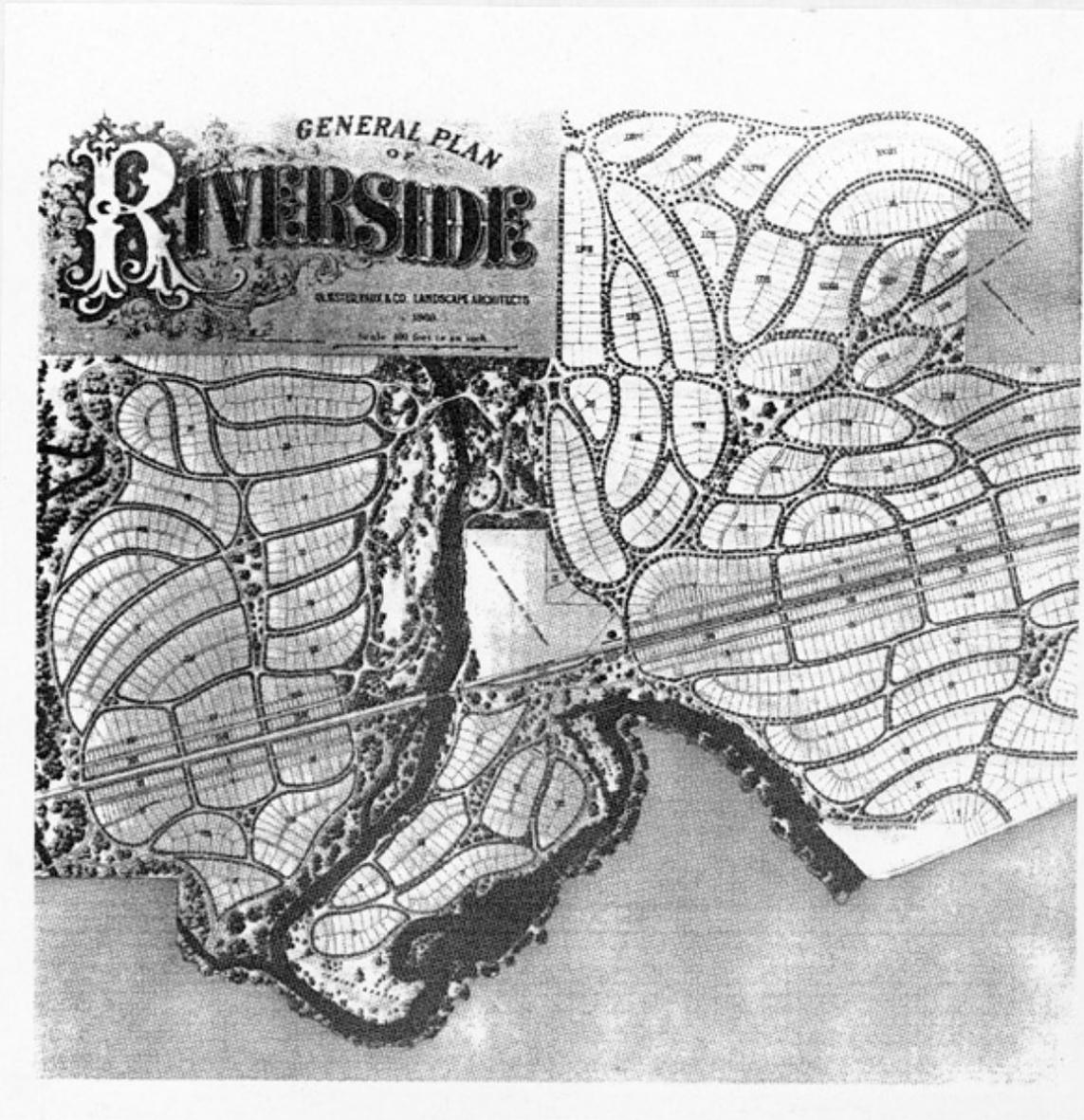


### C.1.2 Industrial/Urban Dominance Period (1870-1930)

The 1870s and 1880s saw the rise of the Victorian "cult of domesticity," which encouraged the enrichment and protection of the home. Promoting the belief that women and children should be removed from the disease, crime, and other problems of the city, magazines, journals, and books encouraged families to invest their savings in a suburban home. The construction of streetcar lines leading from downtowns into the countryside made formerly distant areas on the periphery of cities potential sites for development, and homes in the suburbs became accessible to middle-class families. While the suburbs of the elite continued to resemble the lush, naturalistic suburbs designed by Olmsted and his contemporaries, middle-class streetcar suburbs were designed to be economical. Streets were laid according to the gridiron plan, and the land was subdivided into lots only wide enough to accommodate a one-or two-room-wide house. The residents' need to be within walking distance of the streetcar lines limited the size and scale of developments.



**I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor  
Transportation Study**

Montgomery and Prince George's Counties  
Suburbanization Historic Context  
and Survey Methodology

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**Figure 9: Riverside, Illinois Plan**

Source: Southworth, Michael, and Eran Ben-Joseph.  
*Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities*, page 32

Amenities in these suburbs were scarce; developers were not obligated to provide paved streets and sidewalks, much less trees and parks. Improvements were left to residents and their municipality. Despite these conditions the opportunity to raise a family in the healthier suburbs made these areas desirable. Major cities across the United States saw an exodus of the middle-class to the suburbs between 1870 and 1900 (Wright 1981, 96-104; Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 102-103).

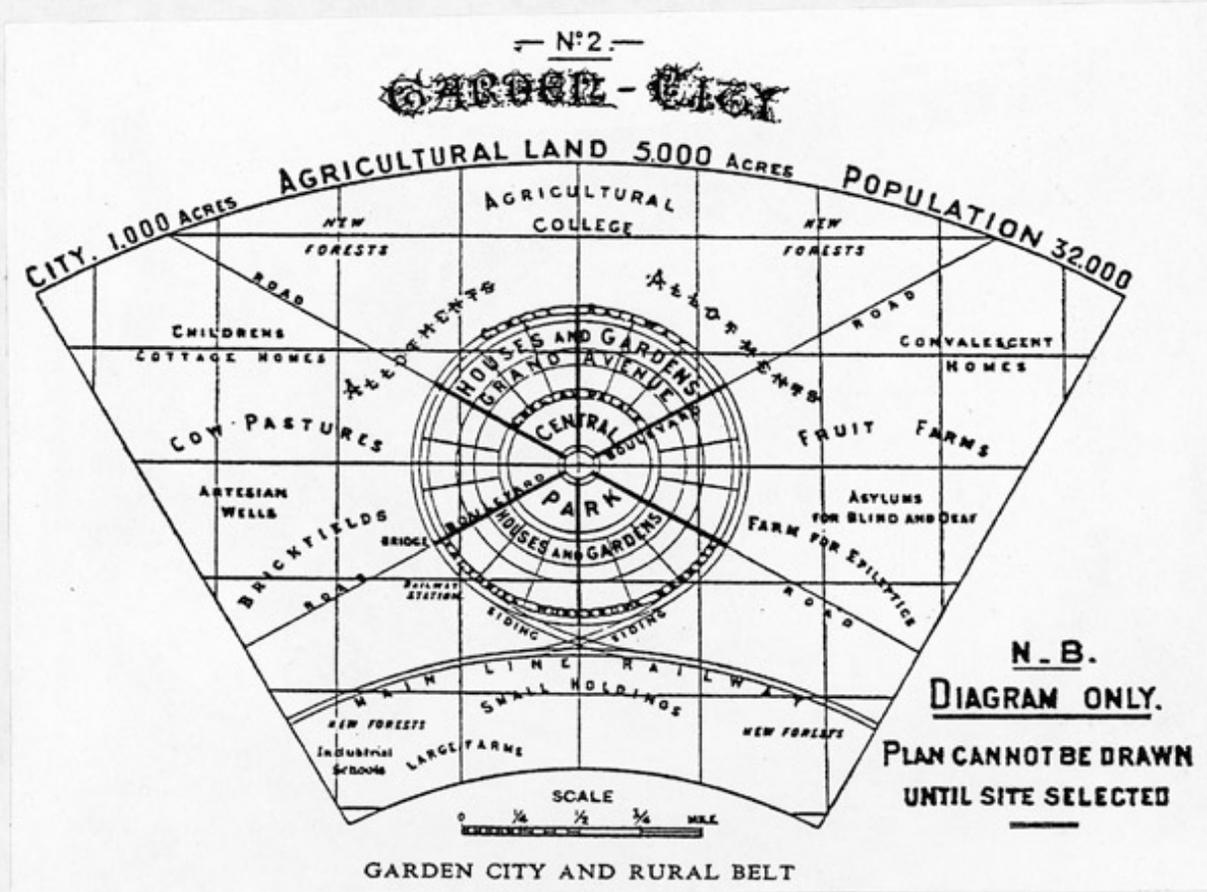
Attempts to provide a more pastoral environment for the working classes began with Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, published in England in 1898 and 1902. Howard proposed self-contained "Garden Cities" designed with a core of public buildings and mixed-class rings of single-family dwellings surrounded by a "greenbelt" of undeveloped land (Figure 10). Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker designed Hamstead Gardens outside London according to Howard's plan in 1904. In Hamstead Gardens, radial streets extending from a village green ended in cul-de-sacs at the edge of the greenbelt. While Howard's exact specifications were not followed in later years, his publications contributed to the rise of the suburban ideal and were emulated in greenbelt communities well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 43-45).

In the United States the City Beautiful movement, inspired by the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, led to new interest in urban redevelopment and the construction of public buildings, parks, and boulevards, all for the purpose of improving the appearance and livability of American cities. It was during this period that city planning as a profession began in earnest. Architect Daniel Burnham was commissioned to produce plans for the redesign of Chicago, San Francisco, and Cleveland. In Washington, D.C. he worked with the Senate to study the city's park system and restore the L'Enfant Plan. His colleague in the American League for Civic Improvement, Charles Robinson, published *The Improvement of Towns and Cities* in 1902, outlining the first standards for street construction (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 47-56).

In anticipation of the changes to come, a movement toward comprehensive planning of metropolitan areas began, this time emphasizing scientific management and public health over aesthetic appearance. The editors of the 1917 publication *City Planning Progress* wrote:

City planning in America has been given to the "City Beautiful" instead of the "City Practical." We insist with vigor that all city planning should start on the foundation of economic practicableness and good business; that it must be something which will appeal to the businessman, and to the manufacturer, as sane and reasonable (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 58).

The First National Conference on City Planning and the Problems of Congestion in 1909 had recommended moving the middle class to outlying areas to alleviate congestion in cities. It also advocated the use of zoning and subdivision regulation to maintain the suburban environment. Suburbs of this time frequently had a loose grid of curving but interconnected streets accommodating both pedestrian and automobile traffic (Figure 8).



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Transportation Study**

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Suburbanization Historic Context  
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**Figure 10: Howard's Garden City Plan**

Source: Howard, Ebenezer.  
*Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, page 52

Automobile owners, whose numbers were rapidly increasing, could commute to the city independently, and suburbs were therefore not limited to the areas around streetcar lines. By the 1920s, the suburbs were considered the ideal place for middle-class citizens to live. Developers of new subdivisions tried to attract buyers by playing on parents' fears of flappers and bootleg alcohol in the cities. As an alternative, developers offered the safe, homogenous, regulated environment they were creating, in which the type of people and activities allowed were restricted. Zoning restrictions began in Los Angeles in 1909, and became a standard way to ensure separation of residences from industrial and commercial areas and of the homogenous suburban population from other classes, races, and religions. As an acknowledgement that most aspects of life could now take place in the suburbs, carefully designed commercial areas were allowed around the fringes of some suburbs in the late 1920s and early 1930s and well-known suburbs such as Radburn, New Jersey and Greenbelt, Maryland included extensive communal lands. Developers could also include specifications for the design of the buildings and the people to occupy them (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 58-62; Wright 1981, 193-213).