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# Jacob Anbinder

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**Academic Specialties**

Modern American politics and political culture, cities and suburbs, public policy, racial inequality, housing and infrastructure, environmental history.

**Employment**

American Council of Learned Societies
Leading Edge Postdoctoral Fellow, 2026–

Cornell University
Visiting Scholar, 2026–
Klarman Postdoctoral Fellow, 2023–2026

**Education**

Harvard University, Ph.D. in history, 2023.
**Dissertation**: *Cities of Amber: Antigrowth Politics and the Making of Modern Liberalism,* a history of the urban "growth revolt" and its role in the Democratic Party's ideological realignment since the sixties. Committee: Lisa McGirr, Lizabeth Cohen, Elizabeth Hinton.

Harvard University, M.A. in history, 2018.

Yale University, B.A. in history *cum laude* with distinction in the major, 2014.

**Selected Honors**

Leo P. Ribuffo Prize for best dissertation in U.S. intellectual history, Society for U.S. Intellectual History, 2024.

Anthony Sutcliffe Dissertation Award for best English-language dissertation in the history of city planning, International Planning History Society, 2024.

Honorable Mention, Michael Katz Award for best dissertation in urban history, Urban History Association, 2024.

History Prize Instructorship, Harvard University History Dept., Spring 2023.

Hoopes Prize for excellence in teaching, Harvard University, 2022 and 2023.

Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard Bok Center, Spring 2021.

Raymond J. Cunningham Prize, American Historical Association, for best article in an undergraduate history journal, 2014.

**Books**

*NIMBY Nation: The War on Growth That Created Our Housing Crisis and Remade American Politics.* New York: Bloomsbury, expected fall 2027.

**Articles and Book Chapters**

"'Power to the Neighborhoods!': New York City Growth Politics, Neighborhood Liberalism, and the Origins of the Modern Housing Crisis." Meyer Fellowship Paper, Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2024.

"Locking the Gates: Yale University and Police Power in the Postindustrial City, 1959–1976." In *Cops on Campus: Critical Perspectives on Policing in Higher Education*. Edited by Yalile Suriel, Grace Watkins, Jude Paul Matias Dizon, and John Joseph Sloan III. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2024.

"The South Shall Ride Again: Mass Transit and the Making of Modern Atlanta." In *Urban Infrastructure: Historical and Social Dimensions of an Interconnected World*. Edited by Joseph Heathcott, Jonathan Soffer, and Rae Zimmerman. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022.

"Selling the World: Public Relations and the Global Expansion of General Motors, 1922–1940." *Business History Review* 92 (Fall 2018): 483–507.

"The South Shall Ride Again: The Origins of MARTA and the Making of the Urban South." *Yale Historical Review* 2 (Spring 2013): 37–57.

**Book Reviews**

Edward Berenson, *Perfect Communities: Levitt, Levittown, and the Dream of White Suburbia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), in *The American Historical Review* (forthcoming).

Andreeas Marklund and Mogens Rüdiger, eds., *Historicizing Infrastructure* (Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 2017), in *Technology and Culture* 59 (July 2018): 791–792.

Anke Ortlepp, *Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of American Airports* (Athens: U. of Georgia Press, 2017), in *Atlanta Studies* (Nov. 2017), online.

**Teaching Experience**

HIST 15J, "Suburban Wars: The American Suburb in the Twentieth Century"
Spring 2023, Harvard University (as instructor of record)

HIST 97H, "What Is Urban History?"
Spring 2021, Harvard University (instructor of record: Lizabeth Cohen)

HIST 97H, "What Is Urban History?"
Spring 2019, Harvard University (instructor of record: Elizabeth Hinton)

HIST 60O, "American Indian History in Four Acts"
Fall 2018, Harvard University (instructor of record: Philip J. Deloria)

**Conference Papers and Invited Talks**

"Neither Hypocrite nor 'Homevoter': The Ideological Origins of the Liberal NIMBY," Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies, November 2026.

"Inland Empires: Boom and Bust on the Growth Periphery," Society for American City and Regional Planning History, October 2026.

"Neither Homevoters nor Hypocrites: Liberal NIMBYism as Political Ideology," Urban Affairs Association, May 2026.

Commentator, "New Cities" panel, Conference on the Politics of Housing Supply and Diversity, JHU Center for Economy & Society, April 2026.

"NIMBY Nation: The Ideological Origins of the Housing Crisis," Initiative for Housing Policy and Practice, Saint Anselm College, February 2026.

"Building Ecotopia: The Urban Growth Revolt That Reshaped Coastal California and Remade American Liberalism," Western History Association, October 2025.

"Power to the Neighborhoods: Community Control and the Making of New York's Antigrowth Machine," Urban History Association, October 2025.

"NIMBY Nation: The Ideological Origins of the Housing Crisis," ASU Center for American Institutions Policy History Conference, June 2025.

"From Ecotopia to NIMBYland: Environment, Ideology, and the Antigrowth Style in California Politics," Stanford Silicon Valley Archives, May 2025.

"New York Wants to Grow, If Only We Will Let It," expert testimony before the New York City Charter Revision Commission, Brooklyn Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use, February 2025.

"'The Biggest Slum on the Face of the Earth': How the Postwar Revolt Against Urban Development Made Modern America," Conference on Real Estate Development and the Built Environment, Hagley Library, November 2024.

"'Salvation by Bricks': Making Preservation Progressive in Postwar New York," Society for American City and Regional Planning History, October 2024.

"Beyond NIMBY: Antigrowth Politics, Political Ideology, and the Origins of the Housing Shortage," City Futures Colloquium, Cornell AAP, March 2024.

**Conference Papers and Invited Talks (cont.)**

"Building Ecotopia: Environmentalism, Liberalism, and the Making of Antigrowth Political Culture in California, 1950–1990," Berkeley Housing Politics and Policy Conference, Univ. of California, Berkeley, October 2023.

"Community Control or Controlling the Community? The Neighborhood Growth Revolt and the New Urban Liberalism, 1960–1990," Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, September 2022.

"Cities of Tenants: Renters' Rights and Urban Citizenship in California, 1968–1986," European Association for Urban History, September 2020. (canceled due to pandemic)

"Fighting 'the Ideology of the Cancer Cell': Tenants' Rights and the Urban Growth Revolt in Coastal California, 1971–1990," BU American Political History Institute, March 2020. (canceled due to pandemic)

"Renters' Rights in 'Reagan's Backyard': Housing Policy and the Politics of Urban Growth in Coastal California," Alabama A&M University, Feb. 2020.

"Renters' Rights in 'Reagan's Backyard': Housing Policy and the Politics of Urban Growth in Coastal California," AHA, January 2020.

"Locking the Gates: Campus Police and the Postindustrial City," Urban History Association, October 2018.

"The South Shall Ride Again: Mass Transit and Modern Atlanta," Interdisciplinary Conference on Infrastructure, NYU Paris, May 2017.

"Too Busy to Hate? Hartsfield Airport, Delta Air Lines, and the Making of Modern Atlanta," BU American Political History Institute, April 2017.

"The South Shall Ride Again: The Origins of MARTA," Atlanta Studies Symposium, Georgia State University, April 2014.

**Selected Writing for Popular Audiences**

"What Paul Ehrlich's Fear of Scarcity Did to American Politics," *The Atlantic*, Mar. 19, 2026.

"New York NIMBYs Turn Against Democracy," *The Atlantic*, Sep. 9, 2025.

"New York Wants to Grow, If Only We Will Let It," expert testimony before the New York City Charter Revision Commission, Feb. 11, 2025.

**Selected Writing for Popular Audiences (cont.)**

"A Few Luxury Condos Are Not the Source of Our Area's Housing Woes" [letter to the editor], *Boston Globe*, Nov. 12, 2023.

"What Preservation Is Doing to American Cities," *The Atlantic*, May 2, 2022.

"The Pandemic Disproved Urban Progressives' Theory About Gentrification," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 2, 2021.

"The Post-Planning Pandemic," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, Jul. 2, 2020.

"Politics Is Failing Mass Transit," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, Jan. 29, 2018.

"Charlotte's Transit Among Nation's Worst," *Charlotte Observer*, May 4, 2016.

"How a Major in History Gives You the Intangible Edge," *AHA Today,* Mar. 28, 2016.

"Why Are Oregonians Driving Less?" *Newsweek*, Jun. 19, 2015.

"Is a Streetcar Still Something to Desire?" [letter to the editor], *New York Times*, Mar. 20, 2015.

"Fool for the City: How We're Over-Hyping America's Urban Comeback," *The Week*, Mar. 5, 2015.

"President Obama's New Infrastructure Plan: Right Idea, Wrong Play Call," *Real Clear Policy*, Feb. 3, 2015.

"Detroit's Road to Transit Ruin," *U.S. News & World Report*, Jan. 29, 2015.

"Will Low Gas Prices Hurt Mass Transit?" *The Week*, Jan. 23, 2015.

"How Public Transportation Can Adapt to Suburban Sprawl," *The Week*, Jan. 8, 2015.

"Bring Back the Earmark," *U.S. News & World Report*, Oct. 22, 2014.

"Trade Short-Haul Air for High Speed Rail and Help the Climate" (with Neil Bhatiya), *The Fiscal Times*, Aug. 10, 2014, named one of the Aspen Institute's "Five Best Ideas of the Day."

"Tunnel Plan Is a Road Map to Bloc's Woes," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 10, 2012.

**Selected Media Appearances**

Joseph Geha, "Housing, Tech and Taxes: 50 Years of Unaffordability in the Bay Area," KQED-FM, Apr. 7, 2026.

Liam Dillon and Janaki Chadha, "The Left's Housing Civil War Is Ending," *Politico*, Mar. 7, 2026.

Joseph Ostapiuk, "NIMBYism or Spot Zoning? What the Battle over Cold Spring Harbor Labs' Dorm Plan Says about Affordable Housing on L.I.," *Newsday*, Jul. 4, 2025.

Henry Grabar, "Gavin Newsom Finally Gets Serious about the California Housing Crisis," *Slate*, Jul. 2, 2025.

Shivom Sadhwani, "A Conversation with Jacob Anbinder: NIMBY Nation, Transit, Housing, and Infrastructure," *Smart Streets Podcast*, Apr. 2, 2025.

Maria Rubina, "NIMBYs and American Liberalism, Conversation with Jacob Anbinder," *Who Killed the Starter Home?* [podcast], Mar. 13, 2025.

Justine Underhill, "Green vs Gray Environmentalism" [YouTube], Jan. 27, 2025.

Henry Grabar, "Read Another Book: *The Power Broker* Leaves Us Ill-Equipped to Understand or Confront the Challenges That Face the City Today," *Slate*, Sep. 16, 2024.

Samantha Delouya, "New Homes Are Getting Smaller. That Could Be Big News for First-Time Buyers," *CNN*, Aug. 5, 2024.

Lee Stabert, "Boston's NIMBYs with Jacob Anbinder," *Explain Boston to Me* [podcast], July 31, 2024.

Justin Davidson, "Where NIMBYs Got Their Veto Power," *Curbed*, Apr. 24, 2024.

Kate Blackwood, "How Did Our Housing Get So Expensive? Klarman Fellow Dives into the History," *Cornell Chronicle*, Feb. 8, 2024.

Jerusalem Demsas, "The Culture War Tearing American Environmentalism Apart," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 18, 2024.

Cameron Sperance, "Historic Battles," *Boston Sunday Globe*, Nov. 19, 2023.

**Selected Media Appearances (cont.)**

Daniel Marans, "Why Rival Sides in the Housing Crisis Plaguing Major U.S. Cities Are Considering Peace," *Huffington Post*, Feb. 6, 2023.

Aaron Gordon, "Thank You for Your Feedback," *Vice,* Nov. 14, 2022.

Jonathan Shaw, "Origins of the Urban Housing Crisis," *Harvard Magazine,* Sep./Oct. 2022.

Conor Dougherty, "Not in Her Backyard," *New York Times*, Jun. 5, 2022.

Jerusalem Demsas, "The People Who Hate People," *The Atlantic,* May 24, 2022.

Noah Y. Kim, "Are We Even Talking About the Same 'Housing Crisis'?" *Mother Jones*, Mar./Apr. 2022.

Jerusalem Demsas, "In Defense of the 'Gentrification Building,'" *Vox*, Sep. 10, 2021.

Henry Grabar, "'Good Design' Is Making Bad Cities, but It Doesn't Have To," *Slate*, Apr. 12, 2021.

Dileepa Fonseka, "Yes in My Back Yard: The Millennial Movement Rebelling against NIMBY Baby Boomers," *Stuff*, Apr. 11, 2021.

**Grants**

**2026**

David Schuyler Travel Award, SACRPH

**2022**

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard GSAS

Research Grant, Harvard Division of Social Sciences Fund

Graduate Seed Grant, Center for American Political Studies

Summer Travel Grant, Harvard University History Department

**2021**

Meyer Dissertation Fellowship, Joint Center for Housing Studies

Urban Research Grant, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative

Emergency Pandemic Support Grant, Harvard GSAS

Graduate Seed Grant, Center for American Political Studies

Summer Travel Grant, Harvard University History Department

**Grants (cont.)**

**2020**

Dissertation Research Grant, Charles Warren Center

Summer Travel Grant, Harvard University History Department

**2019**

Fellowship for the Study of the American Republic,
Harvard Center for American Political Studies

Summer Travel Grant, Charles Warren Center

Real Estate Research Grant, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Student Research Support Grant, Joint Center for Housing Studies

Summer Travel Grant, Harvard University History Department

**2018**

Albert J. Beveridge Grant, American Historical Association

Summer Travel Grant, Harvard University History Department

**Professional Service**

- Referee, *Journal of Planning History*, 2025–
- Michael Katz Award prize committee, Urban History Association, 2025
- Senior thesis advisor, Harvard University, 2021–23
- Senior thesis grader, Harvard University, 2021–23
- Guest critic, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2022
- Grant application evaluator, Center for American Political Studies, 2021
- Research assistant for Dr. Walter Johnson for *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States* (Basic Books, 2020)

**Employment Prior to Ph.D.**

TransitCenter, New York, N.Y., Communications Assistant, 2015–2016

The Century Foundation, New York, N.Y., Policy Associate, 2014–2015
(named an NYU Rudin Center "Emerging Leader in Transportation," 2015)

**Languages**

French (moderate proficiency), Italian (basic)

**References**

**Lisa McGirr**, Warren Prof. of American History, Harvard University
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**Lizabeth Cohen,** Jones Research Prof. of American Studies, Harvard University
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**Lawrence B. Glickman**, Milman Prof. in American Studies, Cornell University
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