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## **PRESS Release**

For Release: Immediate  
September 2, 2010

# **Groundbreaking Documentary Spotlights Issues of Suburban Renewal**

A new, groundbreaking two-part documentary series, ***The New Metropolis***, which explores the rise, fall and possible rebirth of America's older suburbs, has been released and is airing on public television stations by region across the country through 2012.

The two-part documentary series, produced by award-winning filmmaker Andrea Torrice, is the first public examination of issues facing America's older, "first ring" suburbs. Considered the birthplace of the American Dream, these towns were built during a period of national prosperity and financed with government support after World War II. Now many of these once highly desirable communities face the same challenges urban areas do: growing poverty, white flight, a crumbling infrastructure, abandonment, and the continual lure of newer communities further from the cities. ***The New Metropolis*** consists of two half-hour episodes:

**Episode 1:** *A Crack in the Pavement*, narrated by actor **Peter Coyote**, explores the national infrastructure crises through the stories of two suburban Ohio public officials as they struggle to fix their broken infrastructure and save their aging communities.

**Episode 2:** *The New Neighbors*, narrated by Academy Award nominated actress **Ruby Dee**, tells the inspiring story of two ordinary people, one black and one white, who made racial integration the centerpiece of revitalizing Pennsauken, New Jersey, a suburban town of Philadelphia, PA.

According to filmmaker Torrice, "The fate of America's original suburbs is a cautionary tale for every community. The film series addresses the reality facing millions of Americans in hundreds of communities. It offers hope, new ideas and everyday heroes."

"Both films illustrate how the plight of the first suburbs is critical to the overall health of our metropolitan areas," says Liz Blume, Director of the Community Building Institute at Xavier University.

"The issues raised in the films are exactly the ones we're dealing with in my town," said Linwood, New Jersey Mayor Frank DeLucca. "And they give new ideas, and hope."

According to Terry Grundy, Director of Community Impact for the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, "These films are thoughtful and compelling, a 'must see' for anyone wanting to explore how to revitalize our aging communities."

"*The New Metropolis* is precisely the sort of thing that belongs in the public TV repertoire, virtually the only place where TV can shine a light on obscure but fundamental issues of American society," notes Philadelphia Inquirer television critic Jonathon Storm.

### ***The New Metropolis* Sparks Community Dialogues Across Nation**

In addition to the public television broadcasts, *The New Metropolis* is being screened in dozens of communities. The films are sparking dynamic dialogues about strategies for urban and suburban revitalization across the country. For information about the community screening events, please visit [www.thenewmetropolis.com](http://www.thenewmetropolis.com).

**The New Metropolis** is distributed by Bullfrog Films: [www.bullfrogfilms.com](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com)

**For information on the series, events, and broadcasts visit** [www.thenewmetropolis.com](http://www.thenewmetropolis.com)

**To find out air dates in your region,** you may also check local PBS listings by finding your local PBS station at [www.pbs.org/stationfinder/](http://www.pbs.org/stationfinder/)

*The New Metropolis* series was made possible with the generous support of the Ford, Surdna, George Gund, Annie E. Casey, William Penn and Stephen H. Wilder Foundations, and is a project of the Center for Independent Documentary.

## About the New Metropolis Series

Episode 1: ***A Crack in The Pavement***, narrated by actor **Peter Coyote**, exposes policies beginning in the Eisenhower era that encouraged and bankrolled America's suburbs. These policies, many of which are perpetuated today, also encourage sprawl and left aging communities without sufficient resources to meet today's challenges.

The documentary follows the stories of Mayor Richard Ellison of Elmwood Place, a suburb outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, and City Manager Tom Moeller of Madeira, Ohio. The two public officials give the viewer a glimpse into the challenges older communities have in repairing their aging infrastructure and keeping residents and business from leaving, often for newer suburban communities further from the urban core. The film also presents innovative and successful approaches to revitalizing older communities through balanced growth strategies, mass transit and regional planning policies. Besides the Ohio officials, national experts Myron Orfield, Bruce Katz, Dr. Carla Chifos and Kim Gibson offer a national context on the issues facing many American communities.

**Episode 2: *The New Neighbors***, tells the inspiring story of two ordinary people, one black and one white, who made racial integration the centerpiece of revitalizing Pennsauken New Jersey, a first suburban town of Philadelphia, PA. The documentary follows how the town council and residents implemented a unique strategy of "stable integration" in their housing market. Pennsauken has become one of the most vibrant, integrated towns in the country. Narrated by Academy Award-nominated actress **Ruby Dee**, the documentary includes original archival materials along with expert commentary from David Rusk and Angela Glover Blackwell.

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