is another city north of this, which goes by the venerable old name of Newark. Newark has enough office space to be considered moderate-sized by Edge City standards. It even has a new twenty-two-story office tower, anchored by the Seton Hall University School of Law. But it has been around for so long and its growth is so conditional that it should not really be counted as Edge.

Therefore, the third Garden State Parkway Edge City comes after you pass through all those blue-collar neighborhoods on the parkway that look like the opening credits of *All in the Family.* Fifteen miles north, this is the Paramus-Montvale area of Bergen County. It is a relatively mature part of New Jersey, but was originally suburbanized by people looking for sylvan environs who were used to Manhattan-level salaries. It was then urbanized when they brought their jobs with them. Richard Milhous Nixon lives and writes his books in these parts.

Of the Interstate 287 Edge Cities, we've already mentioned one—the Woodbridge area way to the south where 287 is crossed by all those north-south arteries. Then, following around clockwise, there is 287 and 78, the Edge City we've been examining, centered on Bridgewater. That intersection is important because of where Interstate 78 goes. East, it leads right into the international flights at Newark Airport and the Edge City there, and then on into Wall Street via the Holland Tunnel.

West, just over the Delaware River, it dumps into the emerging Edge City of Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley.

Out of date are the impressions of this area shaped by the 1982 Billy Joel song that goes "Well we're living here in Allentown / And they're closing all the factories down; / Out in Bethlehem they're killing time / Filling out forms, standing in line." Today, the Lehigh Valley is booming—its unemployment rate fell from 11 percent to 4 right after Joel's song came out. Because of its abundant skilled labor, pleasant environment, and bargain housing opportunities compared with New Jersey, an Edge City of an Edge City is rising there. It is not in the orbit of New York. It is in the orbit of 287 and 78. That is why Beneficial is thinking about setting up its backshop of computer programmers there.

North of 287 and 78, there is old Morristown. Its freeway approach is memorable: GEORGE WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS, EXIT, ONE MILE. And people say Edge Cities have no history. Red Coats—right lane only?

The Morristown area has an arts community, two universities nearby—Drew and Fairleigh Dickinson—and a thriving downtown. It has not yet hit critical mass as a job center, and probably won't until Route 24 is extended, so it does not qualify as an Edge City; it is headed in that direction. Now, though, it is still serving a residential community; many of the members work in 287 and 78 and in 287 and 80, the next Edge City north around Parsippany–Troy Hills.

That latter Edge City, 287 and 80, which includes the I-280 spur, is already formidable, and is expected to gain more advantage during this decade with the completion—through environmentally fragile wetlands, after enormous controversy—of Interstate 287 all the way to the New York State border. For that matter, the area near Mahwah at Route 17—the "Quickway" to the Catskills—at the other end of 287's so-called missing link should also profit. If it grows, it will spill over into New York State's Rockland County.

Those are the Edge Cities of northern New Jersey, but the 287 beltway's influence does not end there. The Tappen Zee Bridge is the next river crossing up from Harlem, where it takes 287 into Westchester County, New York. There, three more Edge Cities arise. The biggest is in the center of the county, at White

Plains, where the region's Edge City phenomenon got an early boost in 1954 when General Foods moved its headquarters there from Manhattan. The one emerging to the west is in the Tarrytown area. The one to the east is in Purchase-Rye, the headquarters of Pepsico—one of the world's largest consumer-goods providers. It is located where 287 finally picks up Interstate 95 again as it heads north toward Connecticut—and New England.

There are two more Interstate 95 Edge Cities in southwestern Connecticut's Fairfield County. One is the Stamford area, relatively near Manhattan. The other is the Westport and Fairfield area farther out on 95, in which is the headquarters of General Electric, the corporation that in the 1990s began to challenge IBM as the largest corporation in America.

Long Island was the first place in America to be declared urban by the U.S. Census without having a single significant nineteenth-century-style city. It was also the first such territory to spawn a national-quality newspaper—*Newsday*—which is now challenging the downtown papers on their own turf with a New York City edition. Long Island is even more prototypically Edge City than New Jersey. Suffolk County is that half of the island most distant from the mainland. (It is, in fact, a very long island.) As long ago as the 1980 Census, only 14 percent of the people in Suffolk County commuted to New York. For that matter, only 16 percent of them commuted to neighboring, more built-up Nassau County, to the west. Fully two-thirds worked right there on the eastern end of Long Island. Even in Nassau County, which, like Suffolk, is comparable to Manhattan in population and is separated from it only by Queens, 62 percent never leave the island to go to work.

From west to east, the Long Island Edge Cities are the Great Neck–Lake Success area and the Mitchell Field–Garden City area in Nassau County. In Suffolk, there is Route 110–Melville, just east of the county line, and Hauppauge, ten miles farther east on the Long Island Expressway.

There are yet two more Edge Cities in the region. They are so far into central New Jersey that it is debatable whether they are in the orbit of New York, Philadelphia, north Jersey, or are free-standing. One is the Princeton–Route 1 corridor, which in the 1980s was the fastest growing in New Jersey and among the most traffic-choked. The other is Cherry Hill, the home of the first Rouse-Corporation mall, right there between Camden and the James Fenimore Cooper Rest Area.

If the ultimate value of Edge Cities is social—if their whole point is a balance between individualism and face-to-face contact—then the uniting of diverse people into federations, that is, politics or governance, remains a historic city shaper. In few places is that made more clear than in 287 and 78. It was the first place in America whose inhabitants were so hungry for a center to their Edge City that they waged a grass-roots struggle for two decades to get it.

The people of Bridgewater Township, at the heart of 287 and 78, decided in the late 1960s that what they wanted was a kind of twentieth-century village green. They envisioned a place that teenagers would instantly recognize as a fine location to promenade before the opposite sex, akin to the Mexican village square. They hoped that the old would come there to exercise early in the morning, as in a Chinese city park. What they wanted was a market meeting place reminiscent of the Greek agora. They could see a place that was warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and festooned with plants in every season. It would provide for every earthly need, exactly like "the heart of Constantinople, its 'bazestan' [bazaar], with its four gates, its great brick arches, its everyday foods and its precious merchandise," as Braudel described that ancient realm. Around it, the people of Bridgewater figured, they would cluster all their public sites—from their courts of law to their courts of basketball. It would be a city center as described by the urban theorist and architect Louis Kahn: "the place of the assembled institutions."

So that is exactly what they got. After a fashion. Their plans collided with the Law of Unintended Consequences: *No matter what you think you're up to, the outcome will always be a surprise.* And they came to recognize the truth of that ancient wisdom: Be careful what you pray for; you just might get it. Nonetheless, a bronze historical marker may someday be affixed to their answer. For their village square is thriving. Their center finally

opened in 1988 after half a generation of struggle, and it is known far and wide as Bridgewater Commons.

What it turned out to be, of course, was a 900,000-square-foot mall.

Susan Gruel grins broadly when asked if there was an epiphany in the late 1960s, a moment of truth when the people of Bridgewater rose as one and marched on the town council, carrying torches that flickered on their faces as they swayed in the moonlight, chanting, "Mall! Mall! Mall!"

Well . . . Gruel was chairman of the local redevelopment agency in the mid-1980s, when the final contract for the mall was signed. She now smiles. No, it was not like that. But, she cheerfully admits, the whole thing did seem "peculiar" at times, even to her. Peculiar or not, the people of 287 and 78 went from dreaming about Boston Common to building Bridgewater Commons. The process by which this came about demonstrates how, in this country, we constantly reinvent ourselves by the choices that we make.

Political authorities have called cities of governance into being—Washington and Ottawa, for example—for centuries. Granada and Madrid were primarily governmental cities, as were Paris and London. Bridgewater Commons is in the same tradition as Brasilia.

Bridgewater Commons was also a reaction to the mistakes of the past. It was created by people who had seen the land around them burned in ways they vowed would never be repeated.

The first mistake they rued was in the earliest days of suburbanization. The land in the middle of the township was carved up for country getaways into lots so tiny as to be almost unbuildable. Over the generations, these phantom streets and weed-filled lots became legally choked on ownership mysteries. So the site slept despite becoming a Golden Triangle location in the eyes of the real estate industry: it was served, not to mention landlocked, by three major roads—Routes 22, 202–206, and I-287.

It was the late 1960s when a new horror loomed. A developer scraped together just enough land on the Route 22 side to demand the right to build the one thing the locals loathed even more than the weeds—a strip shopping center. "We just did not want another strip development nightmare, what we had seen