THE SUBURBS DESIGN CHALLENGE

The suburbs: No matter where you live in the world, you've encountered the suburbs. You might live in them, avoid them, or commute through them, but somehow, they are part of your life.

On the surface, the suburbs may seem banal, uneventful, and ever-present, but the reality is that they are places of gentrification, racism, and intense polarization. As our urban centers have grown over the last 70 years, the suburban rings that sprawl around them have inherited their social and economic tensions, yet also pose their own platform for technological opportunities, educational changes, manufacturing and creation, food and consumption.

Home to the fastest-growing poor-population in the nation, as well as self-segregating hyper-wealthy enclaves, the suburbs are places in need of thoughtful, intentional design.

Consider a few facets of the suburbs:

Transportation: Living farther from jobs in the city requires a longer commute. Many suburbs lack adequate public transportation infrastructure. With the advent of self-driving cars will we be encouraged to live even farther away, accelerating sprawl? Will our governments re-invest in public transportation that is time and energy-efficient? What other infrastructure and services are possible or needed?

Commerce: Teenagers hanging out at malls. Box stores copy-pasted from one town to the next.
Trends towards creating and buying local. Is the sharing economy still happening? What are the tensions between owning and sharing?

Community: What makes a community? Physical boundaries? Religious affiliation? Schools? Demographics? Gentrification, social tension, and racism are real. What do families need? What will be new in the future? What are the anchor points of communities?"

YOUR CHALLENGE:
In the next 90 minutes, you'll begin to create something that reimagines the suburbs. Yes, it's a complex problem. Yes, there's no way you'd be able to do justice to such a complicated and important problem in this amount of time, but everything starts somewhere. Think of this as your first 90 minutes working on the challenge. You might approach it from any number of angles, any of which would be valid. Tackle a slice of the issues that feel interesting and important to you.

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