

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping rectangles in shades of blue and orange. The rectangles are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. The text "National Center for Real Estate Research" is overlaid on this graphic in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

# National Center for Real Estate Research

Beyond Edgeless Cities: Office Geography in the New Metropolis □

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Robert E. Lang, Thomas Sanchez and Jennifer LeFurgy □

Virginia Tech □

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
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# Beyond Edgeless Cities: Office Geography in the New Metropolis

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## **Key Findings:**

- This study uses spatial analysis within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to track over 3 billion square feet of office space in 13 large US markets. The office patterns revealed do not fit a downtown versus edge city development model. The findings confirm those presented in Robert Lang's 2003 book *Edgeless Cities*. Although new office location categories are added to this analysis, the breakdown of space is roughly approximate with the results in the earlier work.
- Edgeless cities, a small-scale and scattered form of commercial development, account for almost 40 percent of the total office space in this survey. Downtowns follow with nearly 33 percent of space, while edge cities have just over 14 percent. The remaining office space falls into three minor categories: "urban envelopes," "corridors," and "secondary downtowns." These places hold 5.2, 3.8, and 1.2 percent of all office space respectively.
- About half the edgeless city office space mapped in this study sits in higher density "urban" residential areas that have more than 3,000 people per square mile. "Suburban" areas, or places with densities between 1,000 and 3,000 residents per square mile, account for just over a third of the edgeless cities office space. Areas below 1,000 people per square mile, or "exurbs" hold just 12.4 percent of total space.
- The relatively large share of **urban** edgeless city office space is encouraging. This study finds that an emerging form of urbanity in denser parts of the metropolis that mixes smaller-scale edgeless city office development with multifamily housing and local retail. In a few cases, the mix is even served by light rail. This is an important trend because it shows that quasi-urban development does not require a large-scale edge city to exist.

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Topics of primary interest include, but are not limited to:

- Real estate brokerage
- Real estate brokerage business models
- Real estate markets
- Housing policy
- Housing markets
- Real estate wealth effect
- New economy / technology
- Cost and impact of regulation
- Land use controls
- Multifamily
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial
- Commercial property finance

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