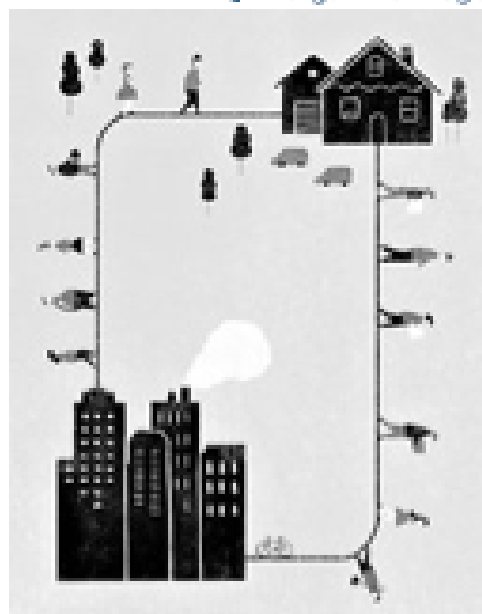


## To the Editor:

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Jing Wei

On the Nov. 26 Op-Ed page, Christopher B. Leinberger ([“The Death of the Fringe Suburb”](#)) and Louise A. Mizingo ([“To Rethink Sprawl, Start With Offices”](#)) serve up what has become a predictable set of jeremiads about the outer suburbs and exurbs.

In this view of the world, S.U.V.'s will rust beside the road in front of abandoned McMansions as Americans finally come to their senses, renounce low-density settlements and rush back to the city. Or, if they don't, we should change our policies to push them

back.

It is telling, though, that these diagnoses and prescriptions are remarkably similar to those that accompanied the oil crisis of the 1970s. They also appear to be based on the same fallacious assumptions, notably that low-density development is inherently less efficient or environmentally sustainable than high-density settlement.

Just as there was no rush back to the city after the oil crisis of the 1970s, there is little evidence that this is happening today.

Even so, it is quite possible that the majority of Americans will eventually want to move back toward the urban center, live at higher densities and use public transit rather than the automobile. Until they do, though, wishful thinking by urban experts about how Americans ought to live is not likely to be any more persuasive now than it was in the 1970s.

ROBERT BRUEGMANN

Chicago, Nov. 28, 2011

*The writer is professor emeritus of art history, architecture and urban planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the author of “Sprawl: A Compact History.”*

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