How Population Change Ushers in a New Era for Planning

Dowell Myers
The Big Questions

What are the major impacts of demographic change?

Gaining the Long View on turning points:
— three eras of change since 1950
— a new era ahead of aging effects

How might the multigenerational perspective solve many problems?
The Two Drivers: Aging and Immigration
U.S. Population Growth by Seniors (65+) and Other Adults

Source: Dowell Myers, USC
Soaring Ratio of Seniors to Working Age

Seniors (65+) Per 100 Working Age (25 to 64)

Source: Dowell Myers, USC

+67% after 2010
The Trigger of Many Crises

- Social Security Crisis
- Medicare/Health Insurance Crisis
- Workforce Replacement Crisis
- Taxpayer Replacement Crisis

- The Home Seller Crisis
- Social & Community Investment Crisis
Demographic Growth
Native-Born Turning Age 25 Plus Immigrant Arrivals

Myers and Pitkin '09
Support for New Housing Patterns
Minority Dictatorship of New Construction

Everyone else lives in existing housing

1% of households (growing segments) dictate type of new construction

Dowell Myers, USC
The Baby Boomers Surge Forward
Age Group Increase as Percent of US Population at End of Each Decade
Episodes and Turning Points in Housing and Cities

1. Urban Decline & Abandonment (1950-80)
2. Gentrification, the Long Boom & the Affordability Crisis (1970-2008)

Source: Dowell Myers and John Pitkin (2009) Annals, AAPSS
3. Apartment Trend and Outlook
Century of Multifamily Construction Shares

- 3+ Units (Schafer)
- 2+ Units (Census Bureau)
- 5+ Units (Census Bureau)

Myers '09

[Year range from 1900 to 2020]
Share of Housing Construction in Apartments

Myers '09
Age Profile of Tenants in Recently Built Apartments
Growth at Ages 25-34 as a Percent of US Population

- Baby Bust Hits Young Adult Age

Source: Myers '09
Expressed Preference for a Townhouse in the City

Myers and Gearin 2001 based on NAHB data
4. The Baby Boomer Sell-Off
Average Annual Rates of Buying and Selling

Per 100 People of Each Age in California

Source: Myers (2007) *Immigrants and Boomers*, Figure 11.1
Seniors (65+)

Growing Weight of Seniors Compared to Working Age

Ratio of Seniors per 100 Working Age (25-64) Residents in the U.S.

Seniors (65+)
Per 100
Working Age

Myers '09
Annual Net Selling Rate at Age 65-69

Note: Annual rates as a percent of people in the age group, calibrated in the late 1990s

Who’s Going to Buy Your House?

Myers’s Projection for California in 2020

Source: Immigrants and Boomers, Figure 11.3
What are some Planning Solutions?
Plan Housing Construction

• **Support New Housing Preferences**
  – Compact, walkable neighborhoods (Myers and Gearin)
  – More central locations
  – Beware low-density outer suburbs (Nelson, Leinberger)
  – Retirement housing integrated for growing seniors

• **Regulate Overall Supply**
  – Monitor absorption of retirees’ homes that are vacated
  – Beware loosening development restrictions at a time when a glut of resale housing could be released by Boomers
Fight the Rising Senior Ratio

- **Plan to Retain Elderly in their Community**
  - Slow the flow of housing sales
  - Design more supportive, elder-friendly communities

- **Attract New Immigrants**
  - Foreign-born account for 30% of growth in owners this decade, triple that of the 1980s

- **Invest in the Young: Social Policy Plan**
  - Young adults need to shoulder a greater burden
  - Every young adult needs to become a middle-class homeowner and taxpayer
  - Neglected inner city youth are a precious asset to be cultivated for their potential contributions
Conclusions
for the
Future
Confluence of Factors

Demographic Change
With New Demand for Density
With Reductions in Energy & Emissions

Livable, compact development fills demand unmet by existing single-family sprawl and solves social and environmental problems
The Intergenerational Social Contract
Rediscovering the Generational Partnership

Children
Educational Investments

Seniors Rewarded
Pensions
Health Care
Home Sales

Replacement
Supporters
New Workers
New Home Buyers
New Taxpayers

Mature Adults
Make Maximum
Financial Contributions

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the cycle of roles
Thank You

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