

CONNECTIONS: Can Our Public Transportation Infrastructure Also Foster Public Life?

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Public Life

*“all (pro) social interactions
that happen in public”*

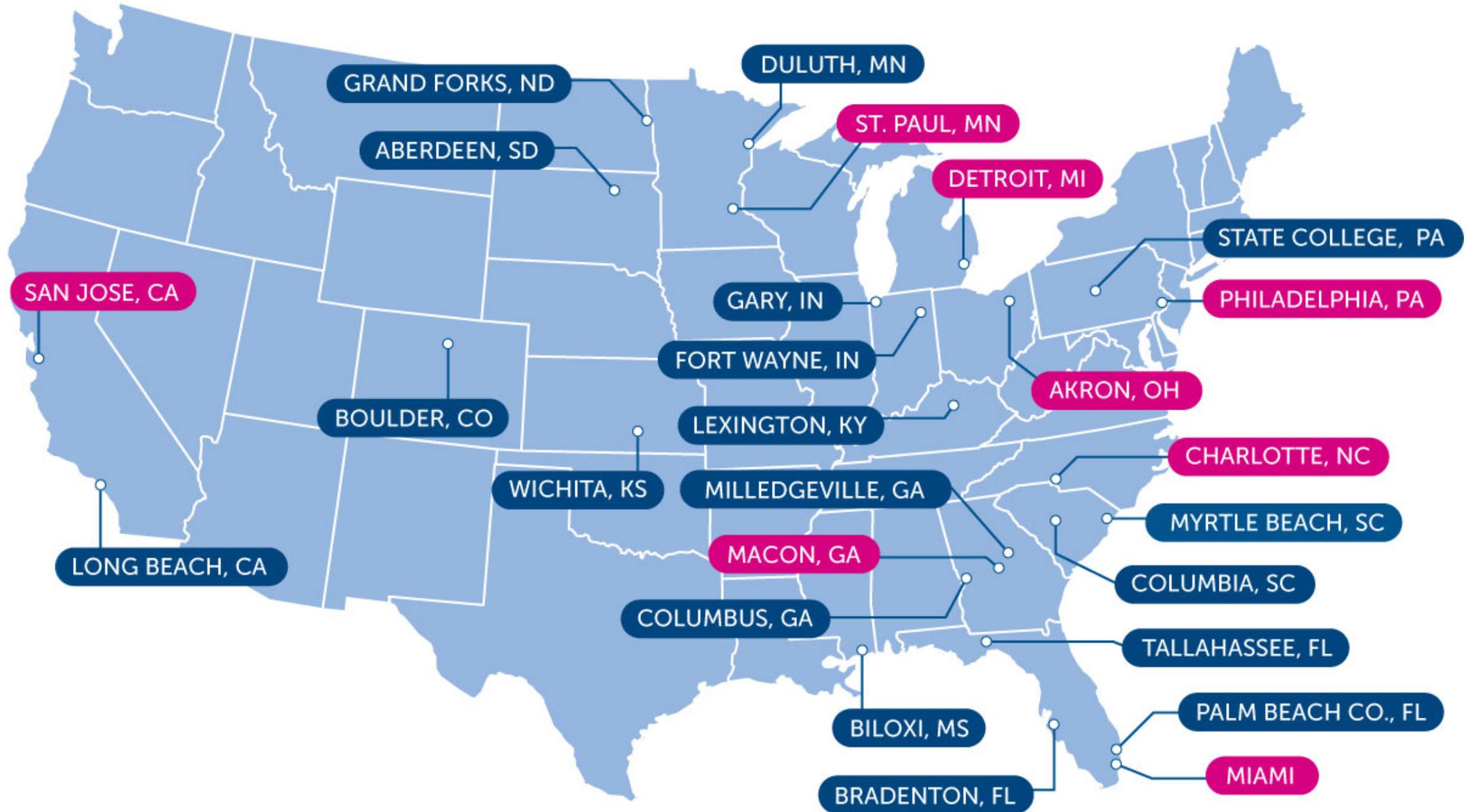
We believe in freedom of expression and in the values expressed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

We believe an informed citizenry is essential for individuals and communities to make their own best choices and that journalism has a critical role to play in that democratic process.

We believe in equitable, inclusive and participatory communities.



KNIGHT FOUNDATION



Knight Foundation supports **informed and engaged communities** by identifying and working with partners to help our cities attract and nurture talent, promote economic opportunity and foster civic engagement.

We fund to help our communities to **attract and retain talent, enhance opportunity, and foster civic engagement.**



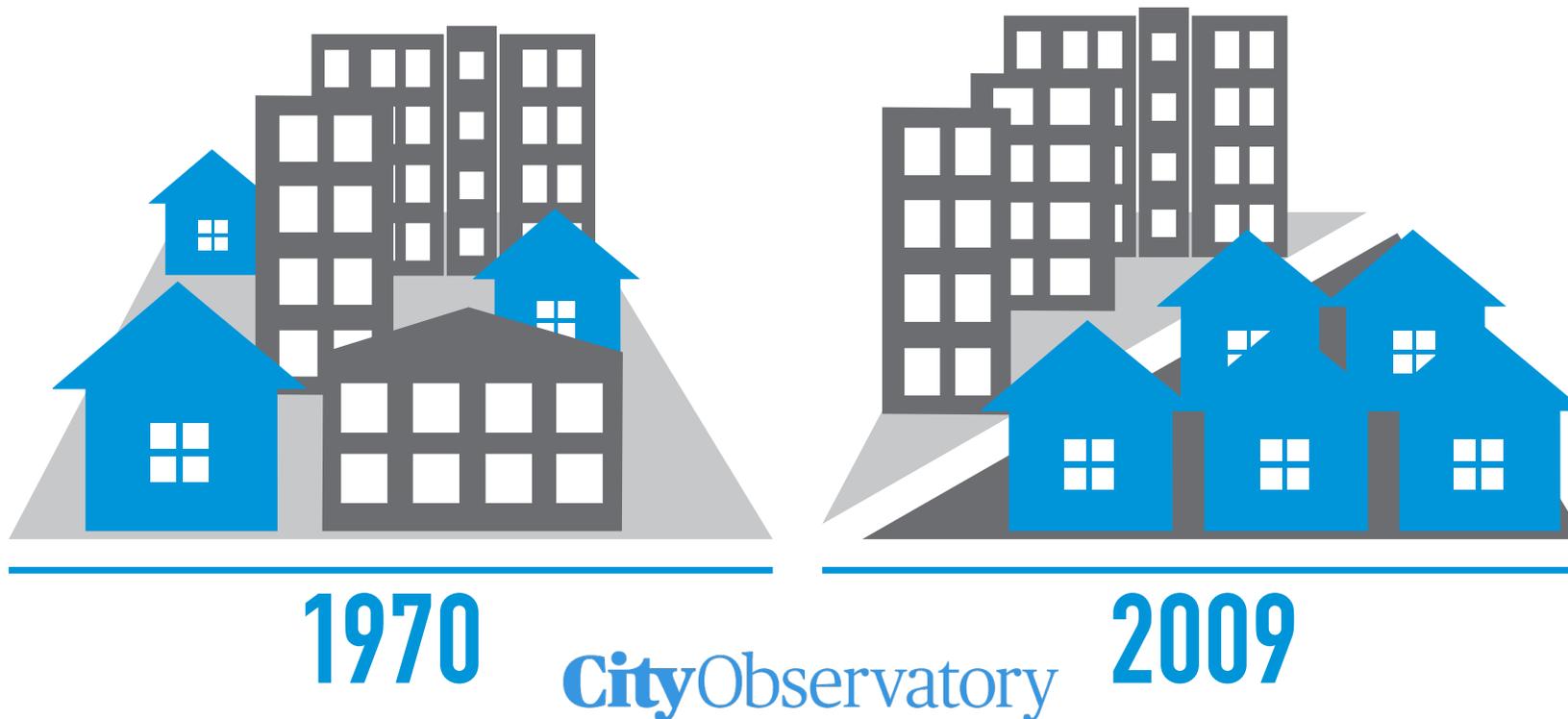
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The Situation

We have
less in common

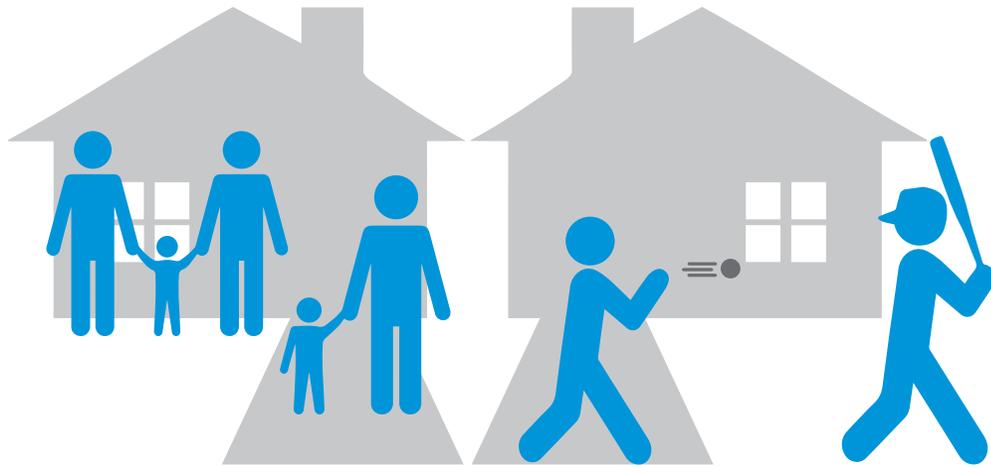
WE LIVE SEGREGATED BY INCOME

Between 1970 and 2009, the proportion of families living either in predominantly poor or predominantly affluent neighborhoods doubled, from 15 percent to 33 percent. Families in “middle income” neighborhoods declined from 65 percent to 42 percent.

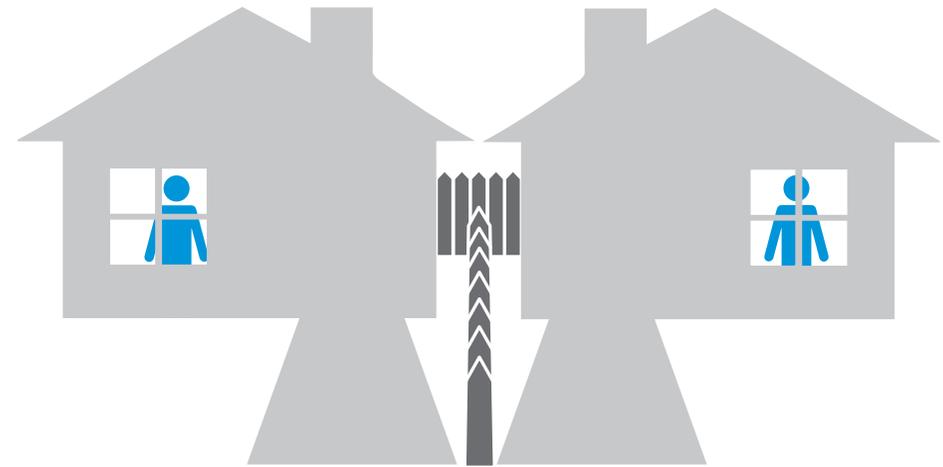


LESS TIME WITH NEIGHBORS

In the 1970s, nearly 30 percent of Americans reported spending time with their neighbors. Today only about 20 percent do, and a full third of people report no interactions with neighbors at all.



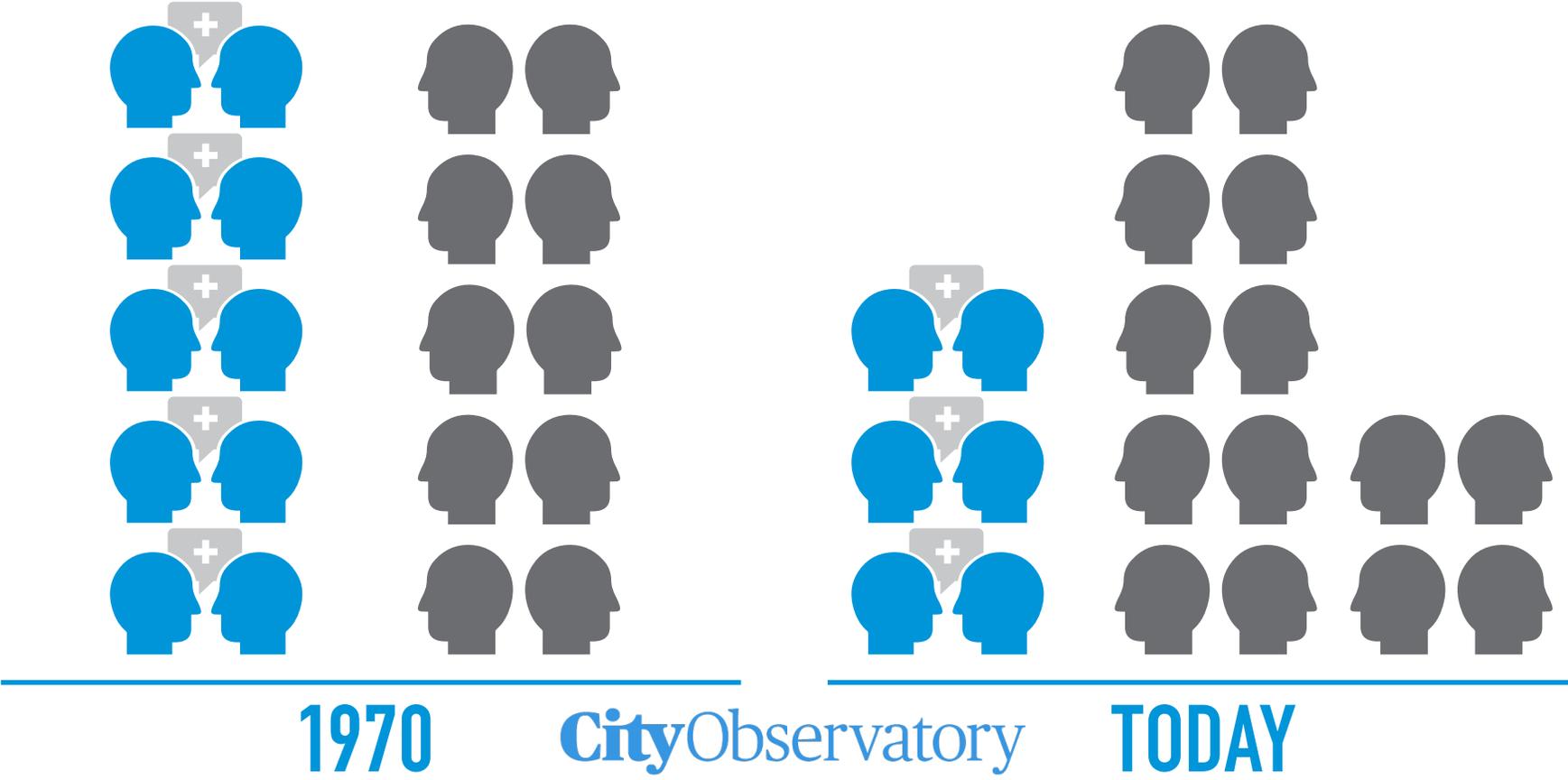
1970



TODAY

WE MISTRUST EACH OTHER

In the early 1970s, Americans were nearly equally divided when asked to choose between: “Most people can be trusted” versus “You can’t be too careful in life.” Since then, the trend in the population expressing trust has gone steadily downward. Today only slightly more than three in 10 people say “most people can be trusted.”



Immigrants at a train station

Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary Attitudes

March 11, 2014 vol. 111 no. 10 pp. 3699-370

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America

Ryan D. Enos , Harvard University

“However, these results also suggest that more prolonged contact or interpersonal interaction can diminish initial exclusionary impulse. This last fact is important for policy makers as they consider the public policy with respect to immigrant incorporation. Given a goal of intergroup harmony, further exploration should be given to public policies that encourage interpersonal contact and incorporation.”

Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary Attitudes
Ryan D. Enos, Harvard University

“These things like public transit and the way we build our cities very much affect how we interact with people and how we get along as groups. When we invest in infrastructure, we bring intergroup harmony by encouraging people to interact.”
-Ryan D. Enos

Does riding the commuter rail change attitudes on immigration?
Boston Globe Feb. 25, 2014

Smiling at strangers

“To be looked at as though air”: Civil attention matters.

Wesselmann, E. D., Cardoso, F., Slater, S., & Williams, K. D. (2012).
Psychological Science, 23, 166-168.

wie Luft behandeln

"Because social connections are fundamental to survival, researchers argue that humans evolved systems to detect the slightest cues of inclusion or exclusion. For example, simple eye contact is sufficient to convey inclusion. In contrast, withholding eye contact can signal exclusion. ... Even though one person looks in the general direction of another, no eye contact is made, and the latter feels invisible." -Eric Wesselmann

“When people think of poverty they think in terms of money and material resources, but a large part of being poor is suffering from a lack of social connections and networks, and living in a low-income area with no infrastructure that enables the leap up to the middle class.” -C. Nicole Mason

“What Causes Poverty? Not a Lack of Money, but a Lack of Social Relationships” The Big Think, Aug. 28, 2016

“If institutions and leaders want to support and elevate poor communities...they need to provide better infrastructure (like libraries, parks, good grocery stores, and hospitals) as well as bridging programs both within the community and, very importantly, outside of it, so people can get in contact with people outside of their normal social network.”

C. Nicole Mason

“What Causes Poverty? Not a Lack of Money, but a Lack of Social Relationships” The Big Think, Aug. 28, 2016

Presentations

Social Contact Theory

*even unstructured contact
reduces prejudice*

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

The job:

*lower the barriers that prevent
people from creating public life*

The job:

*create invitations that encourage
people to participate in public life*



ASSEMBLY

SHAPING SPACE
FOR CIVIC LIFE

Project Orientation
June 2016

Reimagining the Civic Commons

This initiative intends to be the first comprehensive demonstration of how a connected set of civic assets - a civic commons - can yield increased and more equitably shared prosperity for cities and neighborhoods.





**Knight
Cities
Challenge**

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