Few issues in transportation have been as controversial as the relationship between urban design and travel behavior. Advocates of "neo-traditional" design argue that reshaping communities to more traditional forms can reduce auto use and encourage alternative modes; others argue that travel behavior is rooted in far more complex lifestyle issues and is minimally influenced by land use. This seminar will begin with a PBS-produced video that pits those who believe that governments should encourage 'politically correct' forms of development and travel against those who argue that individuals and families should privately decide where they live and work. Then, discussion will turn to three fundamental research questions related to strategies like "new urbanism" and transit-oriented development: Do they really reduce travel? Can they be implemented? Are they a good idea?

Marlon Boarnet is an associate professor in the Department of Urban & Regional Planning and Department of Economics at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). His research interests include transportation policy, local economic development, and transportation/land use relationships. Recent projects have focused on new highways and induced travel; the effects of transportation accessibility on economic activity and employment location; and relationships between land use (especially neo-traditional design) and travel behavior. He is co-author, with Randall Crane, of Travel by Design: The Influence of Urban Form on Travel (Oxford University Press, 2001).