**Edge City**

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**Edge city** is an American term for a concentration of business, shopping, and entertainment outside a traditional urban area in what had recently been a residential suburb or semi-rural community. First explained in the book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* by Joel Garreau, who established its current meaning while working as a reporter for the Washington Post. Garreau argues that the edge city has become the standard form of urban growth worldwide, representing a 20th-century urban form unlike that of the 19th-century central downtown. Other terms for the areas include suburban activity centers, megacenters, and suburban business districts.

**Garreau established five rules for an edge city:**

- It must have more than five million square feet (465,000 m²) of office space. This is enough to house between 20,000 and 50,000 office workers, as many as some traditional downtowns.
- It must have more than 600,000 square feet (56,000 m²) of retail space, the size of a medium shopping mall. This ensures that the edge city is a center of recreation and commerce as well as office work.
- It must be characterized by more jobs than bedrooms.
- It must be perceived by the population as one place.
- It must have been nothing like a city 30 years earlier.

**Geography of Edge Cities (Location and Size)**

- Most edge cities develop at or near existing or planned freeway intersections, and are especially likely to develop near major airports.
- They rarely include heavy industry.
- They often are not separate legal entities but are governed as part of surrounding counties (this is more often the case in the East than in the Midwest, South, or West).
- They are numerous — almost 200 in the United States, compared to 45 downtowns of comparable size — and are large geographically because they are built at automobile scale.
Cars
The edge city as Garreau describes it is fundamentally impossible without the automobile. It was not until automobile ownership surged in the 1950s, after four decades of fast steady growth, that the edge city became truly possible. Whereas virtually every American central business district (CBD) or secondary downtown that developed around nonmotorized transportation or the streetcar has a pedestrian-friendly grid pattern of relatively narrow streets, most edge cities instead have a hierarchical street arrangement centered around pedestrian-hostile arterial roads. In other Words, they are car dependent.

Examples
Schaumburg is the classic example of an edge city in our area. Think of the design for that suburb and you largely have an edge city

- some taller buildings but sprawl is still an issue with many lower buildings and parking lots
- no design plan but rather these places just happened
- shopping has moved to the suburbs and edge cities - centered around a mall
- is a recent creation - the mall was built in the 1970s
- is built along a highway interchange
- decentralizes the CBD

Garreau identified three distinct varieties of edge city:

* Boomers – The most common type, having developed incrementally around a shopping mall or highway interchange.
* Greenfields – Having been master-planned as new towns, generally on the suburban fringe.
* Uptowns – Historic activity centers built over an older city or town (sometimes a satellite city).

For example, within Northern Virginia, Tysons Corner is a Boomer, Reston Town Center is a Greenfield, and the Rosslyn–Ballston Corridor is an Uptown.

Note;this is one aspect of the urban realms model. Edge cities can be some of the realms of the urban realms model as seen in the picture of the model. It also works well in America but maybe not in Europe where they tend to restrict growth more and tend to plan growth more.

History
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Skim after this point
Perhaps the first edge city was Detroit's New Center, developed in the 1920s. Located three miles (5 km) north of the city's downtown (but still within the city at the time), this was developed as an attempt to relocate downtown Detroit. New Center and the Miracle Mile section of Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles are considered the earliest automobile-oriented urban forms, although built with radically different purposes in mind (New Center as an office park, the Miracle Mile as a retail strip). Garreau's classic example of an edge city is the information technology center, Tysons Corner, Virginia, west of Washington, D.C. As recently as the end of World War II, it was a country crossroads, but it now has more office space than downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

Edge cities planned around freeway interchanges have a history of suffering severe traffic problems if one of these freeways goes unbuilt. In particular, Century City, a pioneering edge city built on former 20th Century Fox backlot in western Los Angeles, was built with the long-term intent of establishing connections to both a citywide light rail or monorail system and the planned Beverly Hills Freeway. Neither project ever came to fruition, resulting in massive congestion on the surface streets connecting Century City to the San Diego (I-405) and Santa Monica (I-10) freeways, each two miles (3 km) distant. Recent calls by Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa for construction of a Wilshire Boulevard extension of the Purple Line subway have led many transportation planners and Century City occupants and neighbors to call for a southerly routing of the extension that would pass by Century City on its northern leg.

**The future of edge cities**

Writing for Fannie Mae, Lang and Lefurgy (2003) note that edge cities may turn out to have been a 20th-century phenomenon only because of their limitations. The residents of the low-density housing areas around them tend to be fiercely resistant to their outward expansion (as has been the case in Tyson's Corner and Century City), but because their internal road networks are severely limited in capacity, densification is far more difficult than in the traditional grid network that characterizes traditional CBDs and secondary downtowns. As a result, construction of medium- and high-density housing in edge cities ranges from difficult to impossible. Because most are built at automobile scale, mass transit frequently cannot serve them well. Pedestrian access to and circulation within an edge city is impractical if not impossible, even if residences are nearby. The authors conclude grimly that revitalization of edge cities may be "the major urban renewal project of the 21st century." An example of this can be seen in France, where, in a reversal of the situation in most U.S. cities, the downtown is upscale and some suburbs are the slums.

Despite the lessons of the American experience, in rapidly developing countries such as China and India and the United Arab Emirates, the edge city is quickly emerging as an important new development form as automobile ownership skyrockets and marginal land is bulldozed for development. The outskirts of Bangalore, for example, are increasingly replete with mid-rise mirrored-glass office towers set amid lush gardens and sprawling parking lots where many foreign companies have set up shop. Dubai offers another example.

**Location and Features**

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**Use of Space**

Spatially, edge cities primarily consist of mid-rise office towers (with some skyscrapers) surrounded by massive surface parking lots and meticulously manicured lawns, almost reminiscent of the designs of Le Corbusier. Instead of a traditional street grid, their street networks are hierarchical, consisting of winding parkways (often lacking sidewalks) that feed into arterial roads or freeway ramps. However, edge cities are of similar job density to the secondary downtowns found in places such as Newark and Pasadena; indeed, Garreau writes that edge cities' development proves that "density is back."
http://www.garreau.com/
http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/3.12/edgier.cities_pr.html