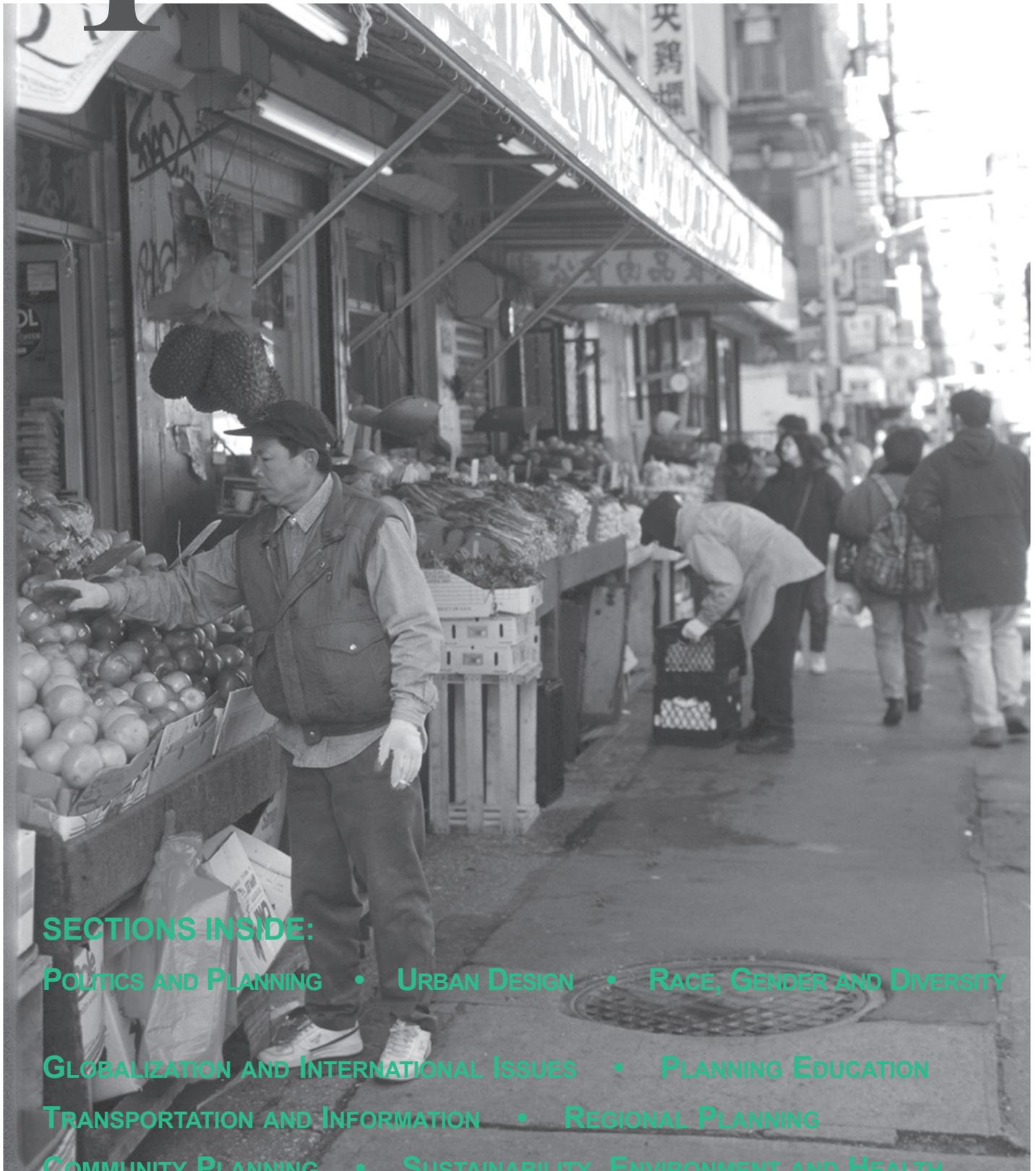


# PROGRESSIVE PLANNING READER

A Publication of Planners Network

\$12



## SECTIONS INSIDE:

POLITICS AND PLANNING • URBAN DESIGN • RACE, GENDER AND DIVERSITY

GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES • PLANNING EDUCATION

TRANSPORTATION AND INFORMATION • REGIONAL PLANNING

COMMUNITY PLANNING • SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

# What is progressive planning today?

This collection of articles from Progressive Planning Magazine and its predecessor, Planners Network, begins to answer this question. Certainly there is no single answer and progressive planning reflects a broad array of concerns and commitments relating to economic, social and environmental justice. In the 1960s, advocacy planners focused on the struggles against urban renewal and gravitated towards the powerful civil rights and anti-war movements of the day. The left, and progressive movements in general, are more diverse today, in some ways weaker but in some ways more mature. Individuals and organizations are concerned with every aspect of life in which inequality, poverty and injustice are present, globally and locally. There remains an underlying opposition to racism and war, and a growing commitment to address all forms of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability.

Progressive planners today work to challenge injustices and environmental threats: toxic wastes concentrated in communities of color, auto dependence, food insecurity, people and neighborhoods displaced by urban renewal and gentrification, homelessness, the loss of low-income housing, the privatization of education and public services. We propose a wide range of solutions: developing public space, preserving historic and cultural resources in all communities, an open planning process with full participation in decision making, building and preserving healthy communities, and sustaining a qual-

ity of life in towns, cities and neighborhoods for future generations. Progressive planners continue to engage discussions about the future of cities and rural areas, including the important exercises in utopian thinking that stretch our imaginations and energize us to demand changes. We can learn from the successes and failures of socialist planning, and many of us continue to seek urban alternatives based on socialist principles of cooperation rather than competition.

Whether trained as planners, working as planners, or working with planners as community activists, most authors in this Reader believe that planning should be involved with building and preserving healthy and sustainable cities and that war and violence undermine that objective. Therefore, many progressive planners oppose the bombing of cities and civilian populations. The Planners Network Steering Committee's statement against the war in Iraq reflects this opposition.

We put this Reader together not to have a doctrine of progressive planning but rather to have a diverse collection of provocative ideas that force us to address the main dilemmas and issues facing progressive planning today. We invite your contributions to the dialogue in the form of notes, letters, and articles.

Tom Angotti and Ann Forsyth, Editors

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The Planners Network is an association of professionals, activists, academics, and students involved in physical, social, economic, and environmental planning in urban and rural areas, who promote fundamental change in our political and economic systems. We believe that planning should be a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo. We are committed to opposing racial, economic, and environmental injustice, and discrimination by gender and sexual orientation. We believe that planning should be used to assure adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care, jobs, safe working conditions, and a healthful environment. We advocate public responsibility for meeting these needs, because the private market has proven incapable of doing so.

# P LANNING

The Magazine of Planners Network

Reader: 2004

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## Progressive Planning Reader 2004

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**Front Cover Photo:** Chinatown in New York City by Ann Forsyth.

## Progressive Planning Magazine GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Progressive Planning seeks articles that describe and analyze progressive physical, social, economic and environmental planning in urban and rural areas. Articles may be up to 2,000 words. They should be addressed to PN's broad audience of professionals, activists, students and academics, and be straightforward and jargon-free. Following a journalistic style, the first paragraph should summarize the main ideas in the article. A few suggested readings may be mentioned in the text, but do not submit footnotes or a bibliography. The editors may make minor style changes, but any substantial rewriting or changes will be checked with the author. A photograph or illustration may be included. Submissions on disk or by email are greatly appreciated. Send to the Editor at [tangotti@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:tangotti@hunter.cuny.edu) or Planners Network, c/o Hunter College Dept of Urban Planning, 695 Park Ave., New York, NY 10021. Fax: 212-772-5593. Deadlines are January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.

# Politics and Planning



Photo By Eugene Patron

March 22, 2003 peace protest in New York City.

## The Socialist City, Still

By Tom Angotti

*Summer, 2003*

Some thirty years ago when Planners Network started, many progressive planners proposed or discussed socialist alternatives to capitalist urban development and planning. Central planning in the Soviet Union, China and the emerging socialist nations of Africa and Asia was a reality, although there were differing judgments about the merits of these regimes. Many progressive planners went to Cuba and were inspired by the possibilities of revolutionary power. In the US, the civil rights, anti-war and new social movements were significant political forces and generated interest in socialism and Marxism. It was not unusual then to contemplate the prospect of planning without private property, even in North America. Marxist analysis was more commonly used to look at urban class and racial divisions. Though often the main theoreticians were European—North Americans have always had a strong pragmatist bent—Marxist categories were often used in urban analysis.

The Soviet Union is no longer and the mass movements have dispersed. With the Reagan Revolution, the entire ↪

political spectrum shifted to the right. TINA (“There Is No Alternative”) is touted as the only alternative. US free-market capitalism rules a global empire. The US model of sprawled, segregated urban development is spreading across the globe. The failed socialist alternatives are criticized for being utopian. Progressive planners in North America take part in the debates about New Urbanism, smart growth, equity planning, environmental justice and other major issues. But there’s virtual silence when it comes to the themes of socialism and Marxism.

Is Marxism relevant today as a theoretical or practical reference for progressive planners? What does dialectical and historical materialism have to offer in explaining urban phenomena and charting the course for progressive planners that deal with issues such as displacement, environmental justice, transportation equity, housing equity and participatory democracy? What can we learn from the history of socialist cities? In charting alternatives to capitalist urban development, is there a place for socialist alternatives, and if so, what is it?

### Marxism Isn’t Religion

In this age of fundamentalism led by the Christian Coalition and its friends in the White House, all problems, including urban problems, are reduced to the supposed battle between good versus evil. The unregulated “market” is good and “planning” is evil. This simplistic dualism results in a simplistic public discourse about urban planning.

Marxism is commonly treated as simply an alternative set of dogma. I never was religious and distrust all holy texts. So did Marx, who didn’t like being called a Marxist. People use scriptures all the time to bless the cruelest atrocities. So I’m not going to defend “Marxism.”

Marxist fundamentalism isn’t the answer to right wing fundamentalism. Yet this is the “Marxism” that is most often taught in Political Science 101, and too often propounded by self-declared Marxists. Those who simply reduce all problems to the struggle between an angelic working-class and demonic capitalist-class (or vice versa) belong in Bible School or on a throne. Dialectical and historical materialism, the basic methodology of Marxist thought and action, rejects the use of simplistic dualisms, abstractions divorced from practice, and static social and economic categories. Our all-American pragmatism pushes us too quickly to “get things done” without evaluating the underlying class and social forces we’re working with. Pragmatism is no doubt one of the occupational hazards of all practicing professions, but it can create serious problems when it’s used to shape political strategies.

### Class and Race

In the US the most perilous tripwire for Marxism has been the question of race. Too often class oppression is understood in a static way as separate from racism. Too many

socialists, especially those with roots in organized labor, have failed to see racism as fundamental to the birth and expansion of US capitalism and fully entwined with class oppression. This is the only modern capitalist country that was founded on slavery. Large sectors of the white working-class continue to support racial apartheid. How can we understand the urban problems of segregation, inequality, suburban exclusion and urban rebellions without connecting racism with the growth of capitalism? How else can we understand North America’s suburban culture, the equation of public space with violence and danger and the readiness to kill people of color and bomb their cities in military exploits around the world to salvage the sprawled, gas-guzzling metropolis?

If there is any struggle that is central to the issue of labor’s political power in the US, it’s the struggle for racial equality. Indeed, the reason for the historic political weakness of workers, unionized and otherwise, has been the division of the working-class along racial lines from the time of slavery and Jim Crow until today. The same dialectical optic that is needed to get at the connection between race and class needs to be applied to the questions of inequality of women, immigrants, gays/lesbians/transgendered, people with disabilities, and the elderly. This isn’t strictly a matter of separate identities. It is the class struggle, never a “pure” struggle and always mediated by social identities and specific environmental conditions. Readers may find similar views in Andy Merrifield’s new book, *Dialectical Urbanism* (Monthly Review Press).

### Urban Poverty and Displacement

While constantly in need of updating, the basic foundations of Marxist urbanism still seem to be valid. In the nineteenth century Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote extensively about the miserable living conditions faced by the industrial working-class in Europe’s large cities. They maintained that the accumulation of capital in large cities was accompanied by the accumulation of misery—the formation of separate working-class neighborhoods with inadequate housing in an unhealthy environment. Today, conditions have improved vastly in the developed nations of Europe, North America and East Asia (less than 20 percent of the world’s population) in part due to a century-and-a-half of working-class organizing, in part due to the enormous expropriation of wealth from poor nations by the rich. As capitalism has become increasingly global, the extreme conditions of inequality once observed in Birmingham now apply everywhere. The hundreds of global metropolises where finance capital is headquartered are miniature reproductions of London and New York City, with ghettos and gold coasts, opulence and suffering, native elites and struggling immigrants. The metropolitan revolution is a by-product of the global rule of monopoly capital, not an outgrowth of local urban development. Outside the world’s metropolitan regions the majority of the population lives under conditions of increasing marginality, with their traditional sources of food and income priced out of the market

by transnational corporations.

Since capital now rules the globe, the urban mess belongs to capitalism, which continues to reproduce it everywhere it goes. Oil and auto monopolies give us sprawled metropolitan regions that consume inordinate amounts of energy, extend the journey to work, create public health crises, pollute the air and contribute to the global environmental crisis. Capitalism's urban environmental crises of the nineteenth century were nothing compared to today's global warming, ozone alerts and epidemics of cancer, heart disease and obesity, all tied to the structure and process of urban development.

In a series of brilliant essays written in 1872-1873 and published as *The Housing Question*, Friedrich Engels picked up on perhaps the fundamental problem with the capitalist city. Unbridled real estate development, he said, forced working people out of their centrally-located neighborhoods so the property could be redeveloped for profit. Today, as global capital reaches cities everywhere with lightning speed, the process of urban redevelopment has accelerated. Displacement has become part of our everyday life, at home and at work. The commodification of land and housing makes planning in the public interest a difficult if not impossible task. Master plans and land use regulations are market-driven and growth is always good. In the latest phase of capitalist development, everything has been transformed into a commodity, including water, clean air and the human body. Towns and neighborhoods are branded, public places are privatized, nothing is left outside the capitalist circuit.

### Lessons From The Socialist City

For most of the twentieth century, billions of people throughout the world lived in cities where capitalist growth was not the driving force. In the Soviet Union, China before Deng, and scores of less developed countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that in myriad and diverse ways set out to develop cities and economies based on social cooperation rather than competition, there were many experiences worth looking at. In attempts to build socialist cities there were many successes and failures, but too often urbanists and planners in the West hear only about the failures, if anything. A balanced assessment of these experiences can offer us many important lessons.

In socialist cities, housing, public transportation, health care and education were offered at virtually no cost to the users. There were experiments with cooperative living. Tenants were rarely evicted. Private vehicular traffic, and all the environmental and public health problems that come with it, was minimal. There was no CBD enclave as we know it, and residential segregation by class and race was relatively limited.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, planners created over a thousand new towns following comprehensive mas-

ter plans. Unlike the West, planned cities were actually built (of course, usually not as they were planned), and comprehensive planning was the rule, not the exception.

We also know the serious problems with socialist city planning. Some of these were the same old problems that came with capitalism, aggravated by insensitive technocrats in power. Urban residents were the objects of top-down urban planning and had little say in shaping or changing their neighborhoods. Old neighborhoods were summarily wiped out by planners and replaced by planned communities, though unlike capitalist cities displaced people usually got free housing in new buildings in exchange. Many new problems emerged in the socialist cities. Stability of tenure became stagnation and lack of mobility. Elimination of the capitalist housing crisis gave way to a socialist housing crisis where government planners simply did not divert enough resources away from production, which itself became inefficient, and when they did they were unable to meet the rapidly changing needs of individuals and households with serially-produced industrial housing.

The housing crisis was perhaps the main social problem underlying the collapse of the Soviet system and was intimately related to structural deficiencies in production, a lack of real democracy and the growth of inequalities. The Soviet system collapsed from its own inertia, but it was pushed into oblivion by a much stronger, better organized and more powerful force—the US and its Cold War allies. Savage, unregulated capitalism swiftly filled the void left by the Soviet collapse and in a short decade reduced much of the old Soviet Union to Third World status. With the collapse of the social welfare system, life expectancy dipped sharply, mortality rates spiked and the big cities sprouted CBDs, traffic jams and smog, ghettos and gold coasts.

To many who saw no hope or inspiration for a democratic socialism in the Soviet Union, its collapse wasn't mourned. But to everyone who at any time dared to dream of alternatives, of a Utopia, this was an historic setback. Now we have TINA: There Is No Alternative. Accept the inexorable march of capitalist development, let the "market" decide, and planners get out of the way.

Cuba is one socialist country still trying to hold on to the social welfare gains they made over almost four decades. Planners there face enormous dilemmas and contradictions that often force them to compromise socialist principles. Socialism is no ideal utopia but a real struggle to end exploitative relations among people and improve the quality-of-life for all. As with all historic processes, there is no straight path to the future.

### Community Versus Class Struggle?

Catalonian urbanist Manuel Castells was one of the first Marxists to analyze contemporary urbanization and community struggles, starting with his classic work, *The Urban Question*. Castells, however, expressed a more sophisticated version of dualist thinking with his critique of ⇨

community struggles, which he saw as divorced from class struggle. To be sure, there are enough reactionary and exclusionary community-based organizations around to lend credence to this theory. But we also have a good share of reactionary and exclusionary labor unions. Many struggles to improve community life—from the suburban fights against Wal-Marts to central city fights against displacement and gentrification—lead people to confront corporate control over their lives. Some are militant and consciously anti-capitalist, many are not. The same can be said for union struggles. There's nothing innate to community struggles that make them any more prone to narrowness, bigotry or conservatism. We need only look at the community movements in Latin America for examples of highly organized, class-conscious community movements. And in this age of hyper-consumerism, capital is being confronted more and more at the point of consumption, not just the point of production.

### Keep Utopia Alive

Practicing urban planners face a real ethical dilemma. Are we simply stuck with serving developers (“the market”) or can we serve broader interests and help diminish inequities? Don't try to answer this question in the abstract. First develop a relationship with social movements that are struggling to develop both the theory and practice of alternative forms of urban living that don't rely on capitalism's drive for profits. There is no shortage of community-based organizations struggling for a more open, democratic society, building new relations of cooperation and solidarity among people. There are little pieces of utopia: progressive local development corporations, non-profit and employee-owned enterprises, community land trusts, co-operative and mutual housing, consumer and credit co-ops, and so forth. All have severe limitations in an economy and society built around corporate greed. But they are a testing ground for an alternative society. Progressive planners need to consider them and make a personal commitment to put their

progressive ideas into practice.

Utopias are critical components to progressive urban planning and it is important that we know their history and theory. We should keep in mind the classical critique by Friedrich Engels of utopian thinkers of his day. The problem, he said, was that they divorced their ideal communities from the real on-going political struggles. They tried to create socialist enclaves by turning their backs on the revolutionary struggles and the working-class as a whole. Too many Marxists have taken this critique out of context and adopted the simplistic dualism of reform versus revolution. History shows that the two can and must be understood as a dynamic relationship.

...

Tom Angotti is Co-Editor of Planners Network and Professor of Urban Affairs & Planning at Hunter College, City University of New York.

Related writings by Angotti include:

Metropolis 2000, Chapter One (Revised) at <http://urban.hunter.cuny.edu/~angotti>;

“The Housing Question: Progressive Agenda and Socialist Program,” *Science & Society* (Spring 1990);

“The Housing Question: Engels and After,” *Monthly Review* (October, 1977).

## On the Practical Relevance of Marxist Thought

By Renee Toback  
*Summer, 2003*

Progressives and socialists get very different press today than we did thirty years ago. What is unchanged from thirty years ago, however, is the status of “socialism” in the United States and the usefulness of Marxist analysis.

When I received the first issue of Planners Network thirty years ago, I was a graduate student at the University of Iowa and the newsletter was a few typewritten pages. Idealistic students and professors studied Mao and the contradictions of capitalist development. Activists struggled; “poor people” had movements and advocacy plan-

ners. It was a heady time and optimism was in the air.

The exuberance of the 1970s is long gone, replaced by the gloomy specter of apathy and depression. But we must recognize that both are impostors. In many ways, thirty years later, we are light years ahead of where we were!

In the 1970s, the left was easily dismissed as a “youth movement.” McCarthyism had decimated the left and progressive activism was dismissed as a “generational conflict.” Mainstream planners as well as influential developers and their political partners dismissed socialism as an idealistic

fantasy bound to end in disaster. Today, socialism is considered to be a “failure” and has lost its status in intellectual and academic discourse. But we have numerous respected Marxist and socialist leaders inside and outside the academy. We have and are experienced activists now with perspective and wisdom gained through years of work. We no longer believe we are inventing the wheel; we know we’re in this for the long haul and that the new day will not dawn tomorrow.

We also focus on concrete policy alternatives and implementation of particular projects rather than broad societal reconstruction. While there is a qualitative difference in the dynamic of today’s discussions of alternatives to capitalist development, that discussion remains vital.

### The Circuit of Capital

Marxist analysis is as useful today as it ever was!

One of the most basic Marxist tenets is the circuit of capital. The general formula for economic interaction in a non-capitalist society is C-M-C. People produce commodities (C) for use. They exchange them for money (M) in order to trade for other commodities (C) that they do not produce but wish to consume. This is the general understanding of the use of money in society and the rationale for labor. One produces and trades to satisfy individual desires for material things. Money is a convenient token, easily stored and a standard measure of value.

While the vast majority of people see the exchange of goods in the marketplace as an efficient way of meeting human needs, the Capitalist has an entirely different agenda. Capitalists are in it not to satisfy human needs but to accumulate capital for themselves. Marx describes how capitalism distorts the experience of the market and in the process conceals the reality of capitalism. He illustrates the Capitalist circuit of capital, M-C-M’ (not the C-M-C of non-capitalist society).

The dynamic of capitalist society is the use of money (M) to produce commodities (C) in order to acquire more money (M’). Thus in M-C-M’ the goal is to accumulate assets. The purpose of the market is not to trade products but to amass wealth as capital to better compete in the marketplace. The success of a capitalist enterprise is measured not by the production of useful items but by the ability to increase capital, thereby gaining greater ability to accumulate money and capital. The engine of capitalist prosperity is expansion, innovation, and growth.

This framework is directly applicable to understanding “hot” urban issues and questions of social planning. The contradictions of workplace reform and the rights of workers clearly illustrate the contradictions of capitalism and the value of a dialectical approach. Mainstream economics tells us that the goal of the economy is production for the enhancement of human well-being and human happiness.

It also tells us that the pursuit of profit is the path by which the “invisible hand” guides individual self-interest to the satisfaction of human needs. Simply stated, mainstream economics tells us that the production of commodities is directed by the demand for those commodities. They make it appear as if the circuit of C-M-C dominates. Individuals get what they want by producing what others want and engaging in trade.

When we look at the world of work under capitalism, we see overwork accompanied by unemployment, environmental destruction, disease and occupational injury. Even among those who succeed in the marketplace, we see functional impairment caused by stress, sleep deprivation and overwork. When we ask, “Why?” the obvious response only leaves us more confused. Overwork and stress are an inevitable result of the struggle to succeed, the conflict between work and family life. The requirement to work harder, longer and “smarter” drains leisure from our lives. So the question then is, how is it that the market mechanism produces misery in pursuit of the social good?

The answer lies at the root of capitalist production and its guiding force, the market. The capitalist market does not exist to trade commodities; it is the sine qua non of social existence. Production of commodities is incidental to accumulation, which is the central theme of capitalist society, M-C-M’. Dialectical Marxist analysis shows that the commodities produced and the external effects of production—stress, overwork, unemployment, poverty in the material and spiritual sense—are all part of the drive to accumulate, expand and grow.

### People Before Profit

Therefore the popular cry of “people before profit” is an attack on the central dynamic of capitalist society. We hear this demand frequently in campaigns for environmental justice, transportation and housing equity and many other current struggles.

Housing displacement of the poor from “revitalized” urban neighborhoods is a 1990s issue and a clear illustration of the effects of the circuit of capital. The failure of housing development for the poor may be dismissed by urban orthodoxy as the result of individual greed or intractable social problems. But “successful” redevelopment efforts are central to the destruction of low-income neighborhoods, and they are tied directly to the circuit of capital.

Despite the traditionally peripheral location of landlords in the accumulation of capital, housing is increasingly drawn into the corporate dynamic. Individual landlords who own one or two housing units are increasingly an element of the economic past. Aided by the public sector in amassing large tracts of land for redevelopment, housing and neighborhood development is more and more a corporate enterprise. As housing becomes profitable, it becomes a source of capital accumulation for corporations, and ⇨

neighborhoods redeveloped on this model sprout chain stores and franchise restaurants.

The contradictions of successful redevelopment in poor and minority areas give rise not mainly to a call for housing subsidies but for control over the market. Activists trace displacement to the private and unfettered ownership of land. Cooperative housing, which often seemed unworkably idealistic thirty years ago, has become a viable option. At the moment it is largely restricted to alternative private ownership of luxury coops and condominiums. But the mixture of collective and individual ownership is a model for more ambitious, imaginative and socially conscious alternatives to the private property owner/renter dynamic. Union and community sponsored coops are alternative prototypes. More socially progressive forms of collective ownership and control such as limited-equity coops and mutual housing can limit the marketability of housing.

The strength of single-issue movements like the housing

movement means building enclaves of alternative practice. It does not make Marxist analysis irrelevant or require abandonment of socialist thought. We approach the body politic from a position of concrete alternatives rather than a broad theory of social restructuring. The critique of private property is implicit in the nooks and crannies of the broad social consensus that "There Is No Alternative."

...

Renee Toback is an economist active in her federal workers union and in the anti-sweatshop movement. She is a member of Economy Connection ([www.urpe.org](http://www.urpe.org)), which provides speakers and resources on political economy.

## Changing the Culture of Planning Toward Greater Equity

**By Norman Krumholz**  
*July/August, 2001*

I want to report on my impressions of planning after years of close association with the American Planning Association (APA) and American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), and much conversation with planning practitioners around the U.S. I have come to believe there is a new culture evolving in planning.

### The New Planning Culture

First, the new planning culture does not reject politics, it embraces it. Robert A. Walker's book *The Planning Function in Urban Government*, recommended that planners needed to relate more closely to their mayors if they wanted to be more effective. Many planners have followed this advice, and have sought to be closer to the executive in the decision-making process. Structurally, there are fewer planners in government working for appointed planning commissions and more working for departments with a direct line of accountability to the mayor or city manager. These planners believe that, if their work is to be more effective, planners need political support as well as good intentions and technical skills.

According to such observers as Anthony Catanese, Mel Levin and many others, their proximity to the mayor's office has meant greater short-term operational planning effectiveness (Levin, *Planning in Government: Shaping Programs that Succeed*). Such planners are *Close to Power*, as William Lucy puts it in the title of his book, and they like being there.

And, as planning issues become more regional and complex, more local and even state politicians are beginning to see political stakes in planning decisions and want to keep the process closer to themselves. So the new culture of planning is more political. It is also becoming more diversified, with more and more planners moving out of traditional jobs in local government and working outside of city hall for banks, developers, foundations and non-profit community development corporations (CDCs). They are becoming generic urban professionals who are expected to function across a wide variety of settings.

Second, the new planning culture is marked by a fascination with the current scientific business and management approach popularized in such books as *Reinventing Government* by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler and *In Search of Excellence* by Thomas Peters. In this perspective, government should be run more like business. Planners are "entrepreneurs in the market" and "managers"; citizens are "customers," and planning helps "customers be empowered to solve their own problems" and, of course, "the customer is always right".

Third, the new culture of planning is less concerned with the long-range and more sensitive to short-range outcomes. My informal conversations with practicing planners suggest that planners are doing fewer comprehensive long-range plans and are spending more time on strategic planning, economic development projects, real estate deals and nur-

turing public-private partnerships. This is a partially a product of sharp cut-backs in federal largesse, but also a more dynamic and turbulent metropolitan environment in which change happens faster than it used to. Also, planners with executive responsibility who act as close advisors to mayors do not enjoy the luxury of time, but must join the rest of the firemen in city hall's hot shot alley and deal with the crisis of the moment.

Fourth, where the old culture of planning was top-down, the new culture is intensely interactive and participatory. Citizen participation is now mandated by federal regulations and is the order of the day, whether token or real. The lessons of the highway program and urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s were not lost on the planners or the public, and groups affected by planning decisions are a lot more vocal than they used to be. This is especially true in such states as California where initiatives and referenda are extensively used. As a result, planners take their proposals out to the neighborhoods as draft documents and are prepared for resistance, discussion and negotiated modifications.

Fifth, in terms of design, the new culture of planning values the intimate and small-scale more than the monumental. Its prophets are much less likely to be Frank Lloyd Wright or LeCorbusier than Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zybek and Peter Calthorpe and its recommendations are less likely to be super blocks and towers in the park than the mixed land uses, short blocks, and front porches incorporated into neighborhood designs of what is known as Neo Traditionalism or New Urbanism. In the New Urbanism's lexicon, zoning, segregated land uses and insensitive suburban development are responsible for virtually everything: traffic congestion, the decline of the central city, the loss of community and the aesthetically unappealing strip mall development of "roadside America". Some exponents of the New Urbanism blame the insensitive designs of the recent past for much more. A NY Times article (May 6, 1999) following the Littleton, Colorado school massacre ("How urban design is failing teenagers") implied that teen age problems of alienation and anomie could be traced to insensitive suburban design. In that event, the new culture of planning continues to echo the old culture's belief in environmental determinism, with design principles affecting human behavior. Disney's new town of Celebration, Florida carries the same message, while ignoring the distributional effects of costs and benefits.

In my judgement, there is much to commend in the new culture of planning. Planning is political, and a direct line of responsibility to the chief executive seems likely to improve both operational effectiveness and the quality of planning. But being close to political power may come at a cost. What will the mayor ask the planners to do? What happens to the long-term or the ideal vision? How will the planners retain their professionalism in the face of a thoroughly politicized world when the mayor asks them to provide support for some favored proposal which they know on analysis to be

valueless? These questions can only be answered in specific circumstances, but they are real, nonetheless.

With respect to the new culture's interest in the New Urbanism, I must confess that I am cautiously favorable. The New Urbanism's small blocks, hidden garages, mixed land uses, bay windows and porches are at least in the service of a coherent neighborhood vision as opposed to the accumulation of developer's shortcuts that have produced the real sprawling suburbs of the late twentieth century. No doubt, the New Urbanism will be oversold and likely will do little for distressed central cities or neighborhoods sunk in poverty, but the concept has already achieved a tremendous popular response, and I think it will make a significant difference in development patterns of the future.

#### Problems with the New Culture

I am less than enthusiastic about the trend toward scientific management adopted by some of the new planners. Citizens may not be customers to some of us, but we all applaud the idea of empowerment and accountability, and the idea of a citizen as a customer may improve the responsiveness of planning. All to the good. But the customer focus doesn't fit all situations. In the world of business, customers provide revenue in exchange for goods and services. In public life, by contrast, most revenue is generated by taxation and allocated by legislation. So the idea that public clients are customers is metaphorical rather than literal.

Of course, governments do more than provide goods and services; they also enforce obligations and punish violators. Are jailed prisoners "customers" of the justice system? Are "customers" free to pay their taxes or "empowered" to choose not to pay or do government agencies like the IRS exist precisely to coerce (not empower) them into paying? And is the "customer always right" in planning? No clerk at WalMart is going to tell the fat guy to put down the two-gallon tub of ice cream and not buy it because it's bad for his health, but city planners sometimes have to do just that -- tell their customers that some things they might want to do like cut down the Redwoods, build on the wetlands and green spaces, overcrowd their apartment houses in the hopes of getting more rent or racially segregate people are not to be tolerated.

Other problems also intrude. The government-as-business movement (that really goes back to the Progressives and the city manager idea) contains a powerful criticism of faceless, unresponsive bureaucrats and invites public distrust of all governmental agencies. A blind application of business management principles may undermine the integrity of all public bureaucracies and perhaps even come to threaten democracy. Another serious criticism is that the "managed state" involves a process of cost transfer from central to local governments; from public to private sectors; and from public to private households. Business organizations are after all, run by "managers" who decide what core services to offer and which difficult, costly, high-risk customers ⇨

to exclude. Incentives exist for managers to control their costs. The logic under these conditions tends to shift as many costs as possible from the state to private families. Organizations and managers may look more “efficient” in the process, but people who are wealthy, healthy and vocal may end up with lots more resources than people who are weak, quiet and poor.

Most seriously, the new culture of planning, with its focus on scientific management and the bottom line, but without a long-term vision of a better city or a better society, confronts planning with the question of the role of planners in the face of market failures, when such failures produce unemployment, poverty, racial segregation and environmental ruin. The new culture of planning seems hardly able to resolve such fundamental problems, but the problems exist and, in some respects, have gotten worse over time. For example, books like Goldsmith and Blakely’s *Separate Societies* and Massey and Denton’s *American Apartheid* show us how racial segregation and concentrated poverty have worsened over time. How will the new culture of planning deal with the fact that vast economic disparities now exist between our central cities and their surrounding suburbs; that poverty and joblessness is intensely concentrated within central cities; that children who grow up in persistently poor environments have virtually no chance to escape into the economic mainstream of America? I believe the new culture of planning will do little for these deep and fundamental problems of poverty and race. For these reasons, I believe a third culture of planning must be created.

### A Third Way

A third way of planning must recover its reformist roots and vision of a better, long-range future for our cities and regions. Without such a vision, the current “new” version of planning is not much more than an exercise in business administration, strengthening the already powerful hand of business and politics as usual. Instead, planning should be used as a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo [see PN’s *Statement of Principles*]. Further, the third culture of planning should be used to assure that the basic requirements of life -- adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, jobs and a healthful environment for all Americans -- should exist. The overarching objective of this new culture of planning should be to produce the “just” city, that is, a democratic city with a free, consensual mode of political decision-making; an entrepreneurial capacity able to provide welfare but create wealth as well; and an egalitarian distribution of wealth and services. In this third culture, planners should continue to embrace a close relationship with the political process and a respect for business, but without losing sight of equity and the broad public interest in the elements mentioned above.

How might we help achieve this third culture of planning? It is unlikely that any professional organization will lend

itself easily as a source of cultural redefinition for at least three reasons: first, they usually limit themselves to highly general role statements because they represent so many different practitioners; second, because they are usually dominated by their older, more conservative members; and third, because the roles of any profession are determined less by their organizations than by the people who hire the professionals. Still, APA and AICP have been slowly moving in a more progressive direction for the past fifteen years. APA has indicated its support for social equity by endorsing its progressive *Agenda for America’s Communities* in 1992, by publishing through APA Planners Press the book *Planning and Community Equity* (1994), by establishing awards that honor such equity planners as Paul Davidoff and Cushing Dolbeare, and by insisting that at least twenty percent of all panels at APA annual conferences have social equity themes.

This momentum can be continued by requiring that all AICP members contribute a number of hours of pro-bono service in low-income neighborhoods as a condition of continued certification; that the AICP certification test contain a good share of equity planning questions; that special efforts be made to recruit minorities on all boards and committees; and that university programs that stress participatory research in low-income neighborhoods be recognized. For example, AICP honored Professor Ken Reardon and the University of Illinois for their outreach planning program in East St. Louis and named as a planning landmark *Planners For Equal Opportunity*, founded by Paul Davidoff and others in the 1960s. It is slow going, but the professional organizations are responding.

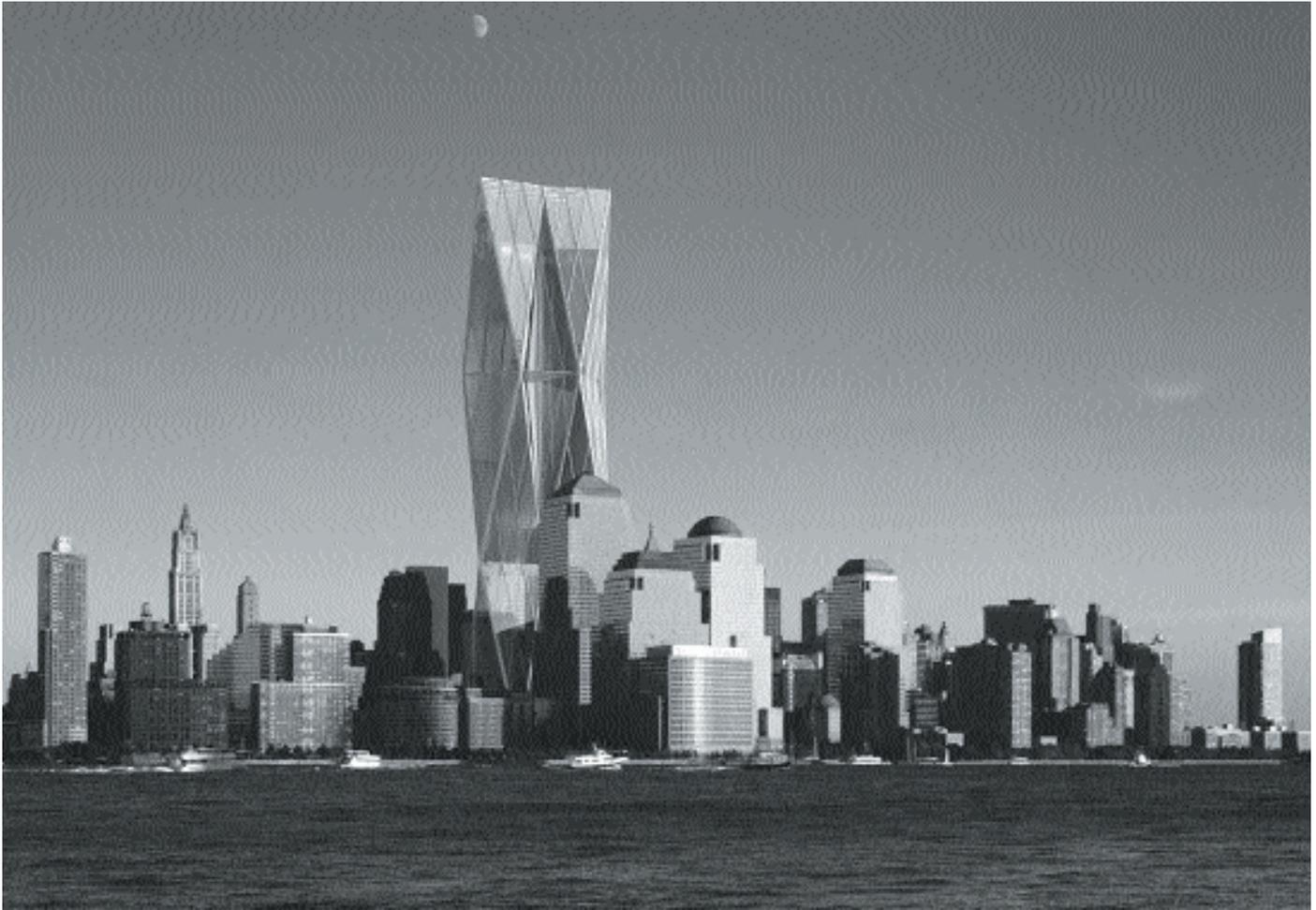
What can Planners Network members do? First, join APA and AICP and run for office to change both organizations in your direction. There are 30,000 planners in APA. Many of them agree with PN’s ideas. Let’s try to change the minds of the others. Secondly, write PN pieces for *Planning* magazine and for the AICP *Casebook*. Third, support community-based planning. And finally, give your ideas to the AICP Task Force on Social Responsibility.

Our work is cut out for us. The status quo brings us rising poverty, continued racial and economic segregation and environmental ruin. If we—professional organizations, professional schools, and planning practitioners—believe that change in the direction of more equity is possible and that our work may contribute to that change, there is much that all of us can do.

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# Urban Design



Foster & Partners proposal for World Trade Center site.

## The Ground Zero Architectural Competition: Designing without a Plan

By Peter Marcuse

*Winter, 2003*

Nine proposals by teams of internationally-renowned architects were unveiled by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) in December, 2002. They made the front pages of every New York newspaper, and have been subject to extensive comment ever since. Both praise for imaginative ideas and criticism for overblown gigantism have been heaped on the designs, but some major points are missing from the discussion.

Whatever the merits of the nine proposals, the basic problem is that the program they were given by the LMDC, developed without adequate public input, was the wrong program at the wrong time. The LMDC has set out a planning process that is hasty, undemocratic and evades the critical planning and policy questions.

### How the Nine Proposals Happened

The LMDC is a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation. It was created by New York Governor George Pataki to oversee development at the World Trade Center site, Ground Zero. It has been the chosen vehicle for significant federal and state funds to be spent below Houston Street, its jurisdictional northern boundary. It also has powers of eminent domain and can override local zoning, but those powers are of limited use here, as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey ⇨

is the owner of the land where the World Trade Center stood. As a federally-created bi-state agency, the Port Authority is exempt from local zoning and condemnation procedures.

The seven handpicked architectural firms and consortia (drawn from a field of over 400) produced nine different schemes for Ground Zero. The participating architects and firms include Norman Foster, Daniel Libeskind, Richard Meier, Peter Eisenman, Charles Gwathmey, Steven Holl, Rafael Vinoly, Frederic Schwartz, Ken Smith, Shigeru Ban, Greg Lynn, Ben Van Berkel, Jesse Reiser, Kevin Kennon, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Peterson/Littenberg.

An earlier proposal, outlining the massing of towers that would hold eleven million square feet of commercial space, had been roundly criticized as unimaginative; the charge to the firms this time was to be imaginative. All of the new schemes included large office towers as their major structures. The firms followed a program established by the LMDC, which included the following guidelines: respect for the footprint of the two World Trade Center towers; space for a memorial (to be designed later); 6.5 to ten million square feet of office space; one million square feet of retail; and a major transit hub serving the region. A "master plan" for the site, presumably focusing on infrastructure and including a decision on the nine proposals, is to be released at the end of January.

Barely a week before the release of the results of the competition, Mayor Michael Bloomberg put forward a plan for all of Lower Manhattan, which included a major transit hub, a proposal for a one-seat ride linking Lower Manhattan and the New York airports, ground-level community-scale development, some housing, and a reference to the fact that the large-scale office development of thirty years ago, including that involving the Twin Towers, originally had a negative effect on the office market elsewhere in Manhattan.

On the day before the results of the architectural competition were announced, the Civic Alliance, a coalition of some seventy civic and professional groups, completed a set of workshops in which it developed three detailed alternative proposals for Lower Manhattan. The proposals were designed around three concepts: Lower Manhattan as a global center, Lower Manhattan as a 24-hour/7 days-a-week community, and Lower Manhattan as a center of creativity.

### The Imaginative and the Gigantic

All of the proposals in the competition are imaginative and interesting from a design standpoint. All respect the program, and in design and in rhetoric emphasize the symbolic importance of the site. All pay attention to "green" (environmentally-friendly) construction and many have gardens. All reserve space for a memorial, with one (Libeskind) suggesting a specific placement seventy feet below ground where the enclosure for the foundation of the Twin Towers had been. All at least pay lip service to integration with the street grid of Lower Manhattan, and allow view corridors from outside the site. The suggestions for cultural centers, museums and

ground-level gardens are imaginative.

So far so good.

But all showcase big towers, four of them the highest in the world [heights range from 1,111 feet (Richard Meier) to 1,400 feet (Peterson Littenberg) to 1,620 feet (United Architects) to 1,776 feet (Libeskind) to 2,100 feet (the Think group)]. Leaving aside the question of whether tall buildings symbolize that we have not been defeated, or that we have learned nothing from the attack, there is a general consensus that there is no demand for this much office space in the foreseeable future. Today there are seventeen million square feet of vacant office space in Lower Manhattan. According to Robert Yaro, president of the Regional Plan Association, "It'll probably take a decade to fill the space that is currently vacant." From a planning point of view, it is highly questionable whether an investment to induce such demand in Lower Manhattan is desirable (as opposed to, for instance, Midtown West, or to the other major subcenters elsewhere in Manhattan and in the other boroughs that are under consideration for development). Such concentration further runs counter to the idea of increased residential uses in the area, and would certainly raise rents or sales prices for housing. It is likely to run counter to the idea of diversity, mixed-income occupancy or the kind of creativity associated with start-up organizations.

Public uses are spoken of in many proposals, but come off badly. United Architects creates a "public space" 800 feet in the air, and SOM proposes a "public garden" on the fifty-second story. The Think team has a park ten stories above ground-level. Peterson Littenberg has gardens at the tenth floor. Viewing platforms would of necessity be tightly controlled for security purposes. Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic of *The New York Times*, speaks of one plan with "security precautions at a level not seen since the golden age of castle keeps." Informal public uses, easy communication and diversity would be discouraged.

Costs and, indeed, uses of the massive structures are not considered in the proposals. These are not serious proposals for a client. They are not responsive either to public or private demand for specific space for specific uses. They have nothing to do with economies of construction or land use. As a director of the LMDC said, on condition of anonymity [sic!] to the *New York Times*, "Fundamentally it's a sideshow, because none of these things will be built."

The designs also do not fit into any wider plan for Lower Manhattan. David Kallick, coordinator of the Labor Community Advocacy Network, told the *New York Times* that they "turned their back on Chinatown." At best, the designs view the site only in terms of its immediate neighborhood (except for the transit hub, which in turn is designed with no reference to costs, regional priorities or the impacts of changed transportation patterns). Economic development, jobs and social justice in the distribution of benefits and costs should be key considerations. They play no role in this program.

## The Wrong Program at the Wrong Time

The seven architectural firms cannot really be faulted for what they have done. They did what they were asked to do, and by and large did it well. The fault lies in the program and in the process.

### The Program

The program is wrong. It asks for too much office space, too little housing, a transit hub that is not in the best location for New York City airport connections and whose dimensions and purpose are not yet clear. It leaves open the memorial to fit in later, gives no sense of the desired balance between public and private uses, has no provision for mixed housing, takes into account no market research, pays no attention to costs or available budgets, and is not based on any developed vision for how Lower Manhattan as a whole should develop.

The program is premature. Planning should precede, not follow, a design competition. Design alternatives are important once the overall plan is established and uses determined, not before. Both the city and the LMDC are involved in a planning process (possibly, but not necessarily, coordinated), and so apparently is the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, but they are far from complete.

The program is misleading. It suggests that the LMDC can produce what one or more of these designs suggest. It cannot. It does not control the land, cannot do the building, cannot make the decision as to uses, and will not be the client for what eventually is done. Debate should not center around whether a tower should be 1,111 or 2,100 feet high. To act as if this architectural competition and its results will determine what is in fact built diverts attention from what decisions really need to be made, in what order and by whom.

### The Process

The process of developing the program was wrong. Its justification, at best, was that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey owned the land, and this is what they wanted. But clearly the Port Authority will not be the only decisive voice. The city, the state, and the public all have substantial leverage to affect what happens, and the Port Authority itself is a creature of other entities that can effectively control what happens. There is a need for a fully transparent planning process involving all of the entities that have an interest in the site or are impacted by its development.

The process is misleading. By making a show of public participation—by setting up models for public viewing, holding a hearing, claiming to listen to civic groups and advisory committee proposals and concerns—the LMDC holds itself up as open and responsive. But the sole power of decision-making lies in its sixteen-member board, dominated by those with pre-existing connections to the real estate industry and the financial community. There may be participation in the sense of an opportunity for the public to express itself, but they will

not participate in making decisions.

The process is undemocratic. No public discussion, let alone democratic decision-making, went into the formulation of the program. Over many years the people of New York City have fought for and established a planning and decision-making process that is at least on paper highly democratic. It includes a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure that involves local community boards, the City Planning Commission, City Council, and the Mayor. It has mandated public hearings and votes, public disclosure and environmental impact review procedures. These established processes are being ignored. The Mayor's plan may (or may not) signal the beginning of a turn in the direction of using these planning mechanisms. The architectural competition should be dependent on them, not the other way around.

Lastly, the timing is all wrong. Decisions that will affect the future of New York City for years into the future are being rushed, without adequate information, discussion, planning, analysis and thought. The LMDC wants to go from the design competition to decision-making and a plan within less than two months. As New Yorkers know, you can't get a license to open a sidewalk hot dog stand that quickly. Other planning processes, more broad-based than that of the LMDC, are under way and not yet complete, including the work of the Civic Alliance and the Imagine New York project of the Municipal Art Society (see the article by Penelope Duda and Eva Hanhardt in this issue). The Department of City Planning is reported to have studies underway, the results of which should also be useful. Granted that prompt action can itself have a positive effect, nonetheless a well thought-through timetable with a clear sense of feasible priorities is needed. It does not yet exist.

### How To Refocus on Planning

While the imaginative and provocative character of the proposals should be recognized, the focus needs to be on the real decisions that are being made and who is making them—on where the power really lies. That means that attention must be paid to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Governor, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the private real estate developers and owners in the city. For democratic decision-making, the role of the Mayor, the City Council, and the involved city agencies should be highlighted.

Attention needs to refocus on the key questions in planning for Lower Manhattan:

What private activities and what public programs (in addition to global and financial) best serve the economic development interests of the majority of the people of New York, in terms of jobs, wages and opportunity?

What can be done to meet critical housing needs, including those of very low-, low- and moderate-income New Yorkers?

What measures will best protect environmental quality in the city, both in Lower Manhattan and elsewhere? ⇨

What are the citywide and regional transportation needs and where is infrastructure investment most needed?

How can communities, here and elsewhere, be strengthened?

How does the allocation of public resources here fit in with other citywide needs, e.g. for schools, libraries, cultural activities and health-care?

And, of course, how can the built environment contribute to meeting these concerns?

The planning process must be more transparent, open and democratic. The city must, with its formal structure of participatory planning, regain and keep the initiative in planning and decision-making following 9/11. The Mayor's proposals can be accepted as the beginning of such a process, but should be seen as only a beginning, both in substance and process. A good start might be a series of public hearings by

the City Planning Commission, whose absence from the discussions thus far is remarkable, and by the City Council, which has hesitated to assert its role.

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[For more information on this topic, visit: [www.renewnyc.org](http://www.renewnyc.org) or [www.lowermanhattan.info](http://www.lowermanhattan.info), to view the architectural designs; [www.lcan.org](http://www.lcan.org), to read the analysis of the Labor Community Advocacy Network; and [www.gothamgazette.com/rebuilding\\_nyc/web\\_resources.shtml](http://www.gothamgazette.com/rebuilding_nyc/web_resources.shtml), to see other proposals related to rebuilding Lower Manhattan.]

## Post-9/11 Planning: New York City and Beyond

By Tom Angotti  
*Winter, 2003*

How should Lower Manhattan be rebuilt? Fill the gap in the New York City skyline? Or, leave it open? Create a memorial? Save the financial district? How can the city be safer and more secure from terrorist attacks?

These are the questions shaping the debates in New York City, and the rest of the country, about post-9/11 planning. The answers coming from government and business elites promote real estate development over solutions that focus on the needs of people and neighborhoods.

In December Mayor Michael Bloomberg released his plan for Lower Manhattan, and the state-created Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) unveiled a set of nine alternative designs by leading architects. At stake is how the sixteen acre World Trade Center site will be redeveloped, how and where the \$21 billion in federal and state aid will be spent and how this will affect Lower Manhattan and the rest of the region.

But the planning going on is mostly physical planning, and the planners aren't talking about the most important element—the people who were the victims of 9/11, and the people who live and work in New York City. The planning process is geared almost entirely toward developing things, i.e. real estate, buildings, infrastructure and capital. Commodities that can be exchanged, land that can be bought and sold—these are the fetishes of post-9/11

planning. In the meantime, there are more restrictions on people, especially immigrants.

The official post-9/11 response at national and local levels has had three components: military, technological and urban design. Historically each of these has failed to thwart terrorism, and each may instead encourage it.

**Military.** United States foreign policy was reshaped to explicitly endorse unilateral “preemptive” military strikes anywhere in the world the US deems appropriate. Domestic policy is to further strengthen the ability of local and federal law enforcement to detain and deport people without due process. Both responses legitimize the use of terror by the US and allied states and in the end reproduce the global disdain for US imperialism.

**Technology.** There is greater use of surveillance cameras, listening devices and web surveillance, as the US government invades public and private spaces. This denigrates the public character of public places (real and virtual) and strengthens the private, anti-urban character of US society. In particular, it degrades public places used by poor people.

**Urban design.** Physical determinism has again raised its ugly head. Planners and architects are knocking each other over to show how they can make “safe cities” and “defensible spaces.” They are advancing the myth that by rearranging things like buildings and roads, cities will be safe.

They ignore the gaping economic and racial inequalities and the national culture of fear and violence, which are the real threats to public safety.

#### Post-9/11 Inequalities

The basic question in New York City is who will get the \$21 billion in federal and state aid. As if to remind us how things work in Gotham, *Forbes* predicted, "There will be windfall gains for large corporations, already powerful commercial property owners and residential landlords far from Ground Zero...." Fifteen months after 9/11, less than one-fourth of the money promised to New York has actually arrived, and most of what did went to clean up the site, subsidize businesses, underwrite bonds for new real estate development and rebuild the transportation infrastructure.

The majority of 9/11 victims lived outside New York City, as did most of the more than 125,000 people who lost their jobs. Yet plans are to concentrate the relief money in the financial district of Lower Manhattan. The investments in infrastructure and services are aimed at protecting the financial sector and creating a better environment for real estate development. Since Lower Manhattan's financial corporations are global in scope, no one knows how much of the aid they receive will end up staying in New York.

So far, the state-dominated LMDC has had all the power to make decisions about how to rebuild Lower Manhattan. Its Board of Directors (led by white males in a city where whites are a minority) monopolizes all decision-making authority. The LMDC's preference for meeting the needs of the financial and real estate sectors led it to produce six alternative proposals for the development of the World Trade Center site last year. These met with an overwhelming thumbs-down reaction from the public because the alternatives were all about building offices. The LMDC then commissioned teams of big name architects and asked them to spread the office space around a bit and throw in a little housing and some services. Their designs, released in December 2002, have again met with groans from the public, but the LMDC is determined to decide

on a plan regardless of public reaction. After all, they will reason, who can question the world's most famous architects? Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently presented a more general and balanced plan for Lower Manhattan. But it, too, comes from the pinnacles of power, and no one up there is supporting a participatory planning process that goes beyond the elite set of downtown insiders.

Finally, the victims of the most glaring inequalities are getting no public attention and no relief funds. Untold numbers of immigrants who lost loved ones and their jobs on 9/11 are fearful of stepping forward to ask for assistance in the post-9/11 climate of anti-immigrant hysteria. Even documented immigrants are reluctant to step forward for fear of being apprehended as terror suspects. And only a short hop from Ground Zero is Chinatown and the Lower East Side, working-class neighborhoods whose economies were devastated by 9/11 but whose representatives have not been invited to sit in the back rooms where decisions are made. Asian Americans for Equality has initiated its own Rebuild Chinatown initiative as a means of making its voice heard. But so far the winning combination is a Wall Street address and signature architecture, not participatory planning.

The ultimate sign of neglect for the human losses due to 9/11 is the outrageous continuing denial by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that there are any significant long-term public health effects of the WTC disaster. Motivated more by an interest in avoiding litigation than an interest in the public welfare, the Bush Administration's EPA has failed to adequately monitor environmental impacts. It also has refused local demands to automatically test and clean inside all buildings, including those in Brooklyn and Queens where the plume of toxic smoke drifted for weeks after 9/11. A local group, 9/11 Environmental Action, with the support of elected officials, continues to press the EPA to acknowledge what many local residents and rescuers know first-hand—they are still walking around with chronic respiratory problems.

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## The Narrow Base of the New Urbanists

By Michael Pyatok  
*Spring, 2002*

New urbanism has been aggressively marketed within the last decade by "boomers" who came of age professionally in the 1990s, disenchanted with the negative physical and social consequences of the sprawl and urban renewal they had witnessed as young professionals educated in the 1960s. Much credit should be bestowed upon them for their ability to rally many architects, reared in a sub-culture of radical individual-

ism, to join a social and environmental cause that transcended the profession's usual pursuit of frivolous fashions.

Unfortunately, this effort emerged from political and social origins that made its members unable to assess the class biases of their own assumptions and prescriptions. While some of their works demonstrate alternative models that hint at pos- ⇨

sible larger solutions, members of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) more often choose to serve private developers who co-opt their mission by simply repackaging suburban sprawl in more seductive “urbane” clothing, or public developers who too often trample on the lives of disadvantaged inner city communities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) HOPE VI program exemplifies this latter approach.

It is interesting to note that CNU’s founders (who remain its leaders today) share certain characteristics—their ages narrowly range between forty-five and fifty-five, all are white and nearly all are men except for two women architects related by marriage to two of the men. Also, nearly all are architects. For a movement that has proclaimed itself to be the savior of all things wrong with North American suburban and urban living, this is certainly a narrow base from which to launch such a crusade. This narrow cultural perspective has limited the organization’s ability, almost from its inception, to frame issues about and propose solutions for North American development patterns.

#### The CNU Charter—Whose Principles?

This narrow worldview led to the first major error in judgment of the CNU when a “charter” was prepared without the painstaking and time-consuming process of building a broad-based and diverse coalition that could engage in the messy process of defining first principles. They reached out mostly to other architects, similar in age and race, and to friends of like mind. Had a broad coalition been formed, perhaps such a pretentious charter would not have been concocted in the first place. Perhaps they would have realized that seeking allies in elected positions should not have been their first priority. Perhaps they would have also realized that finding allies in other progressive organizations and from among those engaged in grassroots efforts would have given them not just numbers, but a more sensitive understanding of issues of equity. Instead, they first sought media coverage and access to power—in politics and real estate—using aggressive publicists like Peter Katz (author of *The New Urbanists*) or planners like Mark Weiss of Henry Cisneros’ HUD staff.

As late as 1999, the Association for Community Design (ACD) held its conference simultaneously with the CNU in Portland, OR and reached out to collaborate on some workshops. The CNU ignored ACD, even though ACD is an organization with three times as many years of experience as the CNU in dealing with inner city problems. The National Low Income Housing Coalition, the National Coalition for the Homeless and Planners Network, to name a few, are organizations that have sophisticated political perspectives based on in-the-trenches experience and critical thinking about the shortcomings of capitalism. They understand some of the unseemly implications these shortcomings have on the management and development of our natural and built environments. Yet to this day, efforts to reach out to the CNU are stymied either by the founders’ lack of connections to these groups or suspicions on the part of such groups, when asked to affiliate with

the CNU, about its starting points.

Given their class origins and the limits of their professional training, CNU founders did not congeal around a well-formed critical view of how North America’s political, economic and social systems create and foster physical problems. They sought, understandably, an analysis using the lenses of architecture and physical planning. They focused on the symptoms of these deeper problems as they manifest themselves in the physical environment, and on the immediate policies that shape it, like zoning, fire and building regulations. As a consequence, their charter’s principles of environmental justice ring hollow when compared to their actions in practice. This is not to say that moving quickly to demonstrate built alternatives is not an intelligent strategy to titillate the imaginations of those who may affect policy among the general populace—politicians and entrepreneurs. But had there been a more thorough understanding of just how deeply our cultural values, assumptions and government regulations are nourished by a corporate-dominated market economy, then perhaps the projects for demonstrating principles would have been selected more carefully.

While giving some vague lip service to other more complicated sources of our malaise, as architects the founders truly believe that many of the nation’s intractable problems are predominantly physical in nature and that physical fixes can substantially improve our futures. Examination of the contents of *New Urban News*, CNU’s newsletter, clearly shows this bias: attention is given solely to physical design, and in particular to larger projects.

Small, community-driven infill projects that may contribute significantly to a community’s political and economic self-development are ignored because they are not at a physical scale that requires the new street layouts and streetscapes that illustrate the CNU’s tenets for the good life. To them, the larger the physical interventions, the greater the positive impacts. Even if their plans do not contribute to building the local job base, and even if the resulting mix of incomes requires the displacement of hundreds of lower-income households, these developments are praised by the CNU because they have employed neighborhood layout designs which their founders, through acts of religious faith, truly believe will improve the lives of residents.

As an architect I can sympathize with the professional tendency of the CNU to try to solve our society’s problems within the framework of our architectural and urban design disciplines. However, it is clear that the CNU leadership needs to significantly broaden its membership so it can recognize that the creation of physical interventions is not the end, but rather the means, for building jobs, community self-sufficiency and political empowerment. Until then, we will continue to see from CNU the “sticks and bricks” interventions that merely raise property values and displace the very people we should be trying to help.

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# New Urban Planning for Neighborhood Revitalization

By Jennifer Hurley  
Spring, 2003

I became interested in planning because I wanted to fight poverty, and I saw that poverty and the physical environment were tied together. I was also concerned with protecting the natural environment and preserving quality architecture. I wanted to understand how to make human-scaled, walkable environments and how to prevent the development of mind-numbing expanses of parking lots and throwaway buildings.

I didn't find answers to any of those questions in planning school until I stumbled upon new urbanism. Unlike other material I encountered in planning school, new urbanism promoted an ideal of what makes a "good" city—walkability, transit-accessibility, mixed uses and diversity. The principles of new urbanism articulated the things I liked about cities and towns as well as the things I disliked about conventional suburban development.

Over the last year, I have participated in the Knight Program in Community Building at the University of Miami School of Architecture. The program is a mid-career fellowship that brings together twelve professionals from a wide variety of development fields to explore principles and strategies for building diverse, sustainable, human-scaled communities. The Knight Fellows sponsor an annual community charrette in one of the twenty-six Knight Foundation cities in the US. This year's charrette in Macon, Georgia—the focus of this article—illustrates some of the strengths of new urbanist practice, as well as areas that need improvement. The charrette highlights the benefits of new urbanist design principles in neighborhood redevelopment, but also the need for new urbanist practitioners to incorporate into their planning efforts the insight and skills of the public, along with those of professionals in the fields of community development, affordable housing and public policy.

## Beall's Hill Revitalization

Beall's Hill is an historic gateway neighborhood to downtown Macon, strategically located between Mercer University and the Medical Center of Central Georgia. Historically, it developed as a residential neighborhood serving a local textile mill. Since the mill closed in the 1950s, the neighborhood has declined. Unemployment rates, crime and other signs of social distress are high.

The level of distress in the community has led to general agreement that redevelopment is necessary. None of the community residents we spoke with were opposed to neighborhood revitalization. There were, however, significant design challenges

and concerns about policy issues, including gentrification and displacement.

The housing stock of the neighborhood is varied and of high architectural quality, but a great deal has been lost to demolition and fires over the years. Large interior blocks served by lanes where shotgun houses once stood are now vacant. Outdated 1940s public housing is sited on a superblock at the heart of the neighborhood. The architecture and street pattern of the public housing is dramatically different from the surrounding area, isolating the residents and creating a barrier in the neighborhood. The neighborhood itself is also isolated—by a railroad and poorly designed bridges—from Tattnall Square Park and Alexander II Math-Science Magnet School. Local retail and commercial services have disappeared, and attractive green space and recreational facilities are lacking.

The charrette was just one piece of the ongoing Beall's Hill revitalization project. With the assistance of \$2.5 million in grants from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Mercer University has been working with Beall's Hill neighborhood residents to bring new resources to the neighborhood. The City of Macon commissioned neighborhood plans, market studies and design guidelines from several consultants. The Macon Housing Authority worked with the residents of Oglethorpe Homes to win a \$19.5 million HOPE VI grant from HUD to demolish and replace the project. The ultimate goal of this neighborhood revitalization project is to rebuild the neighborhood as a vital and diverse community.

The charrette team was unusually large and diverse. The design team was led by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk of the University of Miami and principal in the firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ). The team included Knight Fellow Dhiru Thadani, Knight Professor Jaime Correa, and recent University of Miami graduate Shailandra Singh, along with fourteen University of Miami post-graduate students in suburb and town planning and three University of Georgia landscape architecture students. The twelve Knight fellows and Program Director Charles Bohl added expertise in transportation; retail development; community development; and local, state and federal policy and programs. DPZ project coordinator Debra Hempel and Mercer Center for Community Development staff rounded out the team.

## Community Outreach And Participation

One of the distinguishing features of this charrette was ⇨

the extensive amount of community outreach the charrette team did in the months leading up to the event. In the initial site visit, a small team of designers went to Macon, toured the neighborhood and met the local sponsors. A few weeks later, another team of designers returned to review the base materials and meet with a larger group of stakeholders, including city officials, non-profit organizations and neighborhood representatives. In October, three Knight fellows visited Macon to tour the neighborhood, meet some residents, talk with pastors and attend a Central South Development Consortium meeting. We brainstormed about all of the potential stakeholders in the Beall's Hill project and developed an outreach plan that included invitations, flyers and newspaper inserts.

During that third visit it became clear that we needed to do more one-on-one outreach. Many people were suspicious of the process. Bad past experiences with government programs, university expansion, and outside consultants made people fearful and reluctant to work together. A variety of organizations, including numerous churches, were involved in a large array of projects in the community, but most of them did not know what others were doing.

Cecilia Holloman and I returned a week later to speak individually with pastors and community organizations. Ms. Holloman has extensive experience facilitating faith-based collaboratives and working in distressed communities, and I have experience in conflict resolution and mediation. After interviewing several people, we hosted a roundtable workshop on faith-based collaboration to set the stage for the charrette.

This preparatory work provided the charrette team with an understanding of the essential issues before the charrette even began and resulted in extensive, broad participation in the charrette itself. One person who attended the charrette and was a strong participant later told us that prior to the outreach meetings she had been planning to sabotage the charrette.

In preparation for the charrette, the design team created a list of design issues and key sites, while facilitators developed detailed agendas for each of the stakeholder meetings. During the charrette, we met with about 600 people in a series of eleven stakeholder meetings to talk about the assets and problems in Beall's Hill, and how to address specific social and design challenges. Throughout the charrette there were opportunities for the public to review the work-in-progress.

Because this charrette was one step in a large-scale revitalization project, there were a variety of issues to address. Having detailed agendas and professional facilitation enabled us to get community input on everything from roadway design to housing typologies, park design to affordable housing, all in a limited amount of time. The large size of the charrette team allowed us to capture comments during meetings on flip charts and laptops. Compilation of these notes resulted in a detailed list of neighborhood assets, a list of suggested actions and projects to improve the neighborhood and detailed documentation of what the community wanted.

Community members were also able to participate before, during and-after the charrette through the project's website. Scanned images from-the charrette and notes from the stakeholder meetings were added to the-site regularly, and the site's interactive tools offered people a chance-to participate on their own time. Although few people in this neighborhood have internet access at home, the website provides one more level of transparency for the process and a way to quickly and cheaply disseminate some of the results.

Infill projects come with a large number of parties who have diverse and sometimes competing interests. These people usually have long histories with each other, in some cases histories that include bitter feuds and mistrust. The diverse interests and weight of history make it especially important to ensure that all voices are heard, which may require specific outreach to people who have stopped talking or given up.

The charrette process can help build trust, re-knit damaged relationships and create new relationships. As one Beall's Hill participant said at the end of a full day of stakeholder meetings, "I don't think you understand how profound today was. We had people talking with each other in meetings who never sit in the same room. I think there will be effects from this day years from now that none of us can guess."

Although any high-quality public participation process can achieve these goals, in this case holding a charrette had many benefits. The level of community distress had led to a very negative view of what could happen in the neighborhood. Having a group of outsiders come into the community and talk with residents about the local assets and potential for the neighborhood changed how people thought of Beall's Hill. Seeing drawings of various options and plans helped people better imagine the possibilities. Witnessing the extent of the public participation and watching how the designs changed in response to stakeholder input helped residents overcome some of the distrust and suspicion they may have had.

#### Charrette Results

The preparatory work and stakeholder meetings identified several key design issues, including:

- a large amount of vacant land
- a lack of connection between Mercer University and the neighborhood
- poor pedestrian access, especially over the railroad, and
- the need for neighborhood-scaled retail development

During the charrette, the design work began with a series of analytical drawings of existing conditions, including topography; churches and institutions; park space and tree cover; and historic buildings. Work progressed with a number of studies, out of which evolved the master plan, an analysis of retail potential and schemes of building typology for the infill housing.

Major design proposals included the creation of infill housing, especially on the mostly abandoned interior blocks; renovation

of Tatnall Square Park; slight revision of the HOPE VI plan to improve architectural consistency with the neighborhood; and screening of the County Jail with landscaping.

Since redevelopment projects come with a host of policy challenges that may not be present in greenfield development, the presence of experts on the team—in federal, state and local policy, especially related to affordable housing—allowed for the inclusion of many policy recommendations in the final “Strategic Actions.” And since in Beall’s Hill gentrification and displacement were major concerns among stakeholders, the team included a tool kit for developing and maintaining affordable housing.

Specifically, policy recommendations included creating a community land trust for affordable housing; protecting existing low-income and elderly homeowners from property tax increases through a ten-year phased tax assessment policy; and invoking the Executive Order on Environmental Justice to ensure context-sensitive road and bridge design. The attention to concerns about affordable housing during the stakeholder meetings led the designers to create building typologies suitable for that need, and the designers’ outrage at the poor road and bridge design led the policy specialists to suggest invoking the Executive Order. Although none of these policy recommendations were unique, they would not have come out of the process without a charrette team that included both designers and policy experts.

Of course the charrette described here is only one step in a larger process of revitalization. Will participation continue? Is there local capacity to implement some of the ideas, such as the community land trust? These are difficult questions associated with any participatory process, and ones with which new urbanism needs to engage more actively.

After studying new urbanism in more depth, meeting many new urbanist practitioners and discussing community building over the last year with the other fellows, I am even more convinced that new urbanism provides some of the answers to problems in our towns and cities. New urbanist design principles help create infill development that is sensitive to the local context and adds to the walkability and diversity of the physical form of the neighborhood. Where new urbanism is weak is in execution rather than ideal. New urbanist practice needs to include more attention to ensuring broad and diverse public involvement, and to addressing policy issues that arise from redevelopment. I believe that the solution is for a broader group of practitioners and advocates to become involved in shaping new urbanism and new urbanist developments.

[For more information about the Knight Program in Community Building, see [www.charrettecenter.com/knight/](http://www.charrettecenter.com/knight/) For more information about the Beall’s Hill charrette, see [www.beallshill.net](http://www.beallshill.net)]

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## From “Sugar Cookies” to “Gingerbread Men”: Conformity in Suburban Design

By Jill Grant  
*Spring, 2003*

New urbanist-inspired approaches to suburban development are common in contemporary Canada. Suburbs influenced by new urbanism and featuring modified grid layouts, narrow streets, small lots and limited street setbacks are increasingly common. “Traditional” houses with front porches and pitched roofs are proliferating across the landscape. The new urbanist model has promoted new values: reduced car usage, well-designed public spaces, “eyes on the street” and urban diversity. It hoped to become a town-centered, anti-suburban approach. Beyond the superficial architectural details, however, are the new urbanist goals of equity, environmental protection and economic efficiency being achieved? Is new urbanism “re-urbanizing” the city, or simply creating cuter cookie-cutter suburbs? Is it creating sustainable development?

Since 1999 I have been visiting new urbanist developments in four Canadian provinces—Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Based on interviews with planners and devel-

opers and examination of their claims, I see a parallel with the historical fate of the Garden City movement. The same processes that reduced the Garden City to a sterile concoction of winding roads, big lots and wide houses are now creating a parody of the vision of new urbanism. The holy grail of sustainable development is in danger of becoming an empty catch phrase to justify any of a wide range of decisions and outcomes. Instead, low-density growth remains the dream of the producers of the urban and suburban realm, and the reality of its inhabitants.

### The Concepts Break Down

Developers in rapidly growing Canadian cities began large-scale projects in the 1990s, and two developments exemplify the new urbanist trend. McKenzie Towne opened in Calgary Alberta and Cornell broke ground in Markham Ontario. The early phases of McKenzie Towne featured “brownstone” ⇨

town houses around a square, similar to designs for the new urbanist development of Kentlands, Maryland. Andres Duany participated in the design process. Calgary planners became staunch advocates of new urbanism, developing plans and policies to promote the new models.

The first phase of McKenzie Towne, Inverness Village, had narrow roads, a public square, back alleys with garages, small setbacks and narrow lots. The central “high street” provided space for commercial uses. The developer, Carma, moved away from some of these new urbanist principles in later phases in an effort to recover costs and improve sales. Some of the design concepts, like apartments over stores and garages, proved too expensive to construct. Recent phases of McKenzie present more conventional styles. While porches and columns remain popular, the details in newer phases are less functional; moreover, front garages and cul-de-sacs—features typical of traditional suburban development—are returning. McKenzie cannot easily escape reality—its location in a suburb quite distant from the employment core of the city. With each successive phase it tones down its new urbanist principles to appeal to households looking for starter homes in the suburbs.

Cornell, in Markham Ontario, also has “brownstone” townhouses lining the boulevard leading to its “town center.” Brick buildings emulate the style of Ontario country farm houses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A mix of single-family and semi-detached homes are most common. The streets follow a modified grid, while alleys accommodate garages. It should be mentioned that the homes in Cornell are not inexpensive.

Markham adopted new urbanist planning principles as its preferred option for new suburban development. New projects in the community conform to the prescription: straight streets, alleys, limited setbacks, narrow lots, “traditional” dwelling styles and attractive public spaces.

Developers in many Canadian communities are emulating elements of new urbanist design. Mass-produced houses commonly sport porches, although seldom deep enough to accommodate more than a row of chairs. Gingerbread trim has become de rigeur, even on homes with front-attached garages. These new designs fit well on the compact lots that planners now recommend. Thirty to forty foot wide lots make land use denser than a decade ago. At the same time, however, new developments have a greater amount of impervious ground cover (in streets, alleys and building envelope). What may be gained in infrastructure efficiency is lost in landscape function. Those who believe compact forms are sustainable applaud; those who believe that environmental function should take precedence find the outcome disappointing.

Moreover, as average household sizes are smaller than they have been in the past, greater housing densities may not translate into higher population densities. For example, the typical 1960s household may have had five people on a 50 x 100 foot lot; 1990s suburbs had about 2.5 people on a 30 x 100 foot lot, consuming more land and building materials per

person in the same life cycle phase. Smaller lot sizes do not necessarily translate into sustainability.

New urbanist projects are not solving the problem of affordable housing either. Developers contend that New urbanist design costs more to build than does conventional suburban design and appeals to the upscale market. Starter suburbs have, however, copied New urbanist design elements like front porches and pitched roofs. Hence, new urbanist details are rapidly disseminating into the suburban vernacular, without the rest of the model.

New urbanism seeks alternatives to the car, however, the projects built to date have not reduced car usage. With few jobs nearby, people must commute. Mass transit is available, but not well-developed. Most people still use their vehicles for shopping and recreation. Moreover, most developments pop up in farm fields. In order to get to the real urban landscape, people have little option but to drive.

Some urban redevelopment projects provide greater potential. For instance, the former military base in Calgary offers a mix of rehabilitated housing units and new homes in a central location. Garrison Woods is well-integrated into the urban transit system. An existing commercial core and new retail meet daily shopping needs. Here the principles of new urbanism have a chance of flourishing because they build upon the traditional urbanism of the city core.

In most suburban areas, however, we can see the concepts of new urbanism boiled down to what the market finds useful for packaging: porches, gingerbread trim, peaked roofs, narrow lots. In areas with cold winters, developers may provide garages off unpaved back lanes; in moderate climates, cars are parked in the front driveway. This is not urbanism, but merely updated suburban development.

While planners encourage modified grid layouts and other elements of the new urbanist model, developers prefer the loops and cul-de-sacs perfected in the post-war period. These still sell at a premium. Some communities have adjusted lot layout standards, but few reduce them to urban dimensions. Alleys are not proving popular with consumers; people worry about snow clearing, poor visibility for garage access and potential usage as routes for criminal activity. In some areas, utility companies are reluctant to put services into alleys. As a result, the street edge may fill with unsightly service bollards that contrast markedly with the “traditional streetscape” illusion generated by retro-homes.

#### Cookie-Cutter Suburbs

The suburbs of the 1960s and 1970s were certainly a “cookie-cutter” phenomena with standardized street patterns, house forms and school locations. Designed to meet the needs of the middle-class nuclear family, they fit the mass-produced stereotypes of the times. Developers perfected the combination of house-on-lot-in-neighborhood that sold relatively cheaply and quickly. Planners facilitated standardization by supplying rules

and regulations that enabled land use patterns to emerge.

Economic forces in the development industry and cultural values about domestic environments are already pushing new urbanism into stereotypical patterns. The “sugar cookie” suburb of the post-war period is giving way to the “gingerbread man” suburb of the late twentieth century; suburban substance has not changed. The stereotypical suburb now has houses with distinctive architectural features on narrow lots. Contemporary suburbs aimed at the “move-up” or “executive” market have beautiful public spaces, parks, commercial or recreational amenities and sidewalks. Where the suburbs target the middle- and working- classes, developers do not invest in public spaces or ornate streetscapes and retain winding streets. Developers are segmenting the market to target product lines at particular consumer groups. As in the post-war period, planning facilitates the development process by adjusting land use regulations to accommodate demand.

We see then that suburban development practices follow the paradigmatic logic of their time. Planners articulate models in planning principles and developers embed them in the practice of development economics. Over time, politics, economics and professional critiques modify those principles and practices. Cultural values test the professional principles and eventually force reconsideration. What do people expect from the landscape and how do those expectations change over time? What means do they have available for meeting their needs and what choices do they prefer? What meanings do

they give to the neighborhood through the patterns of their daily activities? In many ways, the market response to development models reflects cultural values. As we see new urbanism being boiled down to its essential architectural elements, we find that the public has only bought into a limited number of the values of the paradigm, just as they only latched onto a few of the elements of the earlier Garden City model.

In its search for a physical planning paradigm to create a new urban social order, new urbanism overlooks the patterns of job distribution, automobile usage and recreational activities that contribute to the shape of our settlements. People resist paradigms that do not address their needs. The planner’s search for sustainable development patterns will likely continue for the near future, coded now in the language of smart growth. Whether any of these models will produce the equity, environmental protection and economic efficiency that planners have sought since the early days of the profession (and embedded in the various models of good neighborhoods we used throughout the twentieth century) remains for the future to judge.

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## HOPE VI and the New Urbanism: Eliminating Low-Income Housing to Make Mixed-Income Communities

By Janet L. Smith  
*Spring, 2003*

Chicago’s public housing is testimony to a long history of struggle between poor people and politicians. The latest contest is over the Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) Plan for Transformation, which aims to reduce the existing unit count from 38,000 to 25,000. Fifty-one buildings—most of them high-rise—are slated for demolition. Some developments are being cleared entirely and replaced with new, mixed-income communities.

This public housing “transformation” hinges on a narrowly constructed argument that high-rise, high-density sites are inherently bad. Embracing the rhetoric of new urbanists (NU), transformation plans around the country are promoting mixed-use and mixed-income development at a neighborhood scale. In practice, however, they are resulting in the net loss of low-income housing units.

For the Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD), the CNU’s approach is a means to reduce the concentration of poverty: transforming “the projects” into communities will encourage higher-income working families to live in redeveloped sites. But with all the talk of community building and building new communities, it is still not clear who is to benefit. Preliminary findings from a national study of HOPE VI being completed by the Urban Institute indicate a real disconnect between policy and practice. While policy speaks of creating communities for families, the reality is that many of these redeveloped sites do not house the original families that were displaced. Many families chose to live in the private sector with vouchers, but many others had no choice, since the development they moved out of offered fewer replacement public housing units.

In the transformation of public housing, NU is not categorically the culprit. Rather, the NU principles are used to ⇨

justify reducing the number of public housing units overall. Instead of dismissing it wholesale, activist planners need to capitalize on the NU climate, particularly the promotion of mixed-income housing, to push for more, not less, affordable public and private housing in all our communities.

#### Learning from Cabrini Green

Reducing the number of public housing units in order to make redeveloped sites “mixed-income” is an issue in Chicago, where most of the plans call for only one-third of the units to be public housing, with the rest either “affordable” (80-120 percent of area median income (AMI)) or market-rate. At Cabrini Green, one of the City’s best known sites, residents fought in court to ensure that those who wanted to stay could be included in the new community that the city envisioned for them. They also fought to get more control over the process to ensure that replacement housing be built first and that demolition happen afterwards, whenever possible. Their view—and the one expressed here—is that while the physical design is important to residents, having enough replacement public housing is essential to the success of housing plans. Otherwise, this “new urbanism” is just another form of displacement of poor people.

While Cabrini Green is a unique case, it offers strategies and principles planners and community activists can employ to ensure that current residents get mixed in rather than out of these new public housing communities.

Located within walking distance of some of the most expensive real estate in the city, Cabrini Green was the first HOPE VI grant in Chicago. Chicago received a \$50 million HOPE VI grant in 1994 to redevelop a portion of the 3,600 unit site. Initially the CHA had made an agreement with the Local Advisory Council (LAC)—the elected leadership for tenants—to demolish 660 units, rebuilding 493 new units of public housing and issuing 167 housing assistance vouchers in place of the balance of the units.

Soon after the plan was approved, the federal government took over the CHA. Two buildings containing 398 units were demolished and no replacement units were provided. A Request For Proposals (RFP) was issued to replace what was going to be torn down. None of the responses fully met the minimum criteria of the RFP in regard to reducing density and providing the appropriate number of replacement units on-site, so the City of Chicago declared all the plans inappropriate. Soon afterward, the City and CHA entered into “private” meetings to compose an alternative strategy, producing the Near North Redevelopment Plan and the corresponding Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. The plan was to demolish 1,300 public housing units and produce 2,300 new units in a larger geographic area (340 acres compared to ten acres in the original proposal). Only 700 units would be public housing, and half of those would be for “working poor.” In response to this plan, residents filed a lawsuit against both the City and

the CHA on the grounds that the plan was prejudicial to their interests. Residents were outraged because the plan, besides violating the previous development agreement with the LAC, was to demolish more buildings and move more residents permanently off-site.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1997, a federal judge stopped CHA from demolishing anything more until this conflict was resolved.

#### Cabrini Green Tenants Win in Court

While TIFs are controversial—especially in Chicago, where there are more than 110 districts and several new ones proposed—the City’s decision to create a TIF significantly expanded the development site. This was an important factor in the ruling on the tenant’s lawsuit against the CHA in the summer of 1998, which gave the LAC substantial control over the development process and the outcome of the demolition of the remaining six buildings. The court ordered the CHA to build 895 public housing-eligible units in the HOPE VI Planning Area, which was now defined by the boundaries of the TIF and not just the public housing site. Furthermore, demolition could not begin until at least one-third of the replacement units were underway, funds and sites for another 400 units were secured, and proposal(s) were received for rebuilding remaining units on the CHA land. The LAC also negotiated to reduce down to less than forty percent of AMI (about \$30,000) the income levels in “affordable housing” units subsidized with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which made more units available to current public housing residents. The LAC will serve as co-developer of the site, and shall comprise half of the review panel.

While the consent decree was appealed and later revised to reduce resident control from fifty-one percent to fifty percent, the final settlement was still considered a victory by tenants since it both maintained the policy that units had to be built prior to demolition, and gave them substantial, although not sole, control over the redevelopment process. To date, the first phase of development is nearly completed: 350 units have resulted, one-third of which are public housing. Phase two will begin shortly. All stages have been controlled by the LAC and the developer to ensure that the outcomes meet the requirements of the lawsuit. Based on accounts from both partners, residents and the developer appear to be working well together. In addition, a group of residents has been working to convert their building, which is not slated for demolition, to a limited equity co-op.

#### Transformative Strategies

Clearly, a bigger vision of transformation is needed in the US—one that is not just driven by new urbanist design ideas. We need transformative strategies. Similar to the notion of transformative community planning that Marie Kennedy describes in her Planners Network working paper, the goal should be to put real control in the hands of the people we are planning with to help them identify and implement real alternatives. These may or may not include NU design ideas. The NU principles used in public hous-

ing plans should be broadened to include the areas outside of public housing. Transformative strategies should include three principles: clear outcomes, expanded space and public control.

**Clear Outcomes.** An outcomes component to the housing plan, similar to the one negotiated in the Cabrini Green case, will ensure that all residents are provided a unit if they choose to return. It will also help meet future needs for affordable housing. The premise here is that residents generally want to return to the site once it is redeveloped. However, the goal should always be to maximize the number of public housing units to meet current and future demand, even if there are residents who do not choose to return to the neighborhood. While not legally binding, these outcomes can then function as guiding principles for negotiating how, when and where units will be built.

**Expanded Space.** Expanding the space of public housing means changing the scale of redevelopment to include more than just the original site. This avoids the need to challenge federal limits on how many units can be built back on-site. More importantly, however, it is a means to open up adjacent communities, especially in locations like Cabrini Green, where the surrounding housing development was also income segregated. In this case, however, the income levels of people surrounding Cabrini were well above the city median, and depending on how you drew the boundaries, the neighborhood was already a mixed-income community. Mechanisms to produce affordable housing, whether publicly or privately owned, can be part of the plan. For example, in a development adjacent to Cabrini Green but in the TIF district, the City required a set-aside of eleven percent “affordable” units. While still out of the price range for most (up to 120 percent of AMI), the set-aside is a step in the right direction, and is now being pushed by a citywide coalition. In addition, two strategies should be considered that are not in widespread use but have proven effective: inclusionary zoning, which requires a proportion of a development to be affordable, and linkage programs, which generate funds to produce affordable housing from development exactions.

**Public Control.** A public control component is critical to ensuring that public housing is first part of the mix and, once built, remains in the public domain and affordable. Many different strategies could be used to keep public investment accessible and affordable to low-income families: land trusts, which keeps the land in the public domain; reciprocal agreements, a method already used in public housing, which requires developers to keep housing affordable for a long period of time; and limited equity cooperatives like the ones being pursued by tenants in Cabrini, which help very low-income tenants become owners and keep property off the speculative market. Public control may also include resident management, which ensures that tenants also control the property, but this should be up to residents to decide.

These strategies aim to empower residents, but not simply by making tenants into property owners. As Bill Peterman describes in his book *Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development*, a progressive view of empowerment means giving residents real control. In public housing transformation this means that residents really make decisions about the future of their developments and really have control over the resources needed to implement them. The strategies outlined here aim to reduce the power of private partners in public-private partnerships—the sanctioned means to fund neighborhood revitalization and community development in the US these days. While we work on getting more public funding for affordable housing (e.g., a National Housing Trust Fund), there is an immediate need to re-position the public in these partnerships. We know that efforts by planners to control development do not necessarily discourage private investment. The key is to make known the return on investment and the public’s quid pro quo. The assumption should be that high-quality and durable public housing is a good investment. If NU design principles are a means to ensuring public housing development, then we should consider how to capitalize on the movement so that there is more, not less, public housing built in our communities.

While this may appear opportunistic and idealistic, the logic here is that well-designed mixed-income communities are not fundamentally bad. It’s the underlying assumptions and processes used to produce them that we should worry about, especially when they are used to reduce housing options for people who already have few. Equally important, however, planners need to look beyond the sites of public housing to produce these new mixed communities. NU principles can be good rules to plan by, but only if adhered to in all forms of development and in all places.

Why is HUD only promoting the mixing of uses and incomes in public housing when it is clearly needed everywhere? There is no reason to stop at the public housing border and every reason to look beyond the public housing sites in central cities to fashion mixed-income communities as the new urbanists propose. Given the spatial patterns created by a long history of segregation by race, ethnicity and income, planners should add a principle to the new urbanist mantra: do not endorse the new urbanist experiment unless it is uniformly implemented in all development.

[For a view of resident concerns at Cabrini Green and their encounters with the City of Chicago planning staff, see *Voices of Cabrini*, a film by Ronit Bezazel and Antonio Ferrera. Info on the film can be found at: <http://www.voicesofcabrini.com/>]

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# Planning Education

Photo By Ann Forsyth



Neighborhood tour from Planners Network Conference in Rochester, NY.

## Professional Identities and Boundary Maintenance

By Gerda R. Wekerle

*Summer, 2002*

In the past, when people asked whether I was a planner, I hedged. “Sort of,” I said. “I teach planning or planners; I write about planning; I even do some planning. But I have three degrees in sociology, not planning.” Last summer, I took two exams and subsequently received a document in the mail pronouncing me a “registered professional planner.” That piece of paper formalized my official status as a planner, but my identities remain multiple. I’m also still a sociologist, geographer and women’s studies scholar, and I see the world and frame my approach to teaching through these multiple lenses and allegiances. Yet getting that planning certificate has changed my status in some people’s eyes. A colleague at a planning conference congratulated me on passing the accreditation exams—the only sociologist, he claims, who has ever done so. “You’ve written piles of stuff over the years,” he said, “but now you’re a real....” “Stop right there. Don’t say it,” I said.

Over the past thirty years that I have taught planning and planning students, a recurrent theme has been who is a “real” planner. Perhaps this question occurs more in interdisciplinary programs than in planning departments, where ipso facto everyone there is assumed to be a planner. But in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, the boundaries between registered professional planners and others have been sharply drawn, although they have become somewhat more fluid over the past few years. I have concluded, despite the claims that planning as a profession has very permeable boundaries, that planners, or at least planning educators, often see their roles in terms of boundary maintenance for the profession at large. Planning education may even lag behind planning practice, making restrictive assumptions as to who will or will not make a “good” planner.

Deeply embedded in admissions procedures are assumptions about what it takes to become a planner, and the kinds of qualities, temperaments and experiences that planning programs seek in students. Many planning programs have a checklist to rank student applications. Typically, admissions committees give higher rankings to students with degrees in geography, engineering, architecture or business, and to students who took math or statistics, or more recently GIS, based on the assumption that they will do better at planning than a student who graduated as a filmmaker, for instance. Committees may never even consider applicants with degrees

in fine arts, humanities or communications.

These kinds of selection criteria affect the classroom mix, the range of student experiences and the openness of students to alternative ways of knowing and problem-solving. But we usually do not test these assumptions against our experiences in the classroom, where students with more non-conventional backgrounds often make strong contributions to class discussions, group projects or community collaborations.

I want to outline a different model. Graduate students studying planning at York are admitted to an interdisciplinary Faculty of Environmental Studies. We do not have a separate scoring sheet for planning applications, although students may indicate that planning is their primary interest. After the first term, all students engage in a personal planning exercise. They write a plan of study, indicating their learning objectives and how they propose to achieve them. Some students discover planning at this point; others decide that planning is not for them. While many of our students do have backgrounds in geography, urban studies and architecture, many others come with undergraduate degrees in international development, women's studies, political science, sociology, fine arts, communications, film studies, biology, adult education, nursing and other disciplines. This creates a rich mix of students who approach planning problem-solving from many different perspectives. Students with backgrounds in the arts, humanities and social sciences do not fare worse than students from more traditional planning-related disciplines; many of them are our very best students.

Increasingly, students combine planning with emergent fields that push the boundaries of what we perceive the field to be and challenge us by demanding courses in emergent areas—green business entrepreneurship, planning for urban agriculture, bicycle planning or community arts and planning. Students also reframe the notion of what constitutes planning skills—not just research methods and GIS but also mediation, cultural production, video and multimedia. In recent years we have had the experience that students with unconventional combinations of skills are snapped up by planning firms. Further, when we examine the careers of graduates over several decades, we find that many have applied their planning education to diverse planning applications and fields outside planning. For example, a graduate who focused initially on social housing is now an executive planning officer for a provincial Agriculture Financial Services Corporation. A student of housing policy is now director of a federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. A student who specialized in environmental planning and impact assessment is now director of real estate for a major bank. And a student who studied transportation planning is now an environmental educator. These career trajectories suggest to me that it is impossible to predict ahead of time which students with what kinds of undergraduate education will flourish in planning, or what particular sets of skills will prove valuable throughout the different stages of a planning career.

Still, I have experienced greater openness in student admissions than in faculty hiring, where assumptions about what constitutes a “real” planner come to the fore. Who is inside or outside the project is defined by decisions concerning who is involved in

writing the job description; who is on the hiring committee; and particularly what fields and experiences are valued over others when choosing among equally qualified candidates. Inevitably, someone argues for the need to hire “real” planners, but there is seldom a discussion of what this means, in practice. If you have to ask, you obviously are not one.

When I deconstruct this label “real” planner, it is often attached to a planner engaged in some form of land use planning, a technical area such as GIS or a field linked to economic growth, such as real estate development. Discussions comparing candidates for a planning position often place a high value on experience in the private sector as a planning consultant or in the public sector; planners who have worked predominantly in the non-profit sector may not be valued as highly.

If I look at these discussions through a sociology-of-work lens, I ask whether the differential values attached to specific practice arenas or specialties might not serve to preserve the roles of established planning educators with certain backgrounds as gatekeepers to their own workplace and to the profession as a whole. Maintaining tight boundaries may also serve to limit competition for students from planning educators with alternative views and practices.

Why should this concern us? With its focus on intervention and making change, planning is fundamentally a political act. Planning education is a site of practice. When I consider who is not considered a “real” planner, I often find a combination of personal identities and research foci which are assigned a lower value, e.g. a woman candidate with a specialty in social planning, gender planning or lesbian, gay and racial identities; an African-Canadian planner who focuses on environmental justice issues and approaches planning from a political standpoint. When these candidates are declared less legitimate, less “real” as planners, such judgments place their identities and their approaches outside the boundaries of planning as a field.

Yet students and graduates of planning programs are applying planning in new ways, ways that make the discourse about “real” planners seem old-fashioned and reactionary. One response to rapid change is to establish and maintain territory by tightening the requirements and making certification mandatory and more rigorous. This does not work very well for planning, which has borrowed liberally from the theories and methodologies of other disciplines and professions. In the past, planning programs welcomed geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, architects and economists to teach. Since the 1960s, programs have hired sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and cultural studies scholars to enrich the curriculum and contribute to planning pedagogy. But the contributions of these planning “others” must be valued both at the point of hiring and afterwards. Within planning programs, we need to fully utilize all our faculty talents and to celebrate multiple paths for planning practice and ways of knowing if we are to model for students pathways that push the boundaries of the profession outwards.

# Cracks in the Foundation of Traditional Planning

By Barbara Rahder

Summer, 2002

Who is a “real” planner? What makes one person a “real” planner and another person not a “real” planner? How is this decided and by whom? What are the common expectations of students entering planning programs (or possibly staying away from planning programs)? In traditional planning these questions are typically answered in the form of a set of myths that undermine the capacity of planners to engage with significant problems. These key assumptions or myths are: planning is a rational process of decision-making, planning is about providing for the public interest/public good; and planning is, first and foremost, about the use of land or space.

These underlying assumptions have direct implications for the role of the planner and, consequently, for planning education.

First—and this is what I want to emphasize most—if planning is a rational process of decision-making, it follows that planners can be trained to be objective and rational. They can learn how to construct planning processes that will lead to rational decisions, an idea embedded not only in rational comprehensive planning theory but also in much, though not all, of some popular versions of communicative action theory. It follows that planners can control the process, and therefore decisions, about the future. Finally, this makes “real” planners the experts at planning.

Second, if planning is about providing for the public interest or the public good, this implies that: 1) the public interest can be known; 2) planners can be trained to identify the public interest; 3) planners can explain to others what is in the public interest; and therefore 4) “real” planners are experts at knowing and using the public interest as the guiding principle in practice.

Third, if planning is, above all, concerned with the use of land or space, then “real” planners are land use planners.

These assumptions about planning and the role of planners are embedded in the history of the planning profession. Professions, by their nature, are self-protective entities meant not only to uphold certain standards of performance, but also to protect, promote and define those who are on the inside against those who are on the outside. Professional organizations are a means of legitimating and controlling access to self-identified areas of specialized knowledge and skill. The planning profession sets the boundaries on who is and who is not a “real” planner, at least in part, as a means of legitimizing an area of expertise we can call our own.

Students assume, quite rightfully, that planning education is about acquiring the skills and knowledge to be a professional planner. In fact, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)

requires planning programs in Canada to demonstrate how they will do this in order to certify these as professionally recognized planning programs. Every five to ten years, each planning program undergoes an intensive review by CIP to make sure it is meeting its requirements. It is not difficult to satisfy these requirements—all of the accredited planning programs in Canada do this regularly. We offer courses in planning history and theory, in local government and planning law. We provide methods and computer courses. We run studios and workshops so that students have an opportunity to apply their new skills and knowledge in a hands-on way.

What is not so easy to address is the common belief of students that planning education should provide them with a clear and incontrovertible body of knowledge, and a set of marketable technical skills, that will allow them to go forth and become experts at shaping our common future. Students’ apprehension about what they are learning—or more likely about what they are not learning—is legendary. In both traditional and innovative planning programs, students commonly express a great deal of anxiety and/or disappointment about not being taught the answers to the problems of planning. It may be worse, however, for those who think they have learned the answers, since they will most likely be bitterly disappointed when they go out into the world and discover that nothing appears to work according to plan.

So, what is the problem here? Are planning programs failing to provide adequate education? Are planning students’ expectations unrealistic? Has the planning profession failed to adequately delineate the skills and knowledge needed to become a planner? The answers to all of these questions may well be yes, but the problem is actually much bigger than this. I think we have tended to cling too long to outmoded notions of technical rationality— notions that even in their heyday served the interests of the few rather than the many diverse interests of the so-called public.

## Problems with Traditional Concepts of Planning

One of the easiest ways to describe what is wrong is by way of analogy. It seems to me that we have built the foundations of the planning profession on a floodplain. Viewing planning as a purely technical enterprise probably seemed quite rational and reasonable, at least to the engineers and architects—virtually all white males—who were asserting their dominion over urban form and land use in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

While the flood waters rose to threatening levels in the 1960s and 1970s, the foundations of rationalist planning remained firm, however tilted. Despite practical and theoretical critiques from

women; from low-income and ethno-racial communities; from urban activists, ecologists and left-wing academics, the notion that planning served some monolithic public interest in a fair and unbiased manner appeared to weather the storm. In the lets-make-a-deal 1980s and the privatization frenzy of the 1990s, there appeared to be little left of these old controversies other than a few high-water marks on the walls of the academy.

But here we are at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and there are definite cracks showing in the foundation. Our water is sometimes undrinkable—yet if planners were rational, wouldn't we set limits on the production and use of toxic chemicals and restrict the size and location of factory farms so that the runoff wouldn't get into our drinking water? Air pollution is causing unprecedented increases in childhood asthma—if planners were rational, wouldn't we restrict the use of cars and trucks rather

than create more suburbs, more expressways and hence more traffic? We are a tremendously prosperous society with more people than ever before, including increasing numbers of children, homeless on the street—if planners were rational, wouldn't we make sure that everyone had adequate shelter?

I have no doubt that we could solve these problems. But I am just as sure that these issues cannot be addressed by rationalist modes of physical land use planning alone or by planners who continue to see themselves as professionals with unbiased technical expertise. The myths of rationalism, a singular public interest, and the separation of space from society are just no longer viable foundations for our profession.

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## Planning Education: How Could It Be Different from Business School?

By Katharine N. Rankin  
*Summer, 2002*

I welcomed the invitation to join this dialogue on planning education because I have had my own experiences of being defined at the margins of “real” planning. I relish those experiences because they remind me of the crucial critical role I believe planning education must play in shaping what “counts” as real planning.

About those experiences:

First, I came to planning from the field of anthropology and continue to do ethnographic research. Therefore, my orientation has always been about how plans and development projects are experienced—and not about how to do planning in a technocratic sense.

Second, I teach planning theory in the planning program at the University of Toronto. We all know that “theory” is something that students balk at, practitioners ignore, and academic colleagues merely tolerate.

Third, I'm a feminist and I teach Gender Planning and Development. It is ironic that for all the wisdom (theoretical and practical) feminism has to offer in challenging injustice from the standpoint of experiences of injustice, some of our more “enlightened” students once nicknamed that course Family Planning and Birth Control.

This may be a pretty good joke, but it is symptomatic of a tendency in planning education to demarcate who is “real” and who is not by who teaches and who takes so-called “skills” courses. What is meant by “skills”? neoclassical economics, quantitative

analysis, maybe GIS. Planning theory, gender planning, and qualitative methods all fall outside the purview of these forms of “legitimate” and “useful” knowledge. Students are constantly advised not to waste their time in a professional masters program on “theory” courses that will not serve them well in their job search or on the job.

At the same time, I've found that the admissions process is often skewed to the kinds of applicants who already have a propensity to value these favored forms of knowledge as “skills.” As Gerda Wekerle and Barbara Rahder also argue in this issue, prerequisites in economics and statistics present up front a disciplinary bias—or gatekeeping effect—against those with backgrounds in humanities and social theory, regardless of established commitments to social justice and social change. Applicants with such backgrounds are defined as the weaker prospects.

We must therefore ask ourselves what view of the planner is embedded in this valuation of certain forms of knowledge as endowing “skills” and others as “peripheral” to the requirements of professional practice. In practice, these “skills” (when acquired in isolation from other skills, such as feminist theory) equip planners to perform two fundamental roles: 1) technician of governmental objectives (which often construes the “public interest” narrowly in the real interest of political expediency); and 2) business entrepreneur equipped with a spatial understanding of free market economics necessary for facilitating urban development. Embedded in our arbitrary construction of “real” and, shall we say, “imposter” planning are also, of course, certain normative understandings of what a good city is. ⇨

Namely, a good city is one where laissez-faire principles rule, and planners participate in individual development projects or (at best) serve government agencies whose task is to mitigate market failure.

What is wrong with all this? I like to approach this question by thinking in terms of what should distinguish planning education from related professional degrees, such as business management, public administration or public policy—other fields where “skills” are valued as legitimate knowledge. To approach this question, I think it is useful to refer to Kevin Lynch, who specifies three basic capacities planners should have in order to understand and shape the spatial form of the city.

First, planners should be able to understand why cities take the form they do. For this, of course, they require a range of disciplinary orientations, including economics (especially spatial economics), but also sociology and anthropology, geography, transportation engineering and political economy, to name a few. And planners must be able to synthesize these many areas of study into a single approach, in true interdisciplinary fashion.

Second, planners should be able to understand and shape the processes through which city form changes—processes in which planners can play different kinds of roles ranging from technician, to project designer, to advocate, to radical critic.

Third, planners should have a clear normative understanding of what good city form would be.

Aside from offering an incomplete analysis, the problem with planners drawing merely from a very narrow set of “skills” in their practice (such as neoclassical economics and quantitative methods) is this: it obscures from view the normative values underlying those approaches. That may be fine in a business management or public policy program, but planning should distinguish itself as a profession populated by practitioners who understand that values and explanations are, as Kevin Lynch argued, inextricable. As such, planning programs should be “multi-ideological,” to borrow an expression from Porus Olpadwala. By their very interdisciplinary nature, whereby

students are routinely exposed to competing systems of social analysis, planning programs should encourage planners to question any single set of ideas or interpretations and build an element of dissent into the profession.

Planning can also distinguish itself from other disciplines by making unequivocal commitments to the principles of social justice, equality of opportunity, participatory decision-making processes and empowerment of the disenfranchised. There are certainly plenty of ideological alternatives to an understanding of social justice, but at the very least one common denominator must be to take a long-term view of good city form, one not beholden to short-term returns to shareholders or politicians. This view must entertain the possibility of fundamental change leading to radically alternative futures.

There is a crucial role for theory here. Theory—the domain where relationships between values and explanations get charted—provides the critical edge to planning. It is the place from which it is possible to articulate a radical politics, to be overtly political. Without theory, the profession turns in on itself, as Bob Beauregard once argued. Without theory the profession narrows its scope, separates the “real” from the “imposters,” subverts itself to hegemonic interests, to—as Kanishka Goonewardena argues in this issue—the market.

If we accept theory as an indispensable “skill” in this way, we must also encompass within the planner’s toolbox a gender analysis, which has for decades been expanding our understanding of “development” to encompass not just economic growth but also human development and well-being. A feminist approach denies the age-old trade-off between equity and efficiency by recasting the framework for action from price signals to human needs. It brings the perspectives of subaltern groups to bear on the planning process. And as theory borne out of practice, feminist approaches confront head-on the imagined and debilitating split in planning between theory and practice.

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## Planning and Neoliberalism: The Challenge for Radical Planners

By Kanishka Goonewardena  
*Summer, 2002*

The “real” planner must be a radical planner, planning for social justice and social change. In order to do this type of planning today, the hegemony of neoliberalism must be contested and defeated.

What is neoliberalism? Neoliberalism is the dominant political-economic thought of our time—the philosophy of corporate globalization, which in turn is a code-word for the universalization of laissez-faire capitalism. Its inviolate moral principle

is remarkably lucid, but rarely acknowledged and hardly ever questioned: maximum profit at any cost. What this categorical imperative amounts to is clear: a political-economic environment within which a handful of private interests are permitted to control social life in order to maximize their personal profit.

Planners confront neoliberalism not only in such practice but also in theory. Many courses we encounter in planning schools today revolve around the assumptions and abstractions of

neoclassical economics; so, we have all been blessed with a religious faith in the infallible virtues of the unregulated market, and doubtful of anything that gets in its way. But unregulated capitalism is a myth. Capitalist markets have never been free—especially when sanctioned by *laissez-faire* rhetoric. Without “big government,” capitalism would not exist. That is why Max Weber coined the term “political capitalism” in his classic work *General Economic History*. That is also why economic historian Karl Polanyi demonstrated that “*laissez-faire* was planned; planning was not.”

The rhetoric of neoliberalism is one thing; its reality is something else. The nineteenth century theory of neoliberalism (neoclassical economics) romanticized free markets; its twenty-first century practice (globalization) reveals a world-economy rigged in favor of the ruling classes and multinational corporations, at the terrible expense of the masses, the post-modern wretched of the earth. Since neoliberalism became hegemonic in the 1980s, the world has indeed become more hellish for many, and even more heavenly for a few. The relevant statistics, as Mike Davis notes, would have stunned even the authors of *The Communist Manifesto*. “In the late 1990s . . . America’s 400 richest families increased their net worth by almost a billion dollars apiece, while the pie slice of the bottom 40 percent of the population plummeted 80 percent. . . . Globally, the Wealth Decade of the 1990s translated into negative income trends for eighty African and Latin American countries, while 200 masters of the universe, led by Bill Gates . . . amassed personal fortunes equivalent to the total income of the world’s 2.5 billion poorest people.”

The current symptoms and underlying trends of neoliberalism are hardly unprecedented. In fact, they remind us of the reign of imperialist oligopolies in the world-economy around the turn of the previous century, during the long wave of capitalist expansion from 1893 to 1914 that culminated in structural crisis and ultimately World War I. That crisis is instructive today because it proves that capitalism without planning is unsustainable. Unless the free-wheeling adventures of global capital are brought under political control and subjected to the demands of social justice, there is every reason to expect that neoliberalism as we know it is destined toward a systemic crisis of global proportions. The uncertainty is this: will the current stage in the development of capitalism come to an end in a social catastrophe or an ecological disaster? For my part, I hope—being an optimistic person on these matters—that the crisis will be mostly social, so that some of us will still be around to come out on the other side of it.

Now, if a global crisis is very much on the world-historical agenda, what can planners do in the meantime, here and now? Contributors to this magazine have already broached many aspects of this question in terms of social justice, with due respect to issues such as class, gender, sexuality and race. For my part, I can offer here a thought on the nature of our political agency in the face of neoliberalism. We must engage neoliberal dogma not because it is true, but because it is the most influential political-economic ideology in the world today; because it severely constrains not only what planners

do, but also what they think they can do. In order to liberate planning practice from the boundaries erected by the political-economic realities of neoliberalism, therefore, it will be necessary to also emancipate planning thought from the shackles of neoliberal ideology. Planners cannot hope to be radical unless all manifestations of this ideology are sharply contested and defeated.

For a start, let me consider neoliberalism’s reification of the economy. Reification here refers to the transformation of human attributes, relations and actions into an objective entity that is independent of human agency. In so doing, it elevates the objective over the subjective, the products of labor and relations between them (commodities and markets) over the people who produce them (workers) and their human essence (the labor process). The conception of the economy in neoclassical economics in fact provides the best example of such reification. How? We know that it is the people who make the economy. As a social construction, the economy does not exist independently of the subjective agents who produce and reproduce it. Yet, if we look at our mainstream economics textbooks, then the economy suddenly appears as a fully autonomous entity, governed by nothing else but its own objective laws. The frequent invocation of these laws with the glib reference to Adam Smith’s Hidden Hand certainly conjures up the image of an omnipotent force, well beyond human control. This conception of the economy admits no trace of human agency, and it thus becomes impervious to politics. Accordingly, the human subjects who constructed the economy to begin with are now purged of any political agency and also deemed to behave “rationally” (“rational fools,” as Amartya Sen once put it), simply by obeying the objective laws of the supposedly self-regulating market. In this scenario, the economy returns as an alien force to haunt the very people who created it. Here—in the reification of the economy—we have a special case of what Marx called alienation.

When I was a graduate student, a neoliberal planning professor told me that a planner (developing real estate) must obey the laws of the market just as a civil engineer (building a bridge) obeys the laws of gravity. That analogy was deeply flawed. My professor was right about the engineer, but wrong about the planner. The laws of gravity are of course not produced socially and politically, and the engineer cannot alter them—in that sense gravity is absolutely objective. By contrast, as Polanyi explains in his book *The Great Transformation*, the self-regulating market was produced politically and socially—in fact, by planners of various descriptions. As such, it is neither natural nor objective. If we made the economy in the first place, then why can’t we change the way it works and remake it? We can and must, because neoliberalism legitimates a historical condition in which the economy subjugates human life to its own autonomous laws, often with inhuman consequences. “Real planners” must strive, in radical democratic fashion, for exactly the reverse: to guide the economy according to human purposes.

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# Race, Gender and Diversity

Photo By Ann Forsuth



Gay Rights gathering in Washington, D.C.

## Diversity and the Planning Profession

By Leonardo Vazquez, PP/AICP

*Summer, 2002*

A friend of mine, a terrific planner in the private sector, gets called in on jobs from public sector clients and private sector colleagues who want him to join their team. He is one of the few senior-level planners of African-American heritage in the New York area, and while I would like to believe he is hired mostly for his skills, I sense that most clients and partners think of him first as black, and second as a good planner.

Though experienced in community planning, zoning and urban design, he often gets called on for outreach in minority communities. Clients who have worked with him will call him back for jobs regardless of the neighborhood's characteristics, but most colleagues in the private sector call him to be "the black guy" on the team.

My friend's experience highlights the lack of diversity in the planning profession today: African-Americans and Latinos are heavily underrepresented in the planning field (especially in the private sector); few minorities are in senior-level positions in their organizations; and many planners see only the marketing benefits of increasing diversity.

Though the lack of diversity in the profession is well-known, it has not been well-documented. In 2001, with an award to the American Planning Association (APA) New York Metro Chapter from the national organization, Juan Miguel Kanai and I looked at the planning profession in the chapter area. In *Lagging Behind: Ethnic Diversity in the Planning Profession in the APA New York Metro Chapter Area*, we compared the profession across the public, private and non-profit sectors; between

New York City and its suburbs; and between 2000 and 1990. Our study covered more than 600 planners in all five boroughs of New York City, Long Island and several counties in the Hudson Valley. The full report is available on the APA New York Metro Chapter website at [www.nyplanning.org](http://www.nyplanning.org).

We were more disappointed with our findings than surprised. African-Americans and Latinos were the most underrepresented races/ethnicities in the planning profession. African-Americans made up nearly 19 percent of the general population, but only 10 percent of planners. Latinos made up 22 percent of the general population, but only 6 percent of planners. Whites, on the other hand, were overrepresented, making up 49 percent of the general population, but 73 percent of planners. One surprising finding was that Asian-Americans were fairly represented, making up 8 percent of the general population and 9 percent of the planning profession.

We learned that the planning profession appears to be getting less representative. In 1990, according to census figures, African-Americans made up 12 percent of the profession, and Latinos 8 percent (compared to 10 and 6 percent, respectively, in 2000). While our survey may have looked at a slightly different population (planners who live in New Jersey, included in the survey, would not be counted in the census figures), we would still expect a growing percentage of African-American and Latino planners, especially given the increase in the Latino population.

Our findings also showed that the private sector is far less representative than the public sector with respect to diversity in the planning profession. While planners of color made up 28 percent of public sector planners, they comprised only 18 percent of private sector planners. Among private sector planners, African-Americans and Latinos were especially underrepresented, together accounting for just 7 percent. Asian-Americans, on the other hand, accounted for 9 percent of private sector planners. This is especially disturbing since governments are relying more and more on private sector consulting firms for what had been the work of public sector planning staff. Consider that Newark and Jersey City, the two largest cities in New Jersey, had their master plans completed by consulting firms. As community development corporations and place-based non-profits get bigger and more sophisticated, they too are turning to consultants to develop plans.

From private sector employers we learned that a number of minority planners had either left the planning profession or went to public sector agencies instead of moving up within the private sector. Employers cited reasons that included the fact that smaller firms do not have the resources to provide training and development opportunities, and that minority planners may have felt "more comfortable" in the public sector. This contributes to another finding—the lack of senior-level planners in the private sector. Only 8 percent of planners of color in the private sector had senior-level responsibilities, compared to 20 percent in the public sec-

tor.

Compared to the private or public sectors, the non-profit sector appears to be more diverse, with minorities making up 39 percent of planners. Eva Hanhardt, director of the Planning Center at the Municipal Art Society of New York and a planner familiar with community-based organizations, told me that the non-profit sector may be even more diverse than our finding, since there are a number of professionals engaged in planning services who do not call themselves planners. Still, because the non-profit sector makes up a small portion of the whole planning profession, adding these professionals to the mix would still not substantially change the results.

Geography appeared to be an important factor. Though the profession in New York City was more diverse than in suburban areas, the profession in Long Island and the Hudson Valley was more representative of the local population. Here again, however, Latinos were the most underrepresented group, by 9 percent.

In explaining the makeup of the planning profession, the why is trickier than the what. Clearly, one of the reasons for lack of diversity is the lack of minority students in planning schools. According to the latest Guide to Planning Education by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, white students comprised 70 percent of students in planning schools that produce graduates who work in the New York area (this includes schools in New York State, New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania). While you might expect immigrant ethnic groups to be underrepresented in the profession, why are Asian-Americans fairly represented and Latinos so underrepresented? Even in planning schools, 7 percent of students were Asian-Americans, only 6 percent Latino. If these trends continue, Latinos will continue to be more underrepresented in the profession.

#### Valuing Diversity: More Than Just a Marketing Ploy

Diversity, like community, is something that no reasonable person can be against. Employers tend to embrace it for its marketing and outreach benefits. While public sector employers can show their responsiveness to the community by putting a planner of color in a frontline position, private sector employers find it valuable to have a minority planner at the table in interviews. The idea at work here is that members of the community will be more responsive to planners who resemble them, and given two planners of equal ability, this is often the case. Unfortunately, this limited notion of diversity tends to keep planners of color in frontline positions in minority neighborhoods while other planners are in positions of influence over development and public policy. This serves our communities and our profession poorly. In planning school we learned about the rational planner, who could take a comprehensive, objective look at a place, then apply scientific analysis to come up with great plans. We then quickly learned that the rational planner never did and never could exist; while our analyses may be scien- ⇨

tific, the kinds of questions we ask, the data we are willing to consider and the range of solutions we would entertain are constrained and skewed by our biases, perspectives and histories. These are so ingrained psychologically that no matter how reflective we are, we cannot see ourselves clearly in the mirror. The true value of increasing diversity is to bring a new breadth of perspectives to bear on finding more creative and sustainable answers to pressing problems. But to make sure those perspectives are heard, we need to have more diversity at the senior levels of planning schools, planning agencies and private planning firms.

### How to Increase Diversity in the Planning Profession

Increasing diversity in the planning profession will take a long time and will need to involve planning schools, employers and the professional organizations that serve planners. The biggest factor will be having senior-level people who understand and are committed to achieving this goal.

The American Planning Association, which has been struggling to attract and retain minorities, is working to increase diversity. It funded our diversity study, and has made social equity one of the key goals of its organizational development plan.

In our study, we made eleven recommendations under four major goals. I should note that Mitchell Silver, now a member of the board of the national APA, and Tina Chiu, vice president of committees for the New York Chapter, worked on refining the recommendations, which include:

- Create mentoring programs for seasoned planners to help younger planners;
- Develop joint programming between APA and other organizations that have larger percentages of minority professionals;
- Provide entrepreneurship and business training for minority planners to help them to become, and succeed as, managers and leaders;
- Allow minority planners within organizations to influence staff development and project assignments;
- Increase the number of senior-level planners in the private sector;
- Increase the number of scholarships to minorities interested in planning schools;
- Create a “unified effort among planning schools and employers” to diversify the profession;
- Make the profession better known in minority communities, which will attract more young people to the profession;
- Make minority planners more visible; when young people see more people like them in leadership positions, they will be more likely to join the profession.
- Conduct more research into diversity issues, including a comparison of regions and a more detailed investigation of the experiences of various planners.

### Diversifying the Private Sector: The Problem with Minority Business Set-Aside Programs

For more than two decades, federal, state, county and some city agencies have been trying to increase opportunities for minority-owned and women-owned businesses. Through Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) programs, jurisdictions encourage contractors to include such businesses on their project teams. While such programs have certainly provided opportunities that otherwise might not have existed for minorities and women who are not keyed into the usual networks that result in business partnerships, there are a few problems with this approach.

Minority-owned is defined as having at least 51 percent ownership by a member of an underrepresented group. In even medium-sized firms, where ownership may be distributed among as few as four people, it would be difficult to get a 51 percent ownership rate by minorities. Another problem is that the MBE requirement produces a small set of boutique firms that everyone goes to when they need an MBE. Like my friend, the same people get called on for certain projects, making it difficult for other minority planners to get work. With the “go-to” firms out there, white employers have little incentive to attract, retain or promote minority planners. You could be a huge firm with one or two black junior planners, but show up at an interview with your MBE teammate at the table, and you look progressive.

You could make the same argument for white planners, but there is a difference. Some of the minority planners that we spoke to for the study complained about not getting the same quality of assignments or opportunities as their white counterparts. We didn’t have a large sample of planners, but their comments squared with what I have heard informally from other planners over the years. They also resembled some of the comments reported by Charles Hoch of the University of Illinois at Chicago in his book, *What Planners Do: Power Politics and Persuasion*. And if we agree that the profession should be more diverse, then we should provide even more quality opportunities for minority planners.

To truly get the benefits of ethnic diversity in the planning profession, we have to integrate diverse perspectives at all levels. As long as minority planners are stuck at junior or middle levels or channel themselves to boutique firms, we’ll have more numbers, but not necessarily more value. Planning work tends to be task-related. Especially in the private sector, where profit margins tend to be narrow, there is little office time for the deep conversations and reflection that leads to changes of heart and new ways of thinking; this usually happens among peers and within networks. The principal of a large transportation planning firm is more likely to have drinks with his fellow partners than with his junior or mid-level planners. Even if he does break bread with his own staff, people who depend on the principal to give them choice assignments (not to mention signing the checks that pay their bills) are going to talk to him differently than someone who is not so dependent on him.

We need a way to diversify planning firms at all levels, and

the push needs to come from clients. The MBE requirement is one way to go. Here's another, which could be used with the MBE: diversity rankings.

A diversity ranking is a score a firm receives for the depth and breadth of diversity within its organization. Different points are assigned for diversity at different levels (e.g. four points for diversity at partner level; one for junior planner). Firms would get additional points for employing a mix of minority planners. An independent review organization would determine scores for each organization. To provide additional incentive to planning firms, the organization could publish and distribute an annual description of firms that achieve a certain minimum diversity score.

We should all work to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the planning profession, not just to make ourselves feel good or help reach out to different communities, but also to keep our profession relevant and strong over this century. Planners are more valuable as communicators, facilitators and persuaders than they are as analysts and technicians. Most people treat planning like running a restaurant; everybody thinks they can do it, and are surprised when half of them fail. For place-building, members of the public and officials tend to think of architects, civil engi-

neers or even developers before planners. This means that to be relevant, we need to bring something to the table that cannot be found in a market study or environmental impact statement.

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## Involving Youth in Planning: The Progressive Challenge

By Ann Forsyth  
*Winter, 2002*

How can children and youth have a voice in planning? What are the responsibilities of planners to incorporate children and youth in their activities? This issue of *Planners Network* features a number of articles about these issues of democracy, participation, planning, and youth.

In the past decades the process of planning has become more broadly participatory. Whether from a commitment to democratic involvement, due to legal mandates for participation, or as a strategy to neutralize opposition and create constituencies for implementation, planners now include significant public input in many of their activities. Vigorous debate about how to incorporate and empower people who are socially and economically disadvantaged has been a hallmark of progressive planning, as has an increasing concern with recognizing different cultural backgrounds. These populations may still be often on the margins of planning, but they are increasingly recognized as important constituencies and collaborators in planning. On the environmental side, and particularly in the area of sustainability, attention is being focused on future generations, the regional population, and even the land itself. This move to incorporate more voices has its limits.

There are real constraints on participation for non-citizens, for example, something that is of great concern in areas with many immigrants and temporary workers. Children and youth also fall into this category and are excluded on multiple levels. They are not able to vote. They rarely own property. They are perceived as incapable of participation. They are considered adequately represented by adults. Children and youth may be acknowledged in analysis, but they are not seen as a core constituency for participation and participation is not tailored toward their specific interests and needs. Children in low-income neighborhoods battle with poverty and exclusion; in middle income neighborhoods they may be seen as disorderly.

How much can children and youth participate? Although limited by language and motor skills, children at the age of three have demonstrated the ability to build models and create mental maps. While environmental awareness is fairly basic at this age, even very young children have a capacity to participate and this ability develops with age. The process of being involved in planning and neighborhood projects can help children and youth develop

a sense of the consequences of actions and a sense of self and others. Among older youth such participation can build skills for later community involvement.

Youth involvement in planning is not just about personal and civic development, however, but about creating places and communities. Children are the dominant users of some spaces such as parks, playgrounds and schools. As teenagers they are often perceived by adults as problem users of public spaces, but their intimate experience with such locations makes them uniquely suited to make decisions about them. As Imre Kepes, Fernando Marti and Llewellyn Golding demonstrate in their inspiring case studies of YouthPower, the HOME's Skateboard Task Force and the Youthlink violence prevention program, the rewards to both the young people and the wider community can be significant (See Winter 2002 issue of Planners Network Magazine). In my work with the Urban Places Project at U.Mass/Amherst in the mid to late 1990s, I was tremendously privileged to watch the young people in YouthPower overcome huge barriers of poverty and ethnic discrimination to physically improve their neighborhood. This in turn helped develop respect from the wider community. The High School Adoption program at the University of Texas/Austin is also notable in this light as it began the task of connecting young people to both the university and to community development groups from their neighborhood,

bridging across racial lines (See Vazquez in Winter 2002 issue of Planners Network Magazine, or online) .

Involving youth in planning is a challenge for progressive planners. Children and youth almost certainly have to involve people other than themselves, that is adults, in any significant planning work or projects. This creates a delicate balance where participation needs to be carefully designed to be interesting and also give power to youth directly, not only through adults. Planners are often inexperienced in the methods for including youth. Planners are also often ambivalent about youth contributions. Given other pressing concerns, youth may simply be ignored. This is in spite of the fact that as many are aware, the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child makes participation a human right.

The important first step is to realize that youth are important partners in planning.

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Ann Forsyth is Associate Professor of Urban Planning at Harvard. She was a project manager for the YouthPower Guide.

# Indigenous Planning and Tribal Community Development

By Ted Jojola

January/February, 2000

*What we ask of America is not charity, not paternalism, even when benevolent. We ask only that the nature of our situation be recognized and made the basis of policy and action.*

--Declaration of Indian Purpose, American Indian Chicago Conference, June 20, 1961.

## Origins

Nearly two generations have passed since the convocation of the mostly young, idealistic native scholars and activists at the American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961. Its purpose was to involve Indian leaders in updating the 1928 Meriam Report on the conditions and federal policies toward American Indians. A year later, a Declaration of Purpose was presented to President John F. Kennedy in a formal White House ceremony.

One irrefutable aspect of the Chicago conference was that its

deliberations consigned non-natives to a "consultancy" status. That meant that non-natives were allowed to speak only after the native participants had recognized them. Unlike any major academic forum, that protocol allowed the indigenous voice to preside.

When this experience was taken back to Indian Country, something truly amazing began to occur. Rather than continue a situation where Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) paternalism had consigned native people to a passive role, a group of the young and educated activists who had witnessed the Chicago Conference began to call for reform. Feeling that they had to wean themselves from federal control, they founded the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC).

NIYC quickly aligned itself with other civil rights movements under the banner of "Red Power" activism. Their public protests and legal actions paved the way for challenging the

injustices of treaty violations and exploitative environmental policies in Indian country. Their movement also succeeded in bringing visibility of the Indian plight to mainstream America.

The discourse that emerged from such activism led to a philosophical movement that was nurtured in a tradition of collective action. It recast tribal community development as a history of shared actions and experiences. This became known as an indigenous "world-view" and it not only served to unite native people, but it also served distinguish them from the non-Indians who did not share the same collective history. It was an effort that was not only invested in learning and scholarship, but was rooted in the articulation and sharing of experiential learning.

Like-minded native scholars and grassroots activists collaborated to take this new breed of collective action back to their communities. For example, in 1992, a planning studio conducted under the auspices of the Community Fellows Program in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT resulted in a "postmodernist discourse" among students from "communities of color" regarding grassroots activism and culture. The result was the formulation of a new theory of action that was coined "indigenous planning." It called for a radical reexamination of contemporary planning practice through long-term learning, the empowerment of community voice, and the advocacy of culture and tradition. In 1995, the movement formulated its five basic principles:

1. People thrive in community;
2. Ordinary people have all the answers;
3. People have a basic right to determine their own future;
4. Oppression continues to be a force that devastates people; and
5. The people are beautiful, already.

### The Indigenous Planning Network

Another important initiative is the Indigenous Planning Network (IPN). In a rather prophetic way, IPN had been conceived in Chicago during the American Planning Association's (APA) 1995 conference, where planners who worked in native communities embarked on reestablishing a professional organization modeled after the defunct United Indian Planners Association (UIPA). Influenced by the 1994 United Nations pronouncement on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Geographic Land Information Systems (GLIS) Department of the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin took the lead role in convening this "indigenous" initiative.

A newsletter called Indigenous Planning was disseminated on a periodic basis with a stated goal of "forming a new division within the APA for native/indigenous planning." Since its inception, IPN has convened tribal community development panels at the annual meetings of the APA with the purpose of showcasing native planning organizations and practitioners. In addition, organizers are presently discussing the development of a "Tribal Planner's Toolbox." These are a series of

products (including the development of a website), seen as necessary for engaging tribes in a community development process that incorporates indigenous principles into their strategic planning.

Several faculty, including myself as a representative of IPN, are collaborating with IPN on creating the academic counterpart. The collaboration is centered on a course entitled "Indigenous Planning" which brings together students from the American Indian Law Program, the Anderson School of Management, and the Community & Regional Planning program at UNM in an interdisciplinary seminar. Recently an endowment in support of this interdisciplinary track was established to support graduate fellowships in the three respective colleges.

### Indigenous Planning

Although it could be argued that the indigenous planning paradigm is a new concept, its principles are actually a reformulation of practices that have been used by "traditional" communities for millennia. Before indigenous authority was usurped through colonial processes, tribal societies planned their communities. Unlike the Western approach that relies principally upon regulating land use, the indigenous planning approach bases its practice on dealing with land tenure.

Land tenure is distinguished by long and sustained patterns of continuous ownership. In indigenous communities, ownership is sustained over successive generations. Land becomes the embodiment of collective groups whose goal is to sustain the productivity of the land for those who will inherit it. As such, land becomes a birthright and collective stewardship is the primary mode of maintaining it.

Given a legacy of land tenure, it becomes easier to understand how traditional communities evolved distinctive world-views. Such world-views embody values that were essential for attaining a balanced and symmetrical relationship between humankind and the natural environment.

Because it is experientially based, there is a certain tolerance for change. As collective societies extended their territories, they would border on other cultural groups. And when they interacted with other societies, they experienced new ideas and adapted them. This goes contrary to the notion of invention. Rather, change is a process of transformation. Transformation was tempered by the need to assure the community that new ideas were mindful of the past, cognizant of the present, and suitable for the future.

To distinguish Western planning practice from indigenous traditions is absolutely critical. Land use as applied in traditional Western planning practice is both temporal and corporal. It serves to give form and shape to communities by upholding the privileges associated with private property rights. Land use becomes the embodiment of the individual, who develops it with the primary intent of raising its capital valuation. When it is maximized, then it is resold. There is ⇨

little incentive to hold land as property longer than necessary, especially if it "loses value." This behavior leads to "slash-and-burn economics" and a reactive mode of community development.

One can surmise, therefore, how such behavior comes in conflict with indigenous tribal community development values. One such arena is Indian gaming. For a few lucky tribes, Indian gaming has become a panacea that has not only resulted in breaking loose from the cycle of dependency on treaty reparations, but has given a renewed ability for tribal governments to make decisions for themselves. At the same time, it has forced tribal governments to adapt new models of management and embark on strategic planning.

This is a change from the comprehensive planning model, which was championed on Indian reservations in the early 60s and 70s by the US Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Many of these well-meaning comprehensive tribal planning approaches fell out of favor principally because they narrowed tribal governments to choosing enterprises within their meager resource base. The process essentially left the tribal governments feeling bankrupt and impoverished. It was only after a few gaming tribes received windfall profits that they began to craft vision statements with the intent of economic diversification. And when the resource base did not exist on their lands, tribes expanded their resource base by acquiring more land and private industries. In that manner, strategic planning unwittingly hastened the transformation of Indian policy away from paternalism and toward self-determination.

It remains to be seen, however, if planning strategies will be confined to capital investment. Simply "putting more eggs into the basket" does not necessarily resolve the enormous social and political problems which contemporary tribes face. In particular, will strategic planning, of itself, return tribes to doctrines that incorporate vestiges of their world-views? This remains to be seen.

Yet there are indications of some unifying ideological factors within contemporary Indian planning practice. These might serve as the foundation of a long-overdue paradigm shift toward indigenous planning. Although the following tenets are by no means definitive, they are offered as a way to begin reconstructing the past and present towards a future of indigenous planning. They are:

First, indigenous people are not minorities. The territories of indigenous people are characterized by a social and cultural geography where it is the outsider or non-native who is a minority. Indigenous communities and lands exist where the presence of outsiders and non-natives is almost non-existent. As long as indigenous communities continue to unconsciously ply the notion that their power is insolvent because they are demographic majorities, the collective will continue to be marginalized and made to appear invisible and insignificant.

Second, the essence of indigenous scholarship is native self. True indigenous scholars and activists do not suffer from cultural amnesia! In the spirit of idealism, indigenous people adapt their ideas from experience. As proven time and again, indigenous people excel in the process of deconstruction as characterized by reflection and introspection. Indigenous planners are not afraid to be a part of their own community research and the role of the expert is tempered by the collective experience.

Third, indigenous voices need no translation. Rather, indigenous people are educated and trained in the best of traditional and Western traditions. Their voice is neither revisionist nor elitist. Instead, it empowers the collective mind by challenging those who attain their expertise solely through individualism and privilege. Native people are poised to take their rightful role as enablers of their own communities. This is accomplished by mutual respect, participatory styles of consensus making, and the adherence to traditional protocols.

Fourth, the indigenous planning process is informed by the indigenous world-view. Central to this world-view are values associated with territory, land tenure, and stewardship. It represents a philosophical construction of humankind's relationship to the natural world and is demarcated by territories that balance human needs with ecologically viable and sustainable development. A world-view is endowed with ideals that integrate the past and present, and projects itself into the future.

In summary, this is an interesting time in the contemporary dealings of indigenous communities. Many generations have passed since colonial practices began to infringe upon indigenous rights and self-reliance. In indigenous communities, an understanding of the traditional world-view has been lost, fragmented, or secularized. In spite of this, indigenous people have always held on to the basic belief that their collective responsibility is to become the principal stewards of the land.

As long as they are able to sustain their territories, then the values associated with land tenure should allow them to harbor a sense of identity. On the other hand, it will rest upon the ability of each respective collective society to bring clarity and cohesion to its planning process through its timeless world-view. This is both the essence and challenge of indigenous planning.

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# Are the Transgendered the Mine Shaft Canaries of Urban Areas?

By Petra L. Doan  
*March/April, 2001*

In coal mining country it is common knowledge that canaries are highly sensitive to noxious methane gas sometimes found in mines. Miners used to carry a caged canary into the mine as an early warning device; when the canary keeled over, it was time to get out fast.

In some ways transgendered people serve as canaries for the other sexual minorities. Because many trans people visibly challenge gender stereotypes, they often attract the bulk of the hatred and rage reserved for people who are perceived as queer or in any way different from the norm. The hatred serves as a signal and warning to the entire queer community.

The lethal effects of this hatred have been devastating. The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition estimates that since 1990 approximately one transgendered person was killed each month, and in the year 2000 the number was closer to two per month. (See the NTAC web site at and the site called "Remembering Our Dead" at [www.gender.org/remember](http://www.gender.org/remember).)

Throughout history and in many cultures transgendered people have played visible and useful social roles. In the aftermath of the Stonewall rebellion, which jump-started the Gay Liberation movement, there was a tendency for gay rights activists to disavow any connections with the rowdy and activist "street queens" who tore up parking meters and led the rebellion. While there have been enormous advances in the tolerance of diversity in urban areas as a result, problems still remain. Although gays and lesbians have been "out of the closet" and demanding their rights in public for the past several decades, transgendered people have been slower to "come out" and risk controversy and possible physical harm.

Accurate estimates of the prevalence of transgendered individuals are highly variable. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) estimates that approximately one in 30,000 men and one in 100,000 women will undergo sexual reassignment surgery. These statistics however have been questioned by more recent studies showing much higher numbers of transsexuals. In the Netherlands, where transgender status is less highly stigmatized, the prevalence is approximately 1 per 11,900 males and 1 per 30,400 females. In Singapore the ratios are even higher, with 1 per 9,000 males and 1 per 27,000 females. There are no accurate estimates of the remainder of the transgendered population who do not opt to have surgery, but may choose to live either full time or part time in a gender role different from their apparent sex at birth.

## Queer and Trans Issues in Planning

The recent creation of Gays and Lesbians in Planning (GALIP), a division of the American Planning Association, was for some an acknowledgment that "queer" issues have "arrived" in mainstream planning. This positive step forward reflects our society's increasing willingness to embrace diverse populations. But many unresolved issues remain which will continue to challenge planning professionals. Indeed, the out-pouring of outraged letters to the editor of Planning Magazine at the announcement of GALIP suggests that within the planning community there is much resistance to this arrival.

But will transgendered people again be the canaries in the mines? The inclusion of transgendered people under the broad umbrella of LGBT issues remains controversial. Adding the "T" for transgendered to the LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) community was a difficult struggle for the gay liberation movement, but it has by now been fairly widely accepted. The City of San Francisco has recognized the important issue of anti-transgender discrimination and adopted full protections for trans people. There are still pockets of resistance, however. One gay lobbying group, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), has fought to keep transgendered people from benefiting from protection under "sexual orientation" anti-discrimination clauses. Congressman Barney Frank, an outspoken advocate of gay rights, has repeatedly stated that including the transgendered on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would ensure its failure. He has argued repeatedly that trans issues are too controversial for inclusion at this time.

Many people evidently agree with him. Transgendered people have become a sort of bogeyman used by the right wing to scare the bejeebers out of elected officials. Why else would Jesse Helms have insisted on excluding transgendered people from the Americans with Disabilities Act? At the local level the same tactics are used. During a recent Leon County (FL) Commission hearing on extending "fair housing" protections to include sexual orientation, local activists lobbied for the inclusion of gender orientation. The State of Minnesota has successfully used this terminology to extend protections to the entire LGBT community. However, the discussion at the Leon County Commission hearings inspired a series of shocked letters and unfavourable comments arguing that such an interpretation would force landlords to open their doors to "men in dresses" and other "perversions." Although sexual orientation was added to the anti-discrimination ordinance, the Commission shied away from clearly defining the meaning of sexual orientation (and whether gender identity was included). ⇨

Questions about the inclusion of trans people force many people, including those gays and lesbians who would prefer to simply assimilate into the status quo, to reexamine some of their basic values about diversity and discrimination.

### Safety Issues

Perhaps the most critical argument for giving trans issues greater visibility is the issue of personal safety. There is an established stream of planning research that looks at safety issues for vulnerable populations within urban areas. Such populations are usually identified on the basis of gender, race, ethnic status, or disability. Rising violence against these groups has encouraged state legislatures to pass special legislation designed to discourage acts of violence motivated by hatred. However, transgender is systematically left out of most of this legislation. Minnesota is the only state that includes transgendered people in anti-discrimination clauses, though a number of municipalities have also done so. Like driving while black (DWB), walking while gender variant (WWGV) is like waving a red flag in a bull ring with often fatal consequences for the trans person.

Differently gendered people are some of the most vulnerable within an urban area because of their visibility. Gender variance is sometimes assumed by the straight world as a marker for homosexuality, and nearly always is considered a flagrant transgression of the fundamental dichotomy of gender which is the underpinning of social and moral order. This violation of what has been called the apartheid of sex incites a virulent and usually violent response. Not all gender variant people are transgendered; butch lesbians and effeminate gay men are also highly visible and likely to be "bashed." However, transgendered people, especially during their transitional stage, are often more obviously gender variant. Male to female individuals are likely to be taller, have deeper voices, larger hands, and prominent adam's apples compared to most women. Female to male individuals are likely to be shorter, have smaller hands, and at least initially have higher voices than most men. These and other markers raise transgender visibility and make them one of the most vulnerable and least protected communities in social space.

There is another element that nearly all transgendered people share with lesbians and bisexual women. They have direct experience with what it means to be a woman in an urban space. Female to Male individuals (FtM, or trans men) taking male hormones are quickly "passable" as men. However their early socialization as girls makes them acutely aware of the swift retribution which would be their lot if they are discovered as a trans. Male to Female individuals (MtF, or trans women), although originally socialized as boys, quickly learn about their vulnerability within the city. Trans women who live full time as women have the same potential to be treated as targets for harassment, abuse, and street crime. Trans people who do not live full time as one or another gender are often less likely to "pass" and are thus even more visible as transgendered and may evoke an even harsher reaction.

Urban safety issues have often been catalysts for the women's movement and have stimulated a variety of activist responses including Take Back the Night marches, lobbying for more

police protection, better lighting, and more humane treatment for female victims of rape and abuse. Although the transgendered are equally vulnerable to these forms of violence, protecting this uniquely vulnerable population is rarely on anyone's political agenda.

### Planning Implications

Because transgendered populations are widely dispersed, it is not likely that there would ever be enough trans people in one city to establish an enclave similar to established gay and lesbian areas such as in The Castro (San Francisco), Boys Town (Chicago), West Hollywood (California), or Northampton (Massachusetts). However, in the past ten years many doors have opened for trans people with the internet. Virtual neighbourhoods have brought together trans people who might otherwise have never communicated with each other. Ensuring relatively easy access to the internet can thus be enormously helpful for trans people. While some transgendered people are doctors, lawyers, university professors, and even city planners, many are members of different social classes. The cost of sexual reassignment surgery alone is enough to wipe out all of someone's savings, leaving very little for the purchase of a computer and subscription to an internet server. Because of prejudice against even post-operative transsexuals, many find it difficult to find gainful employment, which further limits their ability to pay for internet services. Many other low-income urban residents face this situation, but because of their isolation trans people may have no community other than the on-line community with which to associate. Policies to ensure widespread, free access to the internet through libraries and other public facilities could be enormously beneficial to this community.

All the discrimination issues related to housing and other basic services apply to trans people. There are no legal protections for trans people. If someone does not wish to rent to a trans person, they can refuse to do so. If an employer wishes to fire a transgendered employee, they may do so with impunity. Because of their need to save for surgery, trans people often share apartments with others like themselves. In urban areas with limitations on the number of unrelated adults who can live in a single unit, trans people may be adversely affected.

Although there is a slowly increasing tolerance for more visibly identifiable gay and lesbian couples within many cities, acceptance of visible trans people is lagging far behind. If public spaces, parks, streets, and shopping areas do not feel safe to one segment of society how can that space be truly safe for other minorities?

The financial burden on trans people (primarily the cost of therapy, hormones, electrolysis, and surgery) may drive some less affluent trans people to seek positions as sex workers. People who have been so stigmatized and marginalized by society often feel that there is no other option for them than to sell their bodies for money. Areas like the Tenderloin in San Francisco often become a focal point for down and out trans folks, who often work as prostitutes. Policies intended to regulate or eradicate such sex districts may have a powerful and negative influence on these highly marginalized individuals, for whom other employment opportunities are limited.

Planners should not, however, fall into the common misconception that all trans people are sex workers. Transgendered people come in every shape and size and are drawn from nearly every segment of society. Because of their uniquely gendered position they are often highly vulnerable to the same kinds of discrimination that oppress other minorities, but because of their visibility they are likely to be like lightning

rods for bigotry — or canaries in a mine shaft. Progressive planners should make extra efforts to understand this segment of the population. Ensuring their safety will make the city a safer place for all minorities.

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## Deviant History, Defiant Heritage

By Gail Dubrow  
*March/April, 2001*

While there is no shortage of queer folk in the preservation movement, as volunteers and preservation professionals there are very few positive depictions of GLBT identity at the historic sites and buildings that are our life's work. The stigma of deviance has kept interpreters silent on the subject of sexual orientation even at historic houses where the cat has been out of the bag for a long, long time.

Though Walt Whitman and Willa Cather are widely honored as distinguished American writers, those who manage their houses presume to manage their reputations by insuring that visitors learn nothing about their same-sex relationships. The closets are even deeper at historic houses associated with national political leaders, such as Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill, despite recent scholarship that has provided compelling evidence of same-sex intimacies in these settings.

### Private Lives and Public Policy

Among liberals, sexual orientation has long been perceived as a private matter. Corollary thinking suggests that we have no business "outing" closeted gay people and that sexual orientation is largely irrelevant to the interpretation of the past or current practices (such as fitness to serve in the military). While the idea of privacy continues to be critical to protecting the right of queer folk to love whomever they choose, it is an increasingly problematic concept for public policy and practice, particularly when it is used as a rationale for the suppression of public discourse on controversial subjects.

While Georgia O'Keeffe, for example, may have preferred that her intimate relationship with Maria Chabot remain a secret, and the architect Philip Johnson lived most of his adult life as a closeted gay man, the fact of their same-sex relationships is critical to understanding how their houses in Abiquiu and New Caanan, respectively, came into being. O'Keeffe's on-again, off-again romance with Maria Chabot is critical to understanding the landmark. In the words of Paula Martinac, "the renovation of the Abiquiu house was overseen by Maria Chabot, a writer who began living with O'Keeffe in 1941 in an intimate friendship — 'a tall handsome young woman,'

as O'Keeffe described her. Maria planned all the details of the renovation, including the location of the fireplaces, and studied Hopi architecture in order to duplicate its designs." The major biographies of O'Keeffe all acknowledge Chabot's leading role in the renovation. In Johnson's case, the remarkable collection of art in his landmark Glass House was collected and curated by David Whitney, Johnson's lover of more than 30 years.

### Holding Preservation Agencies Accountable

Reluctance on the part of historic site administrators to honestly address aspects of sexual identity and orientation that diverge from societal norms parallels problems in telling the truth about slavery in the Great Houses of the South. For years slaves were inaccurately described as "servants" and the subject of slavery was whitewashed as slave quarters were neglected or demolished. Docents are often uncomfortable with controversial topics and fear visitors' responses. To address this problem, the National Trust for Historic Preservation initiated a special educational program intended to improve the interpretation of slavery at the historic houses it owns and manages. Who will make a similar case for addressing difficult subjects in an accurate and complete way at O'Keeffe's studio and Johnson's Glass House, which were recently acquired by the National Trust? The time has come for the GLBT movement to hold preservation organizations and agencies accountable for their treatment of the subject.

Same-sex relationships are often obscured, if they are dealt with at all, at the landmarks of GLBT heritage through asexual euphemisms such as "special friend" or "associate." At some places, there is an informal policy to address difficult subjects only upon request. Photographs that might raise questions, such as Willa Cather in masculine attire as her alter ego Frank, have no place on the wall of her childhood home. Taken together, these erasures surely make the stories told at these sites more palatable to the most conservative visitors. Yet they represent lost opportunities for educating the public about GLBT history and they leave queer folk and their allies profoundly uncomfortable as they beg the truth about the past. Perhaps ⇨

it is time to stop being such good guests and to instead “act up” on our visits to historic houses?

### GLBT Landmarks

Beyond the homes of notable individuals, there are sites associated with the GLBT movement that merit landmark designation. Recent scholarship has documented the history of the movement, but the need remains to link that history to historic places. Perhaps the premiere example is the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York City, which was the site of the June 28, 1969, police raid where patrons (mostly drag queens and people of color) fought back in response to police harassment. This was the first historic property to be listed on the National Register, in 1999, and to be designated as a National Historic Landmark because of its significance in gay and lesbian history.

More recently, Chicago’s Commission on Landmarks awarded preliminary landmark status to the former home of the late pioneering gay activist Henry Gerber (1882 - 1972), who in 1924 founded the Society for Human Rights, believed to be the first gay and lesbian civil rights organization in the nation. Since the Chicago City Council holds the power to grant final approval of landmark status, lobbying in the year ahead is warranted.

Public debate over most landmark nominations focuses on questions of historical significance, the integrity of the remaining physical resources, economic impacts and development alternatives. Questions of morality, however, tend to come into play when the landmarks of GLBT history are proposed for designation, with queer folks claiming we need role models and homophobes arguing against the government legitimizing deviant lifestyles. Queer history is not the only subject that can elicit this type of response. The home of Al Capone, Margaret Sanger’s birth control clinic, anarchist Emma Goldman’s apartment, and other properties have been the focus of these sorts of controversy. For that reason, preservationists need to be prepared to make the case for preserving historic places based on their historical significance and level of integrity, without making the mistake of selecting only those places that reflect our values. The election of George W. Bush casts a shadow over recent progress in adding “lavender landmarks” to the National Register of Historic Places. However, more liberal political regimes in some localities may allow for new local landmark designations during the next few years, with the added benefit of having enforcement powers, such as stays of demolition, that do not accompany National Register listing.

### Preservation, Planning and Inclusion

The term queer was once a putdown that meant deviant, but it has been reclaimed by GLBT people who now wear the badge of difference proudly and defiantly. The literature on gay and lesbian history is now abundant; however, attempts to present that history in public venues, such as in schools and at historic properties, continues to provoke intense resistance and fiery controversy. For that reason, questions of preservation and interpretation merit the attention of progressive planners who

are committed to an agenda of inclusion. Yet preservation itself has an uneasy place within planning and only a few schools assert the relevance of preservation to planning education. Even fewer have redefined preservation planning in ways that make it a democratic and inclusive sphere of activity. Progressive planners, however, have a common interest in making sure our landmarks reflect histories and points of view marginalized and suppressed by the dominant culture.

Designation of Emma Goldman’s apartment as a landmark would implicitly acknowledge anarchism as an important and enduring strand of American political thought. This goes a long way toward explaining why the National Park Service declined to pursue it as a landmark. Without landmarking Margaret Sanger’s birth control clinic, the issue of women’s right to control our bodies seems like a recent problem rather than an enduring struggle. During the (last) Bush administration, the nomination for this property was long-delayed on account of vague fears that designation of the clinic somehow would imply executive and congressional approval of abortion rights, though it finally won National Historic Landmark designation.

GLBT rights is more fragile because we haven’t been able to mark the progress made during the past 30 years at the Stonewall Inn. We need to reach back yet another 50 years to 1924, through the designation of Henry Gerber’s house, and connect the GLBT movement to a longer tradition of struggle against oppressive social and sexual norms. Likewise, the long struggle for racial equality and social justice is affirmed by the designation of the Underground Railroad and the landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement. The sense of heritage clearly nurtures contemporary political action.

Planning education hasn’t exactly embraced cultural matters within its comprehensive vision. Yet the Culture Wars contribute to the erosion of freedom in the public realm as surely as malls, privatization, and the other nemeses of progressive planning. The task that lies ahead for progressive planners of all sorts is to forge alliances that insure we support one another across lines of difference in making claims to a heritage that resonates. By saving these places and insisting that we use them to tell the truth about the past, we make space for a future in which everyone is welcome.

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# Multicultural Planning: Lessons from Papakolea

By Karen Umemoto  
*March/April, 1999*

There is a lot of talk about multiculturalism in planning. Planning programs and agencies often stress the need for planning staff to be able to work in "diverse communities." Sometimes this simply means placing planners of certain ethnic backgrounds in communities whose residents share the same ethnic heritage. While this may be effective in some cases, it doesn't guarantee good working relations between communities and planners. Nor do all planning agencies have the number of planners to "cover" all the ethnic groups that may live in a city.

It is more useful to discuss what it means to effectively work in diverse communities, since planners frequently work in communities whose ethnic backgrounds are different from their own. Here I'd like to highlight two challenges in working across cultural paradigms. I refer to these challenges as "epistemological," that is, challenges that involve different ways of knowing. Leonie Sandercock eloquently discusses this problem in her book, *Towards Cosmopolis*, and advocates for multicultural literacy. But what does such literacy entail? There are two challenges: 1) addressing culture, history and collective memory and 2) understanding the multiple meanings of language. I draw examples from a community-led planning process in the Hawaiian Homeland community of Papakolea where students and faculty in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawaii helped to facilitate a visioning process along with community residents.

## Culture, History and Collective Memory

When a planner enters a community, she or he enters into a cultural setting in a particular historic moment. Culture, history and collective memory shape the way actions and events are interpreted and how meaning is made. One's mental map and historical lens is shaped by unique personal experiences as well as factors associated with group membership such as age, ethnicity, race, gender, length of residence, membership in social networks and roles played in a neighborhood. Planners are confronted with the challenge of interacting and facilitating interaction among individuals who may see the world from distinct cultural paradigms - worldviews embedded in the history of a community and in their individual and collective memories.

In multicultural cities, planners often work in communities where the ethnic or racial background of residents is different from their own. The stronger the racial or ethnic identification within a geographic community, the more likely that the racial or ethnic background of a planner may be a factor in initial interactions. This may influence how a planner is viewed and

how people make judgements about a planner's motives or intentions.

Actions and gestures are also interpreted from a lens colored by history. For communities that have faced oppressive or discriminatory treatment, the memory of past experiences with outside institutions is often saddled with ambivalence towards those whom they identify with the dominating group. In the U.S., this tension is most often found, at least initially, when white planners enter non-white communities. With contemporary urban conflicts, these tensions also exist between racial or ethnic minorities as well.

Part of the living history in Papakolea was the memory of university staff examining Native Hawaiians as objects of research projects that were never seen by residents to produce anything of benefit to them. They felt they were "studied to death." "Collaborations" were often weighted in favor of outside "partners." Social researchers often focused on the "problems" in the community with little attention to its beauty and richness. Many residents felt labeled as a "problem population," leading to further marginalization. When students and faculty from the university initially entered the community in fall 1997 to embark on a visioning project - where people envision and plan for the future of their community - we encountered the memory of this past and the feelings of resentment towards those affiliated with the university.

It was important for us, especially before diving into the project, to learn about the history of Papakolea and its living memories and to hear the stories of the residents. It helped us identify issues that needed to be clarified, like the purpose and process of visioning and the nature of the partnership between the university and community. It was important to assure residents that the planning process was community led and ownership of the project rested in the community association. And it was important for residents to receive the product of the visioning project, which took the form of a booklet containing a summary of the process and results of the visioning activities. Not only was it important to understand the past as conveyed from the standpoint of residents, but it was important that those with whom we worked understood that the university team valued that history and their worldview. While it would be naive to think that one could know the world from someone else's shoes, it is not unrealistic to create the foundation for social learning that emphasizes multiple epistemologies (ways of knowing) in planning.

Understanding the Multiple Meanings of Language ⇨

Language carries with it the power to discourage or encourage, to repress or release, legitimize or degrade. How planners phrase what they say, how they choose their words, how they convey their message can affect the extent to which people participate in or withdraw from a planning process. Epistemology, as a lens for interpretation, mediates how messages are relayed and how they are received. Not only do problems of interpretation arise in translating between different languages, but meaning can also be distorted or misread among speakers of the same language.

Words in the English language can acquire meaning unique to a particular group. The use of some words in the planning process can occasionally trigger an unintended reaction based on differences in the meaning that they evoke. In the case of ethnic communities where both history and culture may lend unique meaning to words, planners are confronted with the task of clarifying the meaning of words or symbols to insure that participants and potential participants in the planning process share the same understanding.

In the visioning process in the community of Papakolea, the problem of multiple meanings was one of the first challenges we encountered. Among many of the elders, the term "visioning" had an almost sacred meaning. We learned after some confusion that "visioning" is a term that many of the kupuna, or elder generation, use to refer to a highly personal and private practice. It usually takes place while in a dream state and is also a form of communication with deified ancestors or *Āaumakua*. The term *hihiĀo* refers to a dream or vision and *hoĀike* refers to seeing, knowing and understanding. It is sometimes practiced in search of an answer to a question or dilemma. It is done under special circumstances and for situations of import that warrant such sacred practices. When it was announced that university students would facilitate a "visioning project" in Papakolea, a number of the kupuna called the president of the Papakolea Community Association to voice their

objection. What business would university students have conducting visioning in Papakolea? It was only after the different meanings of "visioning" were clarified that the kupuna gave their consent and university partners were educated about this use of the term.

What should have been considered (hindsight is always much more clear) was to change the name of the project to something other than "visioning" so as to avoid the unnecessary altering of the traditional meaning of the word. In other cases, there might be reasons to continue to use a word in order to clarify its meaning. "Collaboration" may be one such word. Collaboration can be interpreted in several ways. It can have a very positive connotation of working together in mutual support on equal terms towards common goals. But it can also connote working in partnership with an enemy force to sabotage another. Given the pervasive use of collaboration in the world of community building and non-profit organizations, it may make more sense to use the word and clarify its meaning in the particular situation so that people develop a shared understanding over time.

While it is impossible to know where language discrepancies may lie, knowing that discrepancies exist help us navigate the minefields of discourse. It is possible to develop a sensibility about epistemological multiplicity. A sensibility alerts us to potential language or interpretive dissonance. It helps us know what to listen for. It helps us pay attention to innuendo and connotation that can be found in narrative, in tone or in silence. And it helps us to understand the potential sources and nature of conflicts that result from epistemological differences.

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## Women Plan Toronto: Incorporating Gender Issues in Urban Planning

By Barbara Loevinger Rahder  
*July 1998*

Grassroots women can organize to change the way cities are planned and developed. Women Plan Toronto (WPT) is an example of how they can do it.

WPT is a grassroots women's organization that uses participatory methods to involve diverse women in changing urban planning processes and outcomes in Toronto.

Its purpose is to raise awareness and advocate practical alternatives for addressing women's planning concerns.

WPT is needed because of the critical urban problems faced by women. In the following, I will give a brief background on the status of women in Canada. I then outline a few of the projects WPT has organized to include women's concerns in

the planning process. I will conclude with a brief analysis of the organization's main strengths and weaknesses. Status of Women in Canada

Canadian women tend to live longer, earn less, do more unpaid housework and child care, have more difficulty finding affordable housing, and experience more violence than Canadian men.

In most age groups, women and men are found in equal numbers, but over the age of 65, 62 percent are women, and this proportion increases with increasing age.

There is a significant wage gap between men and women. In 1993, a woman working full time in Canada earned an average of 72 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The gap is smaller among professionals, but still wide.

According to a survey for the Canadian Institute of Planners, women planners earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by a male planner. \* Much of women's work is unpaid. In 1992, Canadian women spent an average of 1,482 hours on unpaid housework, including child care, compared to 831 hours for men.

Women have more difficulty finding affordable housing. According to the Canadian government, affordable housing is defined as housing costing less than thirty percent of total household income. Among homeowners, affordability is a problem for twenty percent of women, compared with twelve percent of men. It is significantly worse for renters, where 46 percent of women, compared with 27 percent of men, have problems affording shelter.

Women experience more violence, particularly in the home. One in four women in Canada have been abused or assaulted at some time in their lives, many as children, and one in eight have been abused by a male partner or spouse. An estimated thirty to forty women are murdered by their male partners each year in Ontario, accounting for seventy percent of the women murdered in the province. This rate is similar for Canada as a whole, but more than double the rate in Switzerland or Great Britain.

Anishnaabe (aboriginal) women, immigrant and racial minority women, and women with a disability face more barriers to needed services than white women in Canada.

### Women Plan Toronto

What do these facts have to do with urban planning?

Women Plan Toronto began to explore the implications of women's needs and experiences in relation to urban planning in 1985. WPT began by holding a series of informal discussions with women to find out about their experiences and ideas relating to Toronto's urban environment. These groups included employed women, full-time homemakers, homeless women, immigrant women, Anishnaabe women,

high school and university students, elderly women, women with disabilities, and single mothers. Most groups identified problems related to child care, public transit, and personal safety. All of the groups explored ideas about what the city might be like if it were more woman friendly. Suggestions ranged from calls for "equal pay for work of equal value" to a wish for more public washrooms for women.

Over the past thirteen years, WPT took up various issues and started various projects. Some of the most notable projects are:

**Safety Issues** The WISE report -- "Women in Safe Environments" -- was a ground-breaking 1989 project that documented women's concerns about safety in relation to urban planning and design practices in Toronto. Done in cooperation with the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), the WISE report spawned safety audits of the public transit system, public parks, and underground parking garages. By 1990, the City of Toronto had established a Safe City Committee under the auspices of the Department of Planning and Development, and has subsequently developed stringent regulations for the design and lighting of public spaces.

**Municipal Elections** In 1991 and in 1994, WPT conducted workshops with women's groups and produced a booklet on women's election issues. The booklet included a report card ranking the record of various candidates on women's issues, and provided examples of questions women might want to ask candidates at public meetings. This was a tremendously successful campaign. The women's report card was reprinted in Canada's largest daily newspaper, the Toronto Star.

**Housing** WPT been an active advocate for social housing and housing densification, but it has also been involved in creating housing for women. The group worked with Sistering, a women's drop-in center, and with the Older Women's Network, a senior's advocacy group, to build social housing for older low-income women.

**Resisting Mega-Projects** When Toronto was competing to host the 1996 Olympic Games, WPT produced an intervenor report entitled "How Women Lose at the Games." The report is currently being re-circulated as Toronto is bidding again for the Games in 2008. The report documents the social and economic costs and risks to local women, as well as the lack of benefits for them, associated with hosting the Olympic Games. Another group, Bread Not Circuses, spearheads the opposition to the Games in Toronto, and produced a similar intervenor report documenting the social and economic costs for poor people in general. The International Olympic Committee decided to hold the Games in Atlanta in 1996, but we don't yet know about the Games for 2008.

**Resisting the Megacity** Another recent project focused on the municipal elections for the new megacity of Toronto, which is an amalgamation of the six former cities of Toronto, York, East York, North York, Scarborough, and ⇨

Etobicoke. WPT worked with other groups, first to resist amalgamation, and then to develop a pamphlet highlighting gender-related issues such as why women must vote and how to ask questions about issues that affect you. The pamphlet highlights proposed changes in areas such as income support, social and community services, housing, safety, transportation, health, education, and human rights. It provides basic information about the implications of amalgamation under each category, and then lists practical questions women can ask their local candidates, such as what will you do to protect vulnerable people, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities?

### The WPT Organization

A gendered perspective on urban issues is central to the group's work, and a key characteristic of WPT's organizational structure, which is composed of voluntary committees called "circles." The term circle suggests that there is no hierarchy among participants -- everyone who attends a meeting is allowed to participate in decisionmaking -- though the more one participates, the more comfortable, knowledgeable, and potentially influential she might be in the group.

The structure of the organization, then, fluctuates with its membership, depending on who is involved, what their interests are, and what issues are on the public agenda (or put on the public agenda by WPT). There is one part-time staff member, and a core of about seven or eight volunteers who are usually very active in the circles and on various projects. Another fifty women or so are less active members, and up to another 300 individuals and organizations are part of a broader network which is kept informed, and sometimes mobilized, around important issues and events.

The main strengths of WPT are also its main weaknesses. The informality and lack of hierarchy gives volunteers a great deal of freedom to work on the issues that are of most concern to them, but can also be confusing to new

members who don't necessarily know where or how to fit in. Similarly, the small core of active volunteers who do the bulk of the work provides continuity and an organizational memory, but without turnover in the core, this group can burn out. WPT appears to shrink and expand, then, according to the energies of those in the core. Some members of WPT also worry that they have become so successful as the voice of women that they are now the token women's group that gets consulted by planners who are more interested in appearing to be politically correct, than in actually addressing women's concerns.

Women Plan Toronto has had a palpable impact on urban planning in Toronto. For more than a decade the organization has worked hard to focus attention on women's needs in the city, to critique the inequities of mainstream planning, and to develop alternative visions of what planning and urban life might be like if our diverse needs were taken into account. The women whose efforts sustain the organization pay a price for their involvement. Their work is unpaid and its value often unrecognized. But their hard work has begun to change the way planners and decision makers address issues critical to women.

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## Lifting Women's Voices: The Roofless Women's Action Research Mobilization and Participatory Action Research

**By Marie Kennedy**  
*July, 1998*

How can progressive planners work more effectively with low-income women to address urgent issues they face, such as the increasing risk and conditions of homelessness? What alternative models of needs analysis and policy planning lend themselves to increasing the power of those most affected?

The experiences of the Roofless Women's Action Research

Mobilization in Massachusetts (R-WARM) offer lessons to planners, academics and researchers who are looking for some answers. This project is an example of participatory action research, an underutilized approach that responds to the shortcomings of more traditional research and education that do little to change conditions such as homelessness.

### Adding Participation and Action to Research

When a group of women planners and service providers in the Boston area wanted to investigate the conditions of homeless women in Massachusetts, they started out to design a standard social science investigation. They had already designed a survey which they intended to administer to a sample of homeless women, when they were challenged to be more participatory by two formerly homeless women in the group. Pointing out the sensitive nature of the desired information, these women soon convinced all involved that the results would be better if the project were undertaken by women who had experienced homelessness themselves.

Action to influence public policy and service delivery as it affected homeless women had always been a goal of the project and as the participatory focus of the project developed it was recognized that the advocacy effort would also be more effective if led by women who had experienced homelessness. Enhancing the leadership capabilities of homeless and formerly homeless women became a major goal of the project.

To enhance the goal of leadership development, formerly homeless women were given the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS), where I teach, at the University of Massachusetts/ Boston. In the Fall of 1994, six formerly homeless women, chosen on the basis of an interview process, enrolled in CPCS and became the core researchers of R-WARM. They have earned academic credits for some of the project work. Grant funds have provided each with free tuition and fees, a stipend, and reimbursement for child care and transportation. I have provided coordination, technical advice and teaching, along with Lynn Peterson of the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development and Nancy Bristel, then with the City of Boston Emergency Shelter Commission. A steering committee was formed to advise the project, comprised half of formerly homeless women and half of representatives of a variety of groups concerned with homelessness, women, poverty, and domestic violence.

The research project has produced comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data about women's homelessness in Massachusetts. The formerly homeless researchers designed a broad-ranging survey which they administered to 126 currently homeless women. Informational sessions were held in shelters and drop-in centers throughout the state and the formerly homeless R-WARM researchers conducted all of the interviews. Data from the survey was supplemented with information gathered from four focus groups with formerly homeless women. Women respondents came from urban, suburban, and rural communities in various areas of the state. Included were women of different ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and single women as well as women with children.

R-WARM released a report of findings and policy recommendations linked to pending legislation in a well-attended

event at the Massachusetts State House a year ago. We are now following up with more individualized lobbying efforts and working with various ongoing advocacy groups to incorporate R-WARM findings in their work. The researchers prepared several pamphlets addressing specific areas of concern to the homeless women they interviewed: the civil rights of homeless women; recovering from domestic violence while homeless; parenting issues while homeless; and the particular situation of "single" homeless women, many of whom are trying to regain custody of minor children. Other formerly homeless women have joined Roofless Women (the shortened name by which the transformed advocacy organization is now known) and the group is distributing the pamphlets and doing outreach in shelters and drop-in centers across the state. They are also doing legislative advocacy and work with agencies to improve their service delivery.

All of us involved in R-WARM learned a great deal, not only about the causes and solutions to women's homelessness, but also about the strengths and challenges of participatory action research. It was constantly challenging for professionals involved in the project to make their technical expertise and broader perspective on the political/economic/social roots of homelessness available to the core group while making sure that ultimate power for directing the project rested with the formerly homeless women.

Another important challenge for us professionals was to give up rigid notions of how things "should be done" in order to maximize the strengths of the participatory research process. For example, standard social science research dictates that a survey should be administered to each respondent in exactly the same way and that the interviewer should not enter into discussion with the respondent, running the risk of distorting responses. However, dialogue is a critical element of participatory research and when the investigator has experienced the problem being investigated, dialogue is a means of discovering the shared nature of a problem and the common ground for action. Dialogue is the basis for eliciting unusually forthright responses, and more detailed and possibly more truthful answers to interview questions. And this is one of the outstanding strengths of this approach to needs assessment.

Another strength was in the formulation of the survey questions themselves. Critical questions were posed that probably wouldn't have been thought of by an outside professional, and the formerly homeless women also provided a "sensitivity screen" for the wording and ordering of questions.

To date, the most stunning strength of the project has been the growth in self-confidence and skills of the R-WARM researchers themselves. They have become a strong support group. Each of them has become an effective advocate for all roofless women. They have spoken out in many public forums: a legislative breakfast organized around housing issues in Boston, the United Nations Habitat Conference in Istanbul, local colleges and conferences, the Planners ⇨

Network conference in Brooklyn, the Highlander Center workshop on participatory research in Tennessee, and national homelessness conferences in Washington, D.C. and Texas. Three of the R-WARM researchers have graduated, each winning one of the highest awards granted by the College of Public and Community Service, and two are continuing in graduate school. The others are still pursuing their degrees. Several of the researchers have gained good jobs and all serve on advisory committees and agency boards as a result of their connection to R-WARM.

Aspects of the R-WARM project have become models for other efforts. Faculty at Arizona State are attempting to replicate the project and the project is being featured in the Grassroots Guide to Participatory Research being prepared by the University of Tennessee. This year, R-WARM won the Taking A Stand award from the Boston Women's Fund and the Opening Doors award from the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development. With the design help of R-WARM researchers, and modeled on the leadership development goals of R-WARM, Project Hope, the Women's Institute, and the College of Public and Community Service have now established a new program, Women in Community Development, through which another cohort of low-income women are earning college degrees and becoming leading advocates for other low-income women.

#### Participatory Action Research: A Progressive Approach

Participatory action research is particularly suited to "lifting all the voices." It's a process that supports the voices from the margins in speaking, analyzing, building alliances, and taking action. Participatory action research puts those most affected by the problems being researched in the driver's seat. One group in our society that continues to be marginalized in planning decisions is women, especially low-income women and women of color.

Participatory action research is particularly appropriate for drawing women into effective participation in policy debates and planning decisions that impact their lives and the lives of their families and communities. The way of knowing that women have historically relied on and which was particularly recognized and developed in the support and consciousness-raising groups of the 1960's and 1970's, is essential to participatory research theory. As Peter Park wrote in *Voices of Change*:

"In living with other human beings we come to know them in an interactive sense. This knowledge does not derive from analysis of data about other human beings but from sharing a life-world together -- speaking with one another and exchanging actions against the background of common experience, tradition, history, and culture."

Interactive knowledge makes human community possible. Without a common stock of knowledge of this kind, it is not possible to form social solidarity capable of mutual support and common action.

Participatory research doesn't turn its back on the type of knowledge that many planning projects rely on solely -- quantitative data responding to questions generated by "experts". However, it insists that the questions be posed by those most affected by the issues being researched and that transformative action result from the research.

Central to participatory research is critical investigation by those most affected into the problems they face and in light of what they wish to achieve. Participatory research is concerned with uncovering the structural causes of social conditions and, through rational discussion and reflection, leads to questions of what is right for the common good. Realization that problems derive from human action lead people to understand that people can also change the way things are. Critique turns into action. Through struggle, people acquire more knowledge, leading to further action, in the process of what Paulo Freire calls "conscientization."

We can evaluate any planning process by finding out whether it was successful in "lifting all the voices", in bringing previously marginalized voices into the discussion, in organizing the unorganized to participate. How many people moved from being objects of planning to being subjects in the process? How successful were we as planners in framing a process that is comfortable and encouraging for people to participate, particularly those not used to speaking in public and not facile at articulating their concerns and visions? How culturally sensitive were we to different forms of expression and self-organization? Were we able to successfully confront dynamics of racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, ageism, classism, or other exclusionary patterns of behavior in our society? What practical accommodations did we make to reduce the barriers to participation for groups that have been left out -- child care for single mothers, translation for non-English-speaking folks, meeting times that accommodate work schedules, etc.? Overall, how successful were we at nurturing well-informed, genuinely democratic politics and discourse, dialogue about options and the "values" by which those options for policy and design may be evaluated?

Evaluated against these criteria, the Roofless Women's Action Research Mobilization, through its use of participatory action research, would get high marks.

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# Community Planning



Photo By Ann Forsuth

Neighborhood grocery sales in Southern California.

## Bad Meat and Brown Bananas: Building a Legacy of Health by Confronting Health Disparities Around Food

By David C. Sloane For the African Americans Building a Legacy of Health Coalition /REACH 2010 Project

*Winter, 2004*

What do planners have to do with food? Since 1999, community residents, community organizations and researchers in planning and health have been working to understand food security in the Los Angeles area and to increase options for healthier eating in low-income communities of color. This participatory partnership is using planning and organizing techniques to build capacity among community members to make healthier environments for all.

In 1999, a Los Angeles health advocacy organization, the Community Health Councils, Inc. (CHC), was awarded a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a plan to address health disparities in cardiovascular disease and diabetes among African Americans in South Los Angeles. The grant was part of a nationwide CDC demonstration program, REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health), focusing on a single racial or ethnic group and only on issues related to the selected illnesses. The Community Health Councils spent a year in conversations with a broad coalition of African American community and social service organizations as well as community residents. African Americans Building a Legacy of Health (AABLH) ended up with a plan that targeted the communities of North Long Beach, Inglewood and portions of South Los Angeles for three strategic directions: recreating community norms through community education; supporting policy and institutional change through community empowerment; and (the one that this article focuses on) creating economic parity through community development. The AABLH believed that only through a comprehensive approach of education, empowerment and development could African Americans hope to diminish the insidious impacts of cardiovascular disease and diabetes on their community.

In 2000, the Community Health Councils was chosen to be one of roughly a dozen projects nationwide to receive four-year funding to implement its plan. The plan addresses not only traditional public health activities such as provider symposiums, worksite wellness programs, support groups and community wellness events, but it also assesses the nutritional resource environment with a view to ↗

creating a better quality-of-life. This focus is part of a growing initiative, as public health researchers have turned to urban planners for help with a growing number of health concerns, most prominently obesity, clearly related to the urban environment.

This project has relied on a close collaboration between health and planning researchers and community residents and organizations. Using a community-based participatory research model, the AABLH has engaged scholars from USC and UCLA to evaluate and consult with the project. The methods of the project have been to educate community residents to participate fully in the development of all instruments, procedures, implementation plans, data analysis and presentation of all findings.

We focused on the nutritional resource environment after community residents had articulated their frustration over a lack of access to healthy foods in their communities. The coalition chose to investigate the current system by performing an inventory of existing nutritional services, specifically markets and restaurants, and then use that assessment to challenge gaps in the existing system. Community organizations such as churches and social service groups were subsidized to conduct inventories in markets (and later restaurants) in their communities. The inventory was structured to investigate the availability of healthy food in local stores, and also the selections, the freshness and quality and the general level of service.

Community members inventoried 261 stores in South Los Angeles, Inglewood and North Long Beach (the "target" area), which had, on average, a 47 percent African American population and median household income of \$29,237. These findings were compared to inventories of sixty-nine stores in West Los Angeles neighborhoods (the "contrast" area), which had an 8 percent African American population and a median household income of \$45,917. The stores in the contrast area were inventoried by USC planning students. These inventories were then supplemented with an in-depth survey of seventy-one stores in the two comparison areas that looked more closely at the specific services offered.

The differences were dramatic. Only 2 percent of the stores in the poorer neighborhoods offered whole-grain pasta compared to 31 percent in the contrast area. Just 70 percent of the target stores offered fresh fruit or vegetables, compared to 94 percent of the

West L.A. stores. The target area stores offered half the selection of produce as those in the contrast area—thirteen fruits and twenty-one vegetables compared to twenty-six fruits and thirty-eight vegetables. Furthermore, the quality of fruits and vegetables was significantly lower in the target area stores. Overall, stores in the target area were significantly less likely to offer fruits and vegetables, whole wheat pasta, nonfat milk or low-fat snacks. Contrast stores were more likely to be supermarkets (with more diverse offerings), to be cleaner and to provide better service.

These findings should suggest to community and economic development planners how hard it is for individuals in low-income neighborhoods to live a healthy life. The disparities in health conditions reflect the inequities in the nutritional resource environments. Health care advocates and educators can develop successful interventions that teach individuals the importance of eating five fruits and vegetables a day, but if they can't buy them, or don't want to buy brown bananas, society loses, city health services are burdened and communities are damaged.

The project is currently completing analysis of the restaurant results and moving to challenge the gaps in the market offerings. Working with other Southern California groups advocating for more equitable and sustainable food security systems, the AABLH coalition hopes to change the nutritional resource environment, providing all residents with a better chance to live a healthy life. In addition, through its innovative methodology, it is enhancing community capacity to assess other aspects of the economic environment, challenge simplistic profiles of community problems and engage researchers and officials in a dialogue about improving community life. In other words, creating a more equitable environment where residents are empowered to guide policies and programs in their communities. That sounds like planning to me.

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## Transformative Community Planning: Empowerment Through Community Development

By Marie Kennedy  
May 1996

What is community development?

I see real community development as combining material development with the development of people. Real development, as

I understand it, necessarily involves increasing a community's capacity for taking control of its own development—building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities, as well as concrete skills, so that development projects and plan-

ning processes can be replicated by community members in the future. A good planning project should leave a community not just with more immediate "products" -- e.g., housing -- but also with an increased capacity to meet future needs.

Effective community development planning takes a comprehensive approach to meeting community needs -- an approach that recognizes the interrelationship of economic, physical and social development. Community development is linked to empowerment and to valuing diversity of cultures. This is true whether you are talking about planning in materially underdeveloped communities in the United States or in the so-called developing world.

Manning Marable, an African-American scholar and commentator, in his 1992 book, *Crisis of Color and Democracy*, offers a concise definition of empowerment, one that I think is particularly apt for planners:

Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one's interests, and to develop a strategy to achieve those interests. It's the ability to create a plan or program to change one's reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a "thing", it's a process. In other words, you shouldn't say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests.

And, Kari Polanyi Levitt, an economist working in the Caribbean, in a lecture a couple of years ago to the Association of Caribbean Economists, took on selfishness and greed typical of what she calls the "market magic" paradigm, arguing that: Any meaningful notion of "sustainable development" must begin with the recognition that the diversity of cultures which nourish human creativity is as precious an inheritance as the diversity of plant and animal life.

She goes on to say, Development cannot be imposed from without. It is a creative social process and its central nervous system, the matrix which nourishes it, is located in the cultural sphere. Development is ultimately not a matter of money or physical capital, or foreign exchange, but of the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity, to free up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective wisdom.

### Role of the planner

Unfortunately, in most places, public policy and planning practice don't reflect this understanding of community development. And, in my view, that's why we have so little of it, especially in materially underdeveloped communities.

Most of my experience has been on the community level and it's at this level that you will find most of the practitioners who are trying to work in a transformative way. However, what often blocks success for transformative planners at the community level are decisions taken by planners at the city, state, national or even international level. For transformative planning to work on the community level, planners at all levels, who are fram-

ing public problem definitions and policies, writing legislation, designing governmental programs, prioritizing funding targets for private foundations and governmental agencies, or preparing requests for proposals, have to share an understanding of what constitutes community development.

### Measuring success

Measuring success primarily, or even exclusively, by the numbers -- the number of houses built or the number of clients served or the number of jobs created, or even the number of people whose income has risen above the poverty level, the increased number of high school graduates, the number of rivers cleaned up -- describes important outcomes, but outcomes insufficient for community development in the sense that I have defined it. If we measure success by the numbers alone, no matter how laudable our long range goals, we're going to plan, research, and design and lend our support to policies and programs that we think are going to be successful in terms of those numbers. Rational, right? Circular, too. If we don't include less measurable goals (or at least presently less measured goals) in our criteria for success -- goals that have to do with empowerment as Marable defines it -- we're likely to meet our goals while our communities are increasingly underdeveloped.

If, on the other hand, we have a different version of what constitutes success:

- that does include products of development, but which rests primarily on power and control being increasingly vested in community members;
- that is measured by the number of people who have, in the planning process, moved from being an object of planning to being a subject;
- that is measured in terms of increasing numbers of confident, competent, cooperative and purposeful community members;
- that is measured in terms of the ability of people involved in the planning process to replicate their achievements in other situations;
- that is measured in terms of movement towards realizing values of equity and inclusion;

then, we're going to have very different sorts of policies, programs and practices. And, our roles as planners will also be very different.

Transformative planning joins participatory action research in the assumption that possession of knowledge is the critical basis of power and control. There's a tension built in here for the transformative planner to work with. A central dilemma for the transformative planner is the task of finding a balance between assuming that oppressed people fully understand their own oppression and the planner does not, or conversely, that the planner fully understands the truth (or has the research and analytical tools to get at the truth) about people's oppression and that the people do not.

The process of achieving this balance isn't mystical, but it does require an ongoing process of evaluation of the actual cir- ⇨

cumstances in each community planning project undertaken. And it requires a real commitment to community development as I outlined at the beginning of this paper.

A successful transformative planner must carefully listen and respect what people know; help people acknowledge what they already know; and help them back up this "common sense" and put it in a form that communicates convincingly to others. The planner's role in this type of process is critical, but so is the role of the indigenous population—their "common sense" about the situation and their ability to mobilize for change.

Successful transformative planning also means planners who are willing to acknowledge that into each planning situation we bring with us our own attitudes and biases—biases that flow from our own class background and location, our own gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so forth. And, along with acknowledging the baggage we bring with us, we must recognize that our preferences for certain planning and development outcomes are typically based, at least in part, on these biases and that they're not always (or even often) about being "right." It's not about the "right way"—our preferences are just that, they're our preferences.

Successful transformative planning means wielding our planning tools in a way that frames real alternatives; that elaborates the trade-offs in making one or another choice—that puts real control in people's hands. It does not mean making everybody a professional planner—a possessor of the particular set of skills that planners have developed through professional education and practice. It does mean using our skills so that

people can make informed decisions for themselves. And it means including in the trade-offs the consequences of different decisions in terms of overarching community values. It means challenging people on exclusionary, narrow-minded thinking; having enough respect for people to challenge them. It means framing alternatives that include organizing strategies, political strategies, education strategies, as well as the more traditional planning outcomes—programs, buildings, businesses and so forth.

Successful transformative planning means extending our definition of the planning process to include a capacity building and education/outreach phase on the front end and an evaluation period on the back end. And, it means fighting for funding for this extended process.

In short, it means working with communities in a way that's sensitive, supportive, inquiring and carefully analytical, challenging but not directive or patronizing. Although this may sound like "mom and apple pie," it's all too rare in practice.

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Marie Kennedy teaches community planning at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. This paper was presented to the Planners Network 1996 Conference in Brooklyn, NY., and in various versions in lectures at Cornell University (September 1993), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (May 1993), and the Grupo Para el Desarrollo Integral de la Capital, Havana, Cuba (July 1992).

## Town/Gown Conflicts: Campus/Community Partnerships in the 90's

**By Kenneth M. Reardon and Thomas P. Shields**  
*March, 1996*

Structural changes in the U.S. economy caused by ongoing technological innovation, communication and transportation improvements, integration of capital markets and increased international competition have fostered great uncertainty regarding the future of our economy. Nowhere are the impacts of these changes more dramatic than in the residential neighborhoods of our nation's older central cities.

The challenges of the global restructuring have combined with the long-standing problems of suburban competition, manufacturing decline, rising poverty, municipal overburden, and middle-class flight to undermine the stability of our cities' older residential neighborhoods. Citizen leaders and municipal officials from cities such as Bridgeport, Camden, Benton Harbor, East St. Louis, Detroit, and South Central Los

Angeles are becoming increasingly concerned about the future viability of their communities. This crisis of confidence has led to new criticism of the urban planning profession for its failure to develop policies, programs and plans to stabilize and revitalize our most distressed neighborhoods.

The failure of university-trained planners to provide workable solutions to the problems confronting our declining inner city neighborhoods has generated new criticism of our nation's colleges and universities; they are coming under increasing public scrutiny for pursuing research that does not appear to address society's most pressing environmental, economic and social problems and for being inattentive to the educational needs of today's undergraduate students. The efforts of California's Governor Pete Wilson and New York's Governor

George Pataki to gain greater control over their state university systems, along with proposed cutbacks in Federal funding for university-based Cooperative Education Services, reveal the depth of the public's disenchantment with higher education.

These criticisms of our nation's colleges and universities threaten to undermine the basic social compact that has existed between higher education and civil society in the Post-Sputnik era. Throughout the Post World War II period, the state, supplemented by private and corporate philanthropy, supported the research, education and service missions of the university while allowing faculty and administrators to determine educational policies and programs with little accountability. Colleges and universities, in return, produced basic and applied research and graduates who were capable of maintaining U.S. economic, political and military power in the highly polarized context of the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which marks the end of the Cold War, has denied higher education its former *raison d'être*.

Higher education must re-focus its research and instructional resources on a new social objective if it is to re-establish its basic social compact with civil society. Many universities are seeking to do so, in part by encouraging faculty to develop service-learning projects that offer students opportunities to acquire critical knowledge and skills while completing research and service projects for community-based organizations serving low-income neighborhoods. This recent movement for university-based service-learning gained important momentum in the mid-1980s when the presidents of one hundred of the nation's most prestigious public and private colleges and universities formed a group, called the Campus Compact, to promote such activities. Students involved in these initiatives added their organizational resources to this campaign for socially-responsible education by forming a similar advocacy group called the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL).

These two organizations were instrumental in working with the Clinton Administration to secure funding for several new Federal programs supporting service-learning activities involving universities and marginalized communities. Among these were the National Community Service Corporation's AmeriCorps Program; the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Outreach Partnership Center, Joint Community Development and Urban Renaissance Programs; and the Department of Education's Urban Service Programs. Since 1992, thousands of university students have earned academic credit in recognition of learning they achieved as community researchers and service providers through Federally-funded, university-based service-learning programs.

While many students, faculty and administrators have joined with representatives of the Clinton Administration and members of the press to applaud these efforts, many experienced community activists remain skeptical of this latest wave of

university/community partnerships. Many colleges and universities were deeply involved in efforts to support the voter registration campaigns of SNCC, CORE, SCLC and the Freedom Democratic Party throughout the South in the mid-1960s. University students engaged in a wide range of direct service activities in low-income urban communities through various programs funded by the Equal Opportunity Act in the late 1960s and early 1970s. College students were encouraged to participate in student volunteer activities in the 1970s through the Federally-funded Office of Student Volunteer Programs and the University Year for Action.

Campus support for off-campus service projects in low-income urban communities appeared to wane in the 1980s as economic uncertainty led administrators to eliminate many non-teaching programs. The current groundswell of campus interest in the plight of the nation's poorest communities is viewed by many community activists as just the latest in a series of university-initiated community service efforts. Neighborhood leaders representing financially-strapped, community-based organizations are hesitant to invest too much human capital in building relationships with nearby campuses when they appear to be such fickle partners.

Neighborhood leaders are also concerned about the nature of the "partnerships" that colleges and universities wish to establish with community-based organizations. In the past, university faculty and administrators have secured funding for community research and service activities in low-income neighborhoods close to their campuses. These grants frequently provided campus personnel with salaries, benefits and expenses while producing few, if any, tangible benefits for the residents of these communities. Quoting one East St. Louis community leader, "Show me one thing in this town that was produced through the activities of a university-funded researcher." These experiences have led many long-time community activists to view university faculty as intellectual carpet-baggers who use the problems confronting distressed communities to justify research contracts that offer little to the communities being studied. These leaders are reluctant, in light of these experiences, to become involved in the latest round of Federally-funded university/community partnerships.

Finally, community leaders experience the effects of university policies and programs on a variety of levels. In many towns and cities where the university is one of the major employers and landlords, campus policies and programs have a dramatic effect on the residents of nearby low-income communities. When a college builds additional residence halls, the demand for off-campus housing can plummet, de-stabilizing residential and commercial real estate markets. When a university purchases single-family homes to acquire land needed for additional stadium parking or a storm-water retention facility, long-time residents can be displaced, creating bitter feelings towards the campus. When a university constructs a major new research center without providing an entrance on the community side of the facility, residents get a clear message that their pres- ⇨

ence is not welcome on campus. When a university's expansion plans necessitate the relocation of a historic public market, local residents and businesses question the sensitivity of campus administrators.

Colleges and universities seeking to build long-term partnerships with community-based organizations serving nearby low-income neighborhoods must, in light of these historical problems, adopt a collaborative approach that seeks to build the organizing, planning and development capacity of these groups. Such an approach should be characterized by strong commitments to the following principles of good practice in university/community partnerships.

1. Recognizing the structural nature of the economic and political problems facing our nation's poorest urban communities, campus administrators should only initiate university/community partnerships to which they are willing to make long-term financial and organizational commitments.

2. Understanding the symbolic, economic and political importance of institutional commitment, campus administrators should only seek outside funds for university/community partnership programs they are already supporting with internal university funds.

3. Appreciating the truly reciprocal nature of the most successful service-learning programs, campus administrators should create joint policy-making boards with equal representation from the campus and the community to provide leadership to such efforts.

4. Acknowledging the real costs incurred by community collaborators involved in partnership activities, campus administrators should make a sustained effort to assist these organizations in covering these costs.

5. Recognizing the importance given to faculty participation in university programs, campus administrators should seek to appoint a senior faculty member to direct these projects.

6. Seeking to encourage broad-based faculty participation in these projects, campus administrators should work to change promotion and tenure guidelines that recognize and reward excellence in public service education and action.

7. Understanding the inherent power and resource imbalance that exists between large educational institutions and their community partners, campus administrators should make organizational capacity-building the primary goal of these relationships.

8. Acknowledging the central importance of organizational capacity-building in most university/community partnerships, campus administrators should adopt a participatory action research approach to all community planning and development activities to promote social learning for all participants.

9. Understanding the pessimism that many low-income families feel regarding the possibilities for positive change, campus administrators should emphasize the importance of program implementation and execution. Participating students and faculty must focus on devising workable solutions to important community problems and raising the funds needed to carry out such programs.

10. Recognizing the importance of organizational capacity-building to any university/community partnership, campus administrators should develop programs that offer classes, training programs and mentoring opportunities to community leaders as well as students.

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## Indigenous Planning At Work

By Teresa Córdova  
November 1996

For some, Santa Fe, New Mexico conjures up images of chic Southwestern art, architecture, and lifestyle. Glimpses of exotic natives await the curious tourist who travels long distances to experience Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque's Old Town. But to the indigenous populations, both Native American and Chicano, who have inhabited the region for centuries, the continuous commodification of their culture signals the loss of their resources and the erosion of their communities. Santa Fe, according to Alina Bokde and Loretta

Trujillo, student members of the Resource Center for Raza Planning (RCRP), is experiencing a "devastating impact from tourism and growth" through the negative impacts of gentrification.

Trujillo, a native of Santa Fe, whose family originates in Tierra Amarilla, helped form RCRP as a mechanism to confront these and other development issues facing New Mexico. Native New Mexicans have a deeply rooted connection to

their history and the land that represents that history. For Loretta, the Resource Center is a vehicle to align with others who share her concerns and are interested in equipping themselves with the analyses and skills to better engage in the shaping of their region.

The Resource Center formed during a 1996 Spring Semester class I taught in the Community and Regional Planning Program (CRP) at the University of New Mexico. The course, "Planning Issues in Chicano Communities," covered historical land use patterns, the role of colonization in shaping the region, and contemporary development issues. Planning processes and techniques were presented as valuable tools for dealing with major development issues such as appropriate economic development strategies, water rights and policies, infrastructure equitability, and land use patterns. Students had the opportunity to meet a range of planners including the Bernalillo County Director of Planning and Zoning and grassroots planners from the Tonantzin Land Institute and the SouthWest Organizing Project.

Each student was required to write a paper on a planning issue facing Raza communities in New Mexico. A team approach was used in the research, writing and editing of the papers. The results were compiled in their first publication, *Planning Issues in Raza Communities*. The article by Bokde and Trujillo is entitled, "Tourism in Santa Fe: Economic and Social Penetration Upon the Community." Paula Garcia, CRP graduate student and HUD Fellow, also wrote about her homeland in "Community Development Initiatives in Mora." Mora, located in the northern mountains, is threatened by gentrification. Garcia documents current local initiatives to articulate "a vision for the future of Mora County that is sustainable economically, ecologically, and culturally." She analyzes historical dynamics, current socioeconomic conditions, contemporary development concerns, and economic development policy efforts of community organizations. She concludes with a series of recommendations for implementing this vision.

Besides the papers on Northern New Mexico, several students focused their research on Atrisco, which is in the South Valley, adjacent to Albuquerque. Contention over Atrisco's future epitomizes development debates related to the growth and sprawl of Albuquerque. Students in several papers documented the historical development of Atrisco and traditional land uses; the origins of the Atrisco Land Grant; the erosion of the communal lands in that grant by Westland Corporation; the battle over the building of a road through sacred space, the Petroglyph National Monument; the questionable wisdom of extensive development in spite of evidence that suggests trouble for the water table, soil erosion and other ecological implications; city policies for checkerboard annexation of parts of the South Valley; and alternative suggestions for urban design. Several members of the group are interested in maintaining agriculture in the South Valley and are working on plans to promote its economic and ecological feasibility. Other papers covered topics of community participation, resistance to development, and

public art.

Over the summer, the group formulated its mission statement:

"RCRP is an organization of university and community-based research activists who promote integration between higher education and our traditional communities, through the application of planning processes and techniques. RCRP conceives planning as multi-disciplinary, intergenerational, directly responsive to community needs and developed through ongoing, long term relationships. We seek to maintain the sustainability and survivability of our traditional communities that are threatened by colonization. We begin by asking: Who benefits and who pays from social and planning policies? . . . We contribute to policy debates and decisions through analysis and recommendations for alternative strategies."

On October 3, the group held its inaugural event, at which time it provided copies of its first publication, announced its upcoming research project on adjudication of water rights, announced its video project on Atrisco and Westside Development, and initiated its fall lecture series on water. RCRP is adding members, many of whom are Raza graduate students in Community and Regional Planning. The Community and Regional Planning Faculty at UNM have been immensely supportive and other CRP graduate students are asking how they can get involved. The Resource Center works closely with grassroots organizers and is developing its agenda through direct interaction with community members. RCRP will be looking to expand its resource base as it increases its number of publications. The research project, conducted with the Atrisco Land Rights Council, will be a several month project involving the documentation of continuous water use by Atrisqueos as a way to preserve water rights and sustainable agriculture. Several students are obtaining training in video production both for the research project and for the documentation of Westside and South Valley development issues. Next semester, the primary topic for the lecture series will be alternative economic development strategies, which is particularly important given city and state policies that promote giveaways as a means of industrial recruitment. Finally, the group intends to get their hands dirty when they journey to Southern Colorado next spring to help restore a penitente church which was destroyed by vandals. On an ongoing basis, RCRP will collect materials and information related to development issues facing Raza Communities.

The ambitiousness of RCRP members is matched by their long term commitment based on a history of resistance and connectedness to this part of Aztlán. For many Raza students at UNM, Planning is providing a set of tools to tackle some very difficult and serious development issues.

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Teresa Córdova is a PN Steering Committee member.

# Sustainability, Environment &

Photo by Ann Forsyth



Outdoor activities at a park in Orange County, Southern California.

## Urban Planning For Active Living: Who Benefits?

By Kristin Day

*Fall, 2003*

The US population is heavier than ever, with obesity and overweight reaching alarming levels. Inadequate physical activity explains at least part of this trend. As Thomas Halton explains elsewhere (see “Obesity Epidemic” in this issue), 22 percent of US adults today do not participate in regular leisure-time physical activity. The health implications of this are grave, though insufficient physical activity does not affect all groups equally.

According to Pratt, Maceral and Blanton (see “Resources for Active Living” in this issue), low-income communities and some communities of color are especially at-risk. Among high school students, for example, participation in vigorous physical activity is lower among black (54%) and Hispanic (60%) students than among white students (67%). Black and Hispanic adults are also more likely to be inactive than are white adults. People with lower family incomes and lower levels of education are more likely to get too little physical activity. In fact, nearly half of those individuals with less than a high school education report no regular leisure-time physical activity; by comparison, less than 20 percent of college graduates are similarly inactive. US patterns of physical activity are similar to those in other developed countries.

These numbers may not tell the whole story, however. National health surveys, such as the BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System), emphasize traditional “leisure-time” physical activity—reflecting a class bias that assumes physical activity to be an aspect of leisure or recreation, rather than a product of manual work or a function of everyday life, e.g., walking or bicycling for transportation.

So while measurement may be one problem, it is broader than this. Though physical activity and overweight/obesity have

not been systematically studied for diverse populations, low-income groups and some communities of color clearly face additional jeopardy for health problems that are tied to low levels of physical activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control, for example, one in two Latino children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes during their lifetimes, due largely to high obesity rates among Latinos.

The last decade has seen growing interest among planners and public health professionals in how the physical environment supports or impedes physical activity. Prompted by researchers, advocacy groups and public health institutions, the resultant “active living” agenda blames contemporary US urban design for limiting our opportunities to walk, bicycle and conduct physical activity as part of our everyday lives. Until now this agenda has been developed largely in the context of middle-class, suburban communities, where large blocks, separated land uses, low densities and absent sidewalks make it nearly impossible to walk or bicycle to school, shopping or jobs. These features do not, however, characterize the neighborhoods where many low-income and black and Hispanic residents dwell. The pressing need to increase physical activity among these communities suggests that a refocusing of the active living agenda is necessary to ensure that its considerable energies and resources directly benefit these groups.

To help the active living agenda assess its focus, I offer three questions for consideration and further research: 1) is the physical environment the problem in low-income communities and communities of color?; 2) are we looking at the right aspects of the physical environment?; and 3) how can we understand physical activity and active living from the perspectives of low-income communities and communities of color?

#### **Is the physical environment the problem?**

The active living agenda recognizes that obesity results from many factors, including nutrition and lifestyle as well as a poorly designed physical environment. Active living advocates argue that modern conveniences—lawn mowers, microwave ovens, dishwashers—reduce our daily energy expenditures. Our dependence on our cars, in particular, eliminates a key source of regular physical activity. If our communities were redesigned, the argument goes, we might be more inclined to walk and bicycle to our destinations, thereby getting more exercise and improving our health.

The causes of physical inactivity warrant further consideration because they vary among groups based on race, ethnicity and income. High-tech, labor-saving devices and sedentary occupations, for example, may be less of a cause of inactivity among low-income populations than among more affluent groups. Dependence on cars also differs by race and income levels. The 2000 census shows that more black and Hispanic workers travel to their jobs by walking, bicycling or using public transportation (16% and 14%, respectively), compared to non-Hispanic white workers (6%). More likely than high-tech conveniences, it seems, limited leisure-time

physical activity in poor communities may be associated with limited time to exercise because individuals are holding two or more jobs and dealing with high caregiving burdens. Planners and public health professionals must be careful not to generalize from middle-class populations and places; we need more research to understand whether the physical environment is a primary cause of physical inactivity in poor communities and communities of color.

#### **Are we looking at the right aspects of the physical environment?**

Until now, the active living agenda has focused most attention on the design attributes of middle-class, especially suburban, environments that may limit opportunities for everyday physical activity. Such stereotypical suburban environments feature shopping malls surrounded by seas of parking; large street blocks and curvilinear streets that make it difficult to get directly where you are going; low densities; a rural imagery that foregoes sidewalks; long distances from homes to shops, jobs or schools; and prominent garages that produce boring streetscapes.

Such physical features may indeed limit opportunities for walking and bicycling in the suburbs. Many of these features have little to do, however, with the design of urban settings, which in the US continue to be occupied disproportionately by low-income residents and by people of color. Indeed, many older urban environments boast an impressive array of the very features that increase connectivity, high densities, public transportation, sidewalks and a mix of land uses. Other physical features may better explain lower rates of active living in low-income, urban environments—insufficient parks, high crime rates and fears for safety, pollution, lack of jobs to walk to, dirty streets and sidewalks and residential overcrowding that limits opportunities for exercise at home. Aesthetic issues certainly matter, but they are likely to be overshadowed by more pressing barriers that limit accessibility or compromise safety.

The problems of cities are not new, and the causes are also well-known: lack of affordable housing, too few jobs in city centers, private disinvestment, and financially-strapped city coffers. The active living agenda could harness its considerable political and media power to bring attention to these conditions and to demonstrate links between poor quality urban environments and the expensive health outcomes of inactivity. Such strategies might generate new interest in addressing the longstanding problems that face older US city centers.

In built-out cities and impoverished rural areas, design and planning solutions to support physical activity will require extra creativity and resourcefulness. Here, the need to increase physical activity competes with a range of other pressing needs—for schools, jobs, housing, safety. The city of Santa Ana, California, for example, faced with an extreme shortage of park space for its low-income, young population, recently decided to convert one of its existing parks to a badly needed school site. New resources to increase physical activity will not be easy to ⇨

identify. The best will stretch limited resources and will address multiple needs at once: community gardens that produce a source of income and fresh food; joint usage agreements to open school playing fields to community members; neighborhood watch patrols that encourage residents to walk.

Usually, these solutions will not be glamorous; they will not involve expensive, high-speed rail or magnificent new parks or facilities. The scale of intervention is likely to be local and the cost of projects is likely to be modest, though still potentially hard to finance. In terms of social justice, however, these investments are easier to support than the retrofitting of middle- and high-income suburbs at the public's expense.

### **How can we understand active living from the perspectives of diverse communities?**

To date, most public health research assumes a "barriers" approach to understanding active living in diverse communities. This approach assumes a shared definition of active living, and presumes that characteristics of individuals, groups and environments function to limit participation. Usually, such research finds that low-income populations and communities of color face extra barriers to physical activity—additional caregiving responsibilities, heightened health concerns, lack of energy and time. While helpful, this approach falls short in that it does not acknowledge the unique forms that active living may take in each community. It also does not harness the wide range of resources that diverse communities might marshal to encourage physical activity.

Planners and public health practitioners who hope to increase physical activity in communities of color must begin by understanding active living from the perspectives of these communities. Such "culturally competent" planning starts by identifying and learning more about the specific community to be served rather than planning for some hypothetical "norm" and modifying the plans (or not) to fit "exceptions" to that norm.

To understand the meaning of active living for a specific community, researchers and practitioners must work with communities to identify the groups' relevant history and life experiences, their positive and negative assets, their beliefs and values and their activities and preferences, especially regarding physical activity. How, for example, could the strong family ties that characterize most Latino cultures serve as the basis of family-centered strategies for physical activity? How may fears of race crime and harassment limit physical activity in "wilderness settings" for black Americans? How might park design support the practice of Tai Chi among older Chinese-Americans? In interviewing Latino parents in Pico Rivera, California, about their children's travel behavior, we learned that these parents, most of whom walked their children to school, aspired to someday being able to drive their children instead. The lack of drivers' licenses and limited access to cars forced these parents to let their children walk, but they feared for their children's safety in doing so. As this example suggests, planners should not assume the universality of middle-class ideas about the "goodness" of walking and bicycling. For groups that have had few alternatives, these transportation modes may have varied meanings and implications.

Communities themselves should be centrally engaged in identifying and developing strategies for active living. The Active Living by Design program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation offers a good model of what this might look like. This program provides modest funding and significant technical support to communities that demonstrate a commitment to increasing active living. The program seeks to support communities that have both grassroots and top-level commitment to this goal, and that have developed an agenda of activities that will work in their particular site. Ideally, community involvement would look more like community members planning and implementing active living activities, and less like community "input" or tokenism.

The active living movement succeeds in tapping a widespread, middle-class discontent with harried lifestyles and placeless communities—a nostalgia for another, perhaps imagined time, when life was less busy and more local in its orientation. In this other time, children walked to school each day and parents did not worry about child abductions or spend their time chauffeuring children from one activity to another. A day's errands could be handily accomplished by a stroll to the market and a stop at the local post office. In this time before homeowners' associations and three-car garages, homes were smaller and closer together, and neighborhoods were more distinctive and interesting. Neighbors were more inclined to walk in them and less likely to park in front of the TV for hours each evening without even having to get up to change channels.

We must remind ourselves that the development and design of US suburbs was motivated, in part, by a desire to escape dense, urban areas and the "problems" with which they were associated. Suburban development has had long-term implications for race and class justice in the US. We are still struggling with its effects. We cannot in good conscience now commit our resources to changing these suburbs into cities while neglecting our existing urban centers.

Urban environments present tremendous potential for supporting active living; these places are, after all, the models for the reform of suburban design that is the heart of the active living movement. The positive characteristics of urban environments provide an excellent foundation upon which to build, ultimately making city centers into places where residents have places to walk and bicycle to, and pleasant and safe routes to get there. The active living agenda has made great strides in a short time by insisting that we can change how we design our cities to support the kinds of lives we want. This vision of the "good life" can be broad enough to include the communities that need active living the most.

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# Engineering Physical Activity Back Into Americans' Lives

By Mark Fenton  
*Fall, 2003*

In recent months Americans have heard from the Surgeon General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and no less than the President himself that this nation is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. Unfortunately, while rightly acknowledging the great personal and social costs of the epidemic, none of them have offered particularly enlightened solutions to the problem. In particular, none have proposed bringing to bear any of the myriad policy tools available to them, nor have they championed the types of state and local activities that make a difference at the community level. Fortunately, creative solutions are being pursued in cities and towns across the country.

The problem with how they see the problem

Given the incessant media attention, most people now recognize that obesity is a result of a chronic caloric imbalance—eating more calories than you burn on a regular basis. Over the past decade the public health community has seen this epidemic looming and has warned of a commensurate rise in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension and a host of related complications. Certainly there's been focused discussion on the need to improve Americans' nutritional habits. Specific initiatives are also being launched to encourage people to get more exercise. America on the Move, for example, is a program designed to get people to wear pedometers (hip-worn step counters) so that they become aware of and try to increase their daily step totals. More daily steps means more physical activity, goes the thinking, and thus less obesity.

Sadly, almost two decades worth of experience suggests we'll be fighting a losing battle if the goal is simply to get people to "exercise" more. The Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, published in 1996, concluded that Americans should accumulate at least thirty minutes of physical activity every day to reduce their risk for chronic disease and an early death. Yet the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) collects annual survey data suggesting that only about 25 percent of the US population gets that much leisure-time physical activity (in other words, conscious exercise), while nearly 30 percent of the adult US population is essentially sedentary, getting no activity at all during the day. Even more disturbing, despite admonitions to "just do it" and "feel the burn," those numbers haven't budged for well over a decade. So, we've been talking about exercise, and we're talking about it more now than ever, but apparently we're not prepared to do any more of it, no matter how much we're told we should.

This article is based on the premise that there's a missing

link, specifically that the real problem isn't restricted to a lack of exercise, but also to a continually declining amount of routine physical activity. Not only do we have power devices—from lawn mowers to washing machines, elevators to automobiles—to do all of our work for us, Americans rarely walk or bicycle anywhere anymore. While the number of walking trips (as a percentage of total trips) were roughly cut in half from 1977 to 1995 based on US Department of Transportation Data, automobile trips rose to become almost 90 percent of all trips. Over nearly that same time span, the rate of obesity in the US rose from about 12 percent to over 30 percent of the adult population—i.e., nearly one-third of US adults are now considered obese by medical standards. (For more detailed or state-specific health data, go to [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa).)

Given that it is unlikely that Americans are ready to forego automatic garage door openers and washers and dryers, and that there is no evidence we're inclined to increase our more structured exercise, it looks like we would do well to build more routine walking and bicycling into our daily lives. This is the opportunity our national leaders are missing. (For example, why aren't they discussing dramatically increasing federal transportation enhancement funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of the war on obesity?)

Thankfully those involved in local land use and transportation planning have taken up the call. Even better, in many communities coalitions of planners, engineers, health professionals, educators, elected officials, concerned citizens and others are joining the movement—some under the banner of smart growth or sustainable development, but more and more simply out of a recognition that our very health and well-being are at stake. (For extensive evidence and resources in creating active environments, see [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org).)

Planning more physically active settings

To really impact physical activity, we're not just talking about more playing fields, basketball and tennis courts. These are great for exercisers, and certainly should be widely available in every community, but they alone won't get enough people moving to truly make a difference. It's not even about more parks and purely recreational trails, though they also have great merit. What is needed are settings where people will walk and bike simply because it is safe and, for at least some trips, actually more convenient than driving a car. An extensive ⇨ research literature in planning and transportation (and a

growing body of research in public health) suggests five simplified elements can be used to describe places where people are more likely to walk and bike as a matter of course. (For more details and further resources on these and other ideas go to the Local Government Commission at [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).)

1. **Continuous networks.** The pathways, trails and lanes for walking and cycling must be complete and create an effective network. Generally the best sidewalks are wide and separate from traffic, while blocks are short and intersections frequent, providing numerous route choices. Bike lanes provide safe riding in areas of higher volume traffic. The ideal result is that the walk or bike distance between two points isn't dramatically longer than the straight line (or "as-the-crow-flies") distance.

2. **Land Use.** There are two keys here: Communities (or at least neighborhoods) must be compact enough that total travel distances aren't too great. And there must be a high mix of uses, with residential, retail and commercial activities, schools, recreation and transit access all interspersed, and thus within walking and biking distance of one another.

3. **Safety.** People must feel safe both from crime and from traffic when walking or biking. This requires that elements of both the social and built environments be favorable. For example, there should be minimal illicit activity and lots of lighting, as well as separation of walkways from travel lanes and slow traffic speeds.

4. **Site Designs.** Even if sidewalks are available and safe and destinations are plentiful, people will not walk to uninviting buildings, especially if they are set well back from the road behind acres of parking. But buildings near the street with obvious entrances, many windows and bicycle parking are not only more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists, they also provide comfort to those simple walking past.

5. **Civic Commitment.** Though the softest of the bunch, this may be the most important for long-term, large-scale change. Everyone from elected officials and bureaucrats to the average citizen has to embrace the idea of a more walkable community—and vote with their feet! The best measure of a successful pedestrian environment is whether you see people out and about on foot.

**How to build more active communities: Creative approaches and new partners**

In the planning field, many are developing and testing tools and approaches around zoning and site requirements, the two areas most planning entities control. The following strategies show great promise in helping to create places where more people are likely to walk and cycle.

- **Require the network.** Mandate sidewalks in all development, and bicycle lanes where appropriate. (See the "Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide" and the "Bicycle Lane Design Guide"

at [www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org).) One approach is to construct sidewalks and bike lanes opportunistically—say, when streets are being paved or sewers redone. Note that in many communities health officers review all development plans (often as oversight of water and sewer issues), meaning they can and should be an ally in supporting completion of the bike and pedestrian network.

- **Slow down traffic.** Simple traffic calming tools—for example, narrower lanes, median islands, chicanes and speed tables—have been shown again and again to slow speeds in residential and downtown areas, to the benefit of both pedestrians and drivers. Though not always in a planner's purview, this is a critical adjunct to the other activities described here.

- **Mix uses.** Zone for corner stores or small business districts in neighborhoods, and encourage upper floor apartments above first floor retail or businesses.

- **Preclude drive-through retail settings.** Don't allow fast food or other services to cater entirely to automobiles at the expense of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Even fast food outlets and national retailers can succeed, in fact thrive, in more appealing and functional settings.

- **Increase residential and business densities.** One approach is to simply reduce lot sizes, but you can go further by providing density bonuses to developers. These allow an overall greater numbers of units if built in a more compact pattern that encourages biking and walking while preserving open space. Even in already-developed, low-density suburbs you can encourage apartments over garages, in basements, as "garden apartments," etc.

- **Set maximum setbacks.** Suburbs have typically had minimum setbacks, requiring that structures be greater than some minimum figure from the front lot lines. This generally undermines pedestrian friendliness in two ways. First, a building set far back from the sidewalk provides little of the oversight or comfort that makes a sidewalk an inviting place to be, and second, parking is often placed on the lot between the sidewalk and the building, making for more challenging bicycle and pedestrian access. Whenever possible, bring building fronts to the sidewalk edge.

- **Reduce or eliminate on-site parking requirements.** Wherever possible maximize on-street parking or shared parking between and behind—but not in front of—buildings. Diagonal parking, for example, increases capacity over parallel parking and can also serve to narrow the travel lanes. Ideally, give bicycles the very best parking spaces.

So if all this works, who needs the healthy community?

What's so unique about this? Most of these suggestions you'd find in any smart growth manifesto, or in guidelines for creating a New Urbanist or more sustainable community. This argument adds two key ideas to those approaches.

First, we must wear the mantle of public health advocates when making the case for more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly settings. The focus of the argument for better bike and pedestrian facilities at the beginning of this article was to help people be more physically active, and thus to help fight the very real obesity epidemic. But there are two further health arguments. As automobiles are among the greatest contributors to air pollution in this country, replacing some number of car trips with walking or cycling trips can dramatically help improve air quality, and thus health. Also, reducing bicycle and pedestrian crashes, injuries and fatalities is a key goal, and is a result of better-designed facilities. This argument is especially critical around schools, where child-pedestrian traffic is likely to be greatest.

Second, we must use the skills and infrastructure of the public health community to advance the cause. Health advocates tend to be skilled at working in and even facilitating multidisciplinary teams because it's so often required in their work. Whether collaborating with travel authorities when trying to contain an infectious disease outbreak, hydrologists and engineers to maintain clean water supplies, or education officials and parents to assure vaccinations are complete, public health officials are accustomed to crossing boundaries. Thus, they are ready and willing allies in creating more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly communities, once the clear connection to their goals—more physically active and thus healthier citizens—is made. Here are several examples of specific initiatives to launch in your community.

**National: Walk to School Programs.** Sometimes called Safe Routes to School, the approach is often to build interest among children and parents with an event on International Walk to School Day (usually the first Wednesday in October), and then build a coalition to improve safety and increase routine walking by building better facilities where needed. School or community health officers are often integral to such efforts. (See [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org) for details and a national event registry.)

**State: Michigan Active Community Awards.** The Michigan Department of Community Health encourages communities to do an online self-assessment of “activity-friendliness.” It covers a variety of areas including land use and planning, non-motorized transport facilities and safety, parks and recreational programming, schools, worksites and public transportation. The assessment asks communities for intended next steps and provides a score. It both recognizes success (Michigan's governor personally handed out the 2003 awards) while identifying the areas needing improvement. It also begins a process by forcing communities to pull together an interdisciplinary team simply to complete the survey; that team can become the basis for on-going work. (See [www.mihealthtools.org/communities](http://www.mihealthtools.org/communities) for the survey and information.)

**Local: Bike/Pedestrian Network Building.** There are numerous examples from visionary communities nationwide of efforts to complete their bicycle and pedestrian networks. These include passing bonds to underwrite sidewalk and trail

construction, or aggressively pursuing “road-diets,” the conversion of four-lane roads to two-lane roads that have a turn lane, with the leftover space dedicated to bike and pedestrian right-of-way. One especially creative approach: towns that purchase homes at the end of cul-de-sac streets when they go on sale, construct cut-through pathways to adjacent streets, parks or trails, and then resell the homes with the pathway easement owned by or permanently deeded to the town. It's a powerful way to increase bike and pedestrian access in otherwise impenetrable dead-end neighborhoods. (See [www.walkablecommunities.org](http://www.walkablecommunities.org) and [www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org) for detailed design and engineering information, resources and an extensive image library.)

Whatever avenues you pursue, keep in mind all of your potential allies. In Cohasset, MA it has been the health officer, not planners or bike advocates, who has led the charge to get local conservation funds put in place for a feasibility study of a trail along an historic rail corridor. Perhaps the health officer in your community is equally enlightened.

And what about you? Quite simply, you should put up or shut up. The final but perhaps most effective way to create a more active community is to get involved personally. It's easy to visualize this happening at four levels; everyone can start at the first, but for greatest effect you should work all the way to the fourth.

1. Be a role model. Forego at least one car trip every day, and bike or walk instead. Even better, walk a child to soccer practice, or walk with friends to dinner or a movie to broaden your impact.

2. Be a lone voice. Show up at planning and zoning meetings, ask questions and at least make people explain why things are being done the way they are.

3. Infiltrate existing entities. I ran for my local planning board and find that nothing is as effective as being on the “inside.” Simply put, if all I do is get the sidewalk network closer to completion in my community, it will be time well spent. But it's clear one could have an impact working on the zoning or planning boards, school or town council, recreation or conservation commissions—in other words, any one of myriad elected or appointed boards.

4. Create a new coalition. Cross disciplines. Get public safety, health, transportation, planning, public works, education and other officials together with citizen advocates, and make the creation of more walkable and bike-friendly settings a community-wide focus.

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# Sustainability is Not Enough

By Peter Marcuse  
*May, 1998*

"Sustainability" as a goal for planning just doesn't work. In the first place, sustainability is not a goal; it is a constraint on the achievement of other goals. No one who is interested in change wants to sustain things as they are now. Taken as a goal by itself, "sustainability" only benefits those who already have everything they want. It preserves the status quo, making only those changes required to maintain that status.

You could argue that the status quo is not sustainable socially, because an unjust society will not long endure. That is more a hope than a demonstrated fact. You could also argue, and with more evidence, that the status quo is not environmentally sustainable; indeed, that is the origin of the "sustainability" slogan. But changes can be made within the present system to cope with problems such as environmental degradation and global warming. Nor is it inevitable that such changes will be socially just.

Certainly "sustainable" means sustainable, physically and environmentally, in the long run. But what does "in the long run" mean? How long is that, and who is to determine it? Never mind Lord Keynes' "in the long run, we will all be dead." We may be dead, but our children and their children will live. Two quite separate problems arise here, one social and political, the other scientific.

## The Social Problem

The costs of moving towards environmental sustainability will not be born equally by everyone. In conventional economic terms, different people have different discount rates for the same cost or benefit. Meeting higher environmental standards increases costs; some will profit from supplying the wherewithal to meet those standards. Others, not able to pay for them, will have to do without. Thus, the effects of income inequality are likely to be aggravated by the raising of environmental standards in this way. This problem is evident when it comes to the issue of atomic power plants in developing countries that have no other available sources of energy, or in the rain-forest disputes in South America. Similar issues are raised in the environmental justice movement in the United States. Better environments for some will be at the expense of worse environments for others, as waste disposal sites, air pollution, and water contamination, are moved around. Even when there is a solution that improves conditions for some without hurting others, the benefits will be unevenly distributed.

## The Scientific Problem

Our knowledge is limited, and the further out into the future we wish to project it, the more the uncertainties grow. Malthus calculated, with the best scientific knowledge of his day, that food production would not sustain a world population much beyond

its size at that time. Since then, world population has increased more than five-fold, and is better nourished and lives longer. We know we need to deal with the problem of global warming, and we know that relying on technological fixes is dangerous. Those two propositions should lead us to scale down certain activities linked to growth, and to seek substitutes for others. They mandate adoption of specific policies to achieve specific goals by specific actors in a specific timetable. But absent those specific policies, long-range concerns do not help very much in making decisions about shorter-range questions.

## Not Just Environmental

In any event long-term environmental considerations are not the only long-term considerations that need to be taken into account. Matters that have both short- and long-range implications include: social justice, economic development, international relations, democracy, democratic control over technological change, and globalization. For a given policy to be desirable, it should meet the constraints of sustainability in each of these dimensions.

Environmental sustainability seems at first blush to be the most "objective," the most inescapable, of all these constraints. If humankind dies off, the game is over. But may that not also be said of freedom, democracy, or tolerance? Since none of these deaths will be one-shot catastrophes, is the danger of environmental degradation a greater danger in the long run than war, fascism, poverty, hunger, or disease?

## Environmental Justice

In practice "sustainability" had its origins in the environmental movement and in most usage is heavily focused on ecological concerns. But why, given limited resources and limited power to bring about change, are efforts thus focused? I would suggest that the environmental movement is a multi-class, if not upper- and middle-class movement, in its leadership, financing and politics. While the environmental justice movement is making a substantial contribution to both social justice and environmental protection, the environmental movement as a whole often proclaims itself to be above party, above controversy, seeking solutions from which everyone will benefit, and to which no one can object. How nice it would be if we could find such a program we could all rally around, and escape the unpleasant business of facing conflicting interests, having to deal with the unequal distribution of power, the necessities of redistribution, and the defeats that accompany the victories? No wonder "sustainability" is an attractive slogan! But if our goal is redistribution of wealth or opportunity, sharing power or reducing oppression, sustainability does not get us far. All uses of the sustainability concept are not subject to the criticisms I have

made. One leading definition is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987): "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Fine. Clearly here the goal is "meeting needs," and the remainder, making it sustainable, is a constraint on the appropriate means to be used. Other formulations focus on the "carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems," an elusive concept. To the extent that sustainability requires the review of policies designed today to meet the needs of today in such a way that they do not make things worse in the future, it is an important concept, though for planners it is not a very new one. Among those devoted to the concept, there is also an important debate about the relationship between growth and development, a difficult issue conceptually and one viewed very differently in the developed as against the developing world.

So the discussion of sustainability can make a real contribution to advancing the understanding of policy alternatives and their implications.

The pursuit of sustainability is a delusion and snare to the extent that we call for "sustainable" activities that are of universal benefit; activities that everyone, every group, and every interest will or should or must accept in their own best interest. It is a delusion to think that only our ignorance or stupidity prevents us from seeing what we all need to do. Indeed, a just, humane, and environmentally sensitive world will in the long run be better for all of us. But getting to the long run entails conflicts and controversies, issues of power and the redistribution of wealth. The "sustainability" slogan hides these conflicts instead of revealing them.

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## Sustainable and Environmentally Just Societies

By Sandra Rodriguez

Communities of color have much to contribute to sustainability because of their front-line experiences in struggles against environmental degradation and health risks they face in their neighborhoods and workplaces. The environmental issues faced by communities of color reflect everyday life experiences of social, economic and political disenfranchisement. Yet, for the most part, their concerns and perspectives have been marginalized from mainstream discussion about sustainability and the environment. These concerns are with environmental racism, the unequal burden of pollution borne by communities of color, and the exclusion of environmental justice principles from visions of sustainable societies.

### Environmental Justice

A landmark 1987 study by the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ, *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States*, documented how commercial hazardous facilities were concentrated in and near communities with the highest proportion of racial and ethnic minorities. In the United States, and more recently in Canada, further documentation has shown how the most common victims of environmental pollution are people of color. These communities are disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards including hazardous waste facilities, incinerators, contaminated soil and polluting industries. Environmental inequities are being countered by an emerging movement working towards environmental justice. In October 1991 in Washington D.C. over 600 people working on environmental justice issues came together at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. This was the first time that people of color from throughout North America convened in order to define their environmental agenda and develop a process that would guide what has been described as a multi-racial movement for change. An important outcome

of this summit was the development and adoption of seventeen "Principles of Environmental Justice" (see page 6). As a whole, these principles represent a call to action against environmental inequities and address issues of democracy, marginalization, poverty, and discrimination. They state the right of people of color to live in and fully participate in healthy and just communities. They outline a vision for a just and sustainable society, and include elements necessary to any discussion about sustainability.

Rev. Benjamin Chavis, civil rights leader and Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice, defines environmental racism as "any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individual groups, or communities based on their race and color." Environmental racism "combines with public policies and industry practices to shift the costs of industrial pollution to people of color." This form of oppression is maintained by a system of ideas, laws, and practices that work to regulate the aspirations, actions and livelihood of people of color. The education system, political and administrative bodies, private corporations and the mainstream media reinforce racism on a continuing basis. Racism experienced by these communities is inseparable from their broader experiences of social, economic, and political marginalization. As a result, they seldom frame their struggles as "environmental" problems, but rather as issues of social justice. Issues such as poverty, racism, and access to decisionmaking, which are central to environmental justice struggles, have been noticeably absent from discussions about sustainability. The sustainability literature has mostly been concerned with the physical degradation of the environment and the ecological limits to economic growth. Only recently have social issues been dealt with in any depth. This interest can be seen in the work of Trevor Hancock, a leader in the international healthy cities movement. ⇨

In his article, "Healthy Sustainable Communities: Concept, Fledgling Practice and Implications for Governance," Hancock makes the point that social issues need to be addressed if truly sustainable societies are to be achieved. But while there is increasing discussion about the social dimensions of sustainability, these discussions fall short of addressing and naming systemic power relations based on race, class, and gender.

### Racism and Sustainability

The truth is that sustainability discussions do not adequately deal with the issue of racism. In some sustainability literature there is an acknowledgment that discrimination in general must be dealt with, but I have yet to encounter a discussion on sustainability that confronts racist relations directly. Discussions of sustainability do not adequately deal with how racism works to limit life choices and reduce the quality of life in communities of color. Nor do they address the systemic nature of racism and how it is reproduced within the institutional framework of capitalist societies.

For planners this is particularly important since the unequal distribution of environmental degradation is partly the result of inequitable and discriminatory planning processes which mediate how zoning and other environmental regulations are organized and enforced. Environmental justice activists have begun to document and expose how discriminatory planning processes not only marginalize the interests of communities of color, but limit their participation, representation, and access to decisionmaking power. It is vital that institutional racism be named and confronted so that power relations are exposed and communities empowered.

### Are "We" in This Together?

An underlying premise in discussions of sustainability is that "we" are in this together. This generic "we" assumes that all people are equally to blame for society's environmental problems, and that "we" all have a responsibility to change our lifestyles to "save the planet." As Catherine Lerza asks in her article "Race, Poverty and Sustainable Communities": "Are the poor, the marginalized equally to blame for the waste and pollution that exists, when they are the people least benefiting from economic growth and they are bearing most of the environmental burden?"

East Los Angeles, a predominantly Latino neighborhood, is currently considered a "human sacrifice zone" because there is a large concentration of polluting industry in the area and new polluters continue to locate there. In Toronto, residents of South Riverdale, a predominately low-income community, have been fighting for over twenty years to get lead contaminated soil cleaned up. Throughout North America, but particularly in the United States, the concentration of poverty in urban areas coincides with the residential segregation of people of color. These communities, located in areas with low land values, receive more unwanted land uses such as polluting private and public facilities. Many are ill-equipped to deal with the pollution. At the same time, they are struggling daily to deal with unemployment, poverty, housing, education, and health problems. Further, many residents do not have the economic means to leave polluted neighborhoods for more desirable (i.e., less polluted) locations.

In their article, "Capitalism and the Crisis of Environmentalism," Daniel Faber and James O'Connor argue that capital "always seeks to pollute in ways that encounter the least political resistance." Therefore, people and communities that have the least political power and resources to defend themselves are the most vulnerable. Further, these communities are underrepresented on governing bodies where land use siting decisions are made. Underrepresentation translates into limited access to policy makers and lack of advocates for minority interests.

It is obvious that "we" are not in this together. The assumption that all people regardless of race, class, or gender are in this together needs to be dispelled, and advocates of sustainability need to understand how the costs and benefits of industrial and economic expansion are not equally distributed. Sustainability needs to address the paradox that growth and development are sources of both wealth and destruction, with particular ramifications for people of color.

### The Future vs. The Present

Discussions of sustainability tend to be forward thinking and futurist, projecting an ideal vision of a "sustainable city." But environmental justice advocates reject the single vision of a sustainable city and are more interested in the amelioration of existing inequities. The forward looking perspective does not take into consideration the immediate problems and struggles for environmental justice such as those in South Riverdale and East Los Angeles. While it is important that sustainability be forward thinking, it should also address existing conditions that are inherently unsustainable.

Many visions of sustainable societies, like that of "new urbanism," reflect the needs and interests of the white middle class. Their prescriptions for a sustainable society are implemented, for the most part, in a top-down fashion that leaves little space for community input.

The environmental justice movement has much to contribute to the sustainability discourse. The movement's knowledge and strategies are not being developed in academic settings, government institutions or by consultants, but at the community level where environmental justice struggles are taking place. These communities have many ideas about the key elements of a sustainable society and the issues that must be confronted.

Discussions of sustainability need to address systemic racism and its impacts, recognize the unequal burden of pollution on communities of color, and question the people with the power to formulate visions of sustainable societies. They must include a broader understanding of the structural and political forces that maintain power inequalities so that environmental problems and the needs of diverse peoples are addressed within the social, political, and economic realities in which they are embedded. As different constituencies redefine issues and set their own agendas according to their own needs, concerns, and identities, a universal strategy for sustainability will not do. Rather, there will have to be multiple and diverse strategies for sustainability.

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# It's Not Easy Being Green: Feminist Thoughts on Planning for Sustainability

By Sherilyn MacGregor  
May, 1998

Recent interest in "sustainability" has overshadowed issues of social justice in planning. There is an implicit assumption that, in the face of impending ecological destruction, we're all in this together. But, as Peter Marcuse argues, we are clearly not all in this together. The costs and benefits of moving toward a sustainable society will surely be distributed unevenly in an already unjust society. Yet is the addition of "social justice" to the sustainability puzzle enough?

Feminist critics of planning theory argue that it is not. Although feminist critiques of planning have gained acceptance in some circles in recent years, there is a long way to go before gender is taken up consistently in planning discussions. As in many other cases, if feminists do not raise issues of importance to women's lives, such as the gender division of unpaid labor, the gendering of social space, access to urban goods and services, and changing employment patterns in the global economy, they simply go unmentioned.

## Social Justice: More than Class and Income

Feminists have pointed out that social justice concerns in planning are mainly focused on the allocation of resources and distribution of wealth. Aspects of social injustice that are not reducible to class or income frequently get left out of the analysis. Gender inequality and sexism includes but is by no means limited to matters of distributive justice. The domination of elite white men is pervasive in all aspects of Western society. This privileges male interests and needs within political, educational, cultural and familial institutions. Similarly, as Sandra Rodriguez argues, racism is not only a matter of unequal access to opportunities or jobs, it is also about the political and cultural marginalization of people of color.

Sexist assumptions about gender roles and responsibilities are deeply embedded in North American culture. They are manifested in the design of living spaces and the relationships that take place within them. Women are expected to be primarily responsible for the care and maintenance of the living spaces in our society. That women will look after the work of caring - what I call life-sustaining work - is so deeply rooted in our culture that it is commonly taken for granted and poorly rewarded, if rewarded at all. In addition to keeping questions of the distribution of wealth on the agenda, we must also keep in mind the distribution of labor and responsibility necessary to achieve an ecologically sustainable society. Moving toward a more just and sustainable society will require more unpaid labor and more participation by citizens. The question is, on whose shoulders will these added burdens fall?

## Life-Sustaining Work

Decades of empirical research have documented the unequal

gender division of labor. Despite some gains for some women in the labor force in recent years, women still do a disproportionate amount of the unpaid work that nurtures and maintains households and communities. Many women who are employees, caregivers and neighborhood volunteers juggle a double and triple day of work without adequate support from family members or government. This workload is unsustainable for individual women who, on average, have less leisure time and lower wages than men do. This division of work and responsibility is socially unjust. It represents an unfair subsidy to men and capital at the expense of the continued subordination of women. Feminist planners, therefore, have tried to find ways to alleviate this burden through innovative social policies and the redesign of gendered urban spaces.

Non-feminist planners have been slow to take these gender concerns into account in their discussions of both sustainability and social justice. They tend to either ignore the importance of life-sustaining work altogether or take the gender division of unpaid labor for granted. Planning theory is masculinist in that it privileges the public sphere and embraces a conventional economic understanding of work that excludes domestic and care-giving activities. As a consequence, there is little recognition of the implications of plans for sustainable societies and for those who will be compelled, by virtue of their socially constructed gender roles, to perform the extra work required to live sustainably in everyday life.

## Women's Unpaid Labor

Insofar as planners and environmentalists have realized that changes in living habits are a necessary part of the search for sustainability, they advocate initiatives that demand particular responses from household and community members, such as waste reduction and energy conservation strategies, and collective efforts to grow and pool resources. Such changes in daily living are no doubt important. But what must be challenged is the lack of awareness that they will intensify the burden on unpaid labor. This increased labor will be borne primarily by women in their socially constructed roles as care-givers and housewives.

For example, planning for municipal solid waste reduction through household recycling, precycling, and composting campaigns (growing in popularity in places like Seattle, San Jose, and Berkeley) demands extra time and effort from those responsible for household maintenance and provisioning. Recycling depends on the diligence of individuals to collect, wash, sort, and transport recyclables, and composting requires increased effort on the part of cooks and gardeners. Precycling involves the reduction of waste that enters the household, a practice that requires cutting down on over-packaged "convenience" goods and environmentally unfriendly ⇨

household cleaners, and purchasing more fresh foods. Research conducted in German households found that precycling alone adds at least 20% more work time for the two person household. There is clearly a price to be paid for green living.

Many energy conservation strategies, such as the use of "appropriate" technologies, demand increased human labor time. For example, the use of solar ovens is promoted in Sacramento in order to reduce the need for air conditioning in private kitchens. Sustainable community advocates in Toronto, such as the authors of *Get a Life!: How to Make a Good Buck and Save the World While You're At It*, recommend the switch to solar powered composting toilets to conserve water and electricity. While the cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits of such technologies are celebrated, no mention is made of the demands they place on those who will actually use and maintain them.

Those who promote more sustainable forms of transportation like cycling and walking don't address the logistical problems for those who need to get around the city with children and groceries in tow. Feminists have long criticized the gendered assumptions of transportation planners who forget that some people have different concerns than "the journey to work." Similarly, those who champion the cause of telecommuting (working at home online) in order to reduce car use fail to consider what it means for those workers who already see the home as a workplace (nor do they consider the plight of the underpaid and non-unionized women workers in the electronics industry!)

Sustainable community planners have also advocated the local production of food in community gardens (also known as community shared agriculture) and collective kitchens. While feminists support the concept of collectivization of socially necessary work for social and ecological reasons, the appeal fades when it becomes evident that women tend to do most of this work. In addition to the intensification of unpaid work in the household, women could end up with added responsibilities in the community - all in the name of sustainability.

### Environmental Privatization

The sustainability agenda seems to romanticize a return to good old fashioned self-reliance, elbow grease, and homespun goods while taking for granted that gendered individuals will bear the burden of increased work. We need to reconsider a range of energy, resource, and waste intensive practices that we rely on to sustain us, but part of the discussion must be the equitable redistribution of the work that will take their place. Placing responsibility for sustainable living on the household and neighborhood can be seen as a form of environmental privatization. This approach takes the onus off corporate polluters and government regulators. Environmental privatization shifts responsibility to women under the assumption that women's ability to care, provide, and serve is elastic and can expand indefinitely. Rarely is there any mention of the work required or who will do it, because women's work is taken for granted, or "externalized" (in the language of economics). The same writers who argue that there are biophysical limits to human use of the earth seem to forget that there are also limits to the use of labor.

### Sustaining Participation

A growing number of sustainability advocates envision a greater role for citizens in the planning and administration of local communities and neighborhoods. Citizen advisory boards, task forces, and round tables on environmental issues, community-based environmental impact assessments, and other forms of participatory democracy are thought to be an essential element of a sustainable society. Eco-guru Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism - his vision for the good ecological society - is modeled after the Greek polis wherein rational citizens took an active part in the running of public affairs. It is thought that increased public involvement in planning and administrative decisionmaking will improve the quality of urban life for greater numbers of citizens and result in heightened levels of environmental consciousness and responsibility at the local level.

While feminists support participatory democracy and more inclusive decisionmaking processes, that support is tempered by concerns for the distribution of responsibility and disparities between men and women in the ability to participate. Rarely do advocates of citizen participation in sustainability issues take into account that public participation takes time and requires a range of conditions that only a small and relatively privileged segment of the population enjoy.

### Feminist Critique of Citizenship

Feminist scholars have developed a critique of the concept of citizenship, asserting that it is based on masculine traits and elite male life experiences. Active participation in public affairs is only possible when people have spare time on their hands and when basic needs are met in the private sphere.

So what happens when the demands on citizens for the political life of a sustainable community increase along with demands on unpaid work? Some people, particularly women, may actually have less time for public engagement. Even if sustainable societies are more participatory, male domination of decisionmaking will persist in the absence of any concerted effort to redistribute and support the work that is necessary to sustain life in the domestic sphere. For women who already perform a double or triple day of work, taking an active role in the planning and on-going management of their community adds an additional burden to their already over-burdened lives.

Yet the majority of activists in local environmental justice and community struggles are women. We need to understand the costs of this triple role, and whether an ecologically sustainable society can be built on top of existing, or intensified, gender inequalities. Without providing support services like child care, or finding innovative ways to collectivize socially necessary work, citizenship in the sustainable society will be plagued by the same tensions between public and private that have produced and reproduced gender inequality for centuries.

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# Globalization and International Issues

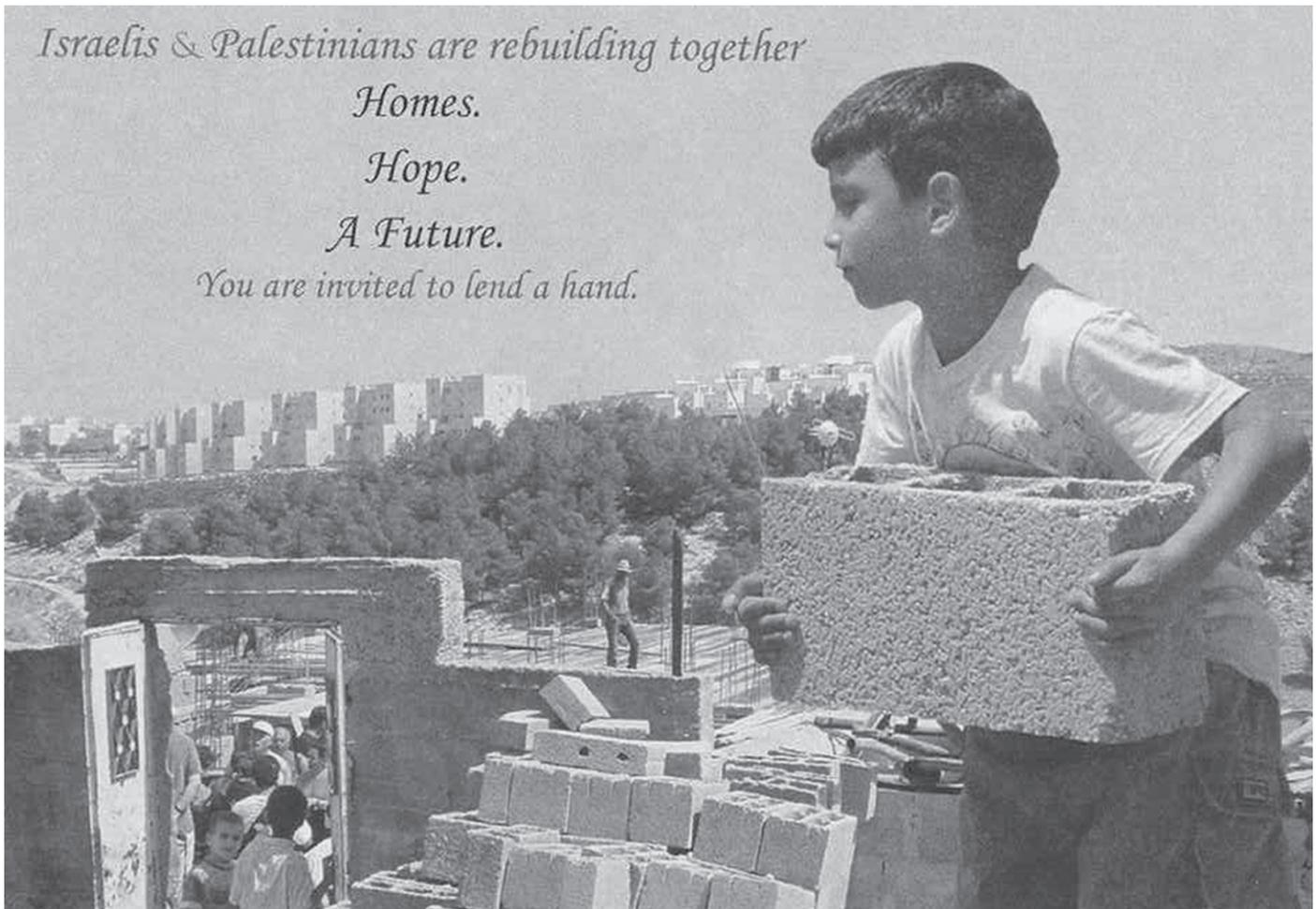


Photo courtesy of Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

## Planning as a Tool of Political Control: Israel's Matrix of Control

By Jeff Halper

*Winter, 2003*

In Israel's thirty-six-year occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, planning has been perfected as a tool of political control. Nowhere in the world is planning used with such sophistication to such a single-minded purpose. Because Israel denies having an "occupation" at all—insisting that it is merely reclaiming the historic Land of Israel as the exclusive patrimony of the Jewish people—it seeks to make its control over the Territories permanent. Maintaining control through outright military actions, though effectively employed, is not a preferred means, since it is brutal, too visual and generates both internal and foreign opposition. Instead, Israel prefers to use administrative means—and here is where planning comes to the fore. Dressed in neutral professional jargon, its rationale graphically presented in maps, planning is an ideal guise for concealing political ends.

The complex web of bureaucratic constraints on the Palestinian population, combined with massive Israeli construction, enmeshes the Palestinians in what I call a "Matrix of Control." The Matrix hides the very fact of occupation behind a facade of "proper administration" and "neutral" construction, thus shunting the blame for the conflict onto the Palestinians. It creates massive Israeli "facts on the ground" that render the occupation permanent. And it is intended to induce such despair among Palestinians about ever achieving a viable state of their own that they will submit to an Israeli-controlled mini-state.



## Creating Facts on the Ground

Consider the following facts:

Since 1967, Israel has expropriated for settlements, highways, “bypass roads,” military installations, nature reserves and infrastructure some 24 percent of the West Bank, 89 percent of Arab East Jerusalem and 25 percent of Gaza.

More than 200 settlements have been constructed in the Occupied Territories, and 400,000 Israelis moved across the 1967 boundaries (200,000 in the West Bank; 200,000 in East Jerusalem; 6,000 in Gaza).

During the Oslo “peace process” Israel constructed a system of twenty-nine “bypass roads,” funded entirely by the United States (at a cost of \$3 billion). Together with the settlement blocs and military checkpoints, these highways bypass Palestinian communities, creating massive barriers to Palestinian movement while linking the settlements with Israel proper. Palestinians are today confined to more than 200 tiny and impoverished islands.

Construction of seven (of a planned twelve) industrial parks on the “seam” between the Occupied Territories and Israel give new life to isolated settlements while robbing Palestinian cities—with which they are in direct competition for workers and markets—of their own economic vitality. The industrial parks exploit cheap Palestinian labor while denying that same labor access to Israel. They also allow Israel’s most polluting and least profitable industries to continue dumping their industrial wastes into the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel’s Matrix of Control extends underground as well, using settlement sites to maintain control over the main aquifers of the Occupied Territories and other vital natural resources.

Even seemingly innocuous holy places such as Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, sites in and around Jerusalem and Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus serve as pretexts for maintaining an Israeli “security presence,” and hence military control reinforced by settlements.

## Bureaucracy, Planning and Law in the Service of Political Control

Planning procedures, deriving from a discriminatory legal system and embedded in a Kafkaesque bureaucracy, comprise a subtle but highly effective form of political control that entangle Palestinians in a tight web of restrictions and trigger sanctions whenever Palestinians try to expand their life space. For example:

Israel has taken two British Mandate-era planning documents—the Jerusalem Regional Planning Scheme RJ5 (1942) and the Samaria Regional Planning Scheme RS15 (1945)—and used them to effectively freeze Palestinian development in Jerusalem and the West Bank as it was in the 1940s. RS15, for example, zones the entire West Bank as “agricultural land.” Since this severely limits

the construction of houses on such land, Israel can effectively deny Palestinians building permits, and demolish their houses if they build “illegally.” But another little-noted provision of British planning law gave the District Commission (now Israel’s “Civil Administration”) the “power to grant a relaxation of any restriction imposed by this scheme.” This has been exploited to permit the construction of hundreds of thousands of housing units for Jews in the settlements of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Military orders issued by the commanders of the West Bank and Gaza (some 2,000 in number since 1967) have replaced local civil law with policies and procedures designed to strengthen Israeli political control. Thus, Order 59 (1967) grants the Israeli Custodian of Abandoned Properties the authority to declare uncultivated, unregistered land as state land, enabling Israel to “legally” claim as state land 72 percent of the West Bank, making it easy to expropriate land from Palestinian owners. Order 270 (1968) designates 250,000 acres of the West Bank as closed “combat zones” which can then be handed over to settlements. Order 291 (1968) stopped the Jordanian process of systematic land registration, thus preventing Palestinians from registering their lands at all. Order 393 (1970) grants any military commander in Judea and Samaria the authority to prohibit Palestinian construction if he believes it necessary for the security of the Israeli army or to ensure “public order.”

Order 977 (1982) allows the Israeli army and its agencies (such as the Civil Administration) to proceed with excavation and construction without a permit, providing yet another legal basis for the construction of settlements. Hundreds of other orders prohibit Palestinian building around army bases and installations, around settlements and whole settlement areas and within 200 meters of main roads. Orders effectively curb the development of Arab communities and alienate tens of thousands of acres of land.

Because Palestinians will outnumber Jews in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean by the end of the decade, Israel considers the “demographic bomb” the greatest threat to its hegemony. To counter the trend, Israel actively pursues policies of displacement: exile and deportation of Palestinians; revocation of residency rights; impoverishment of the population through economic “closures”; expropriation of land and demolition of houses (10,000 since 1967). In general, Israel makes life for Palestinians so unbearable that they will “voluntarily” emigrate.

Administrative restrictions intrude into every corner of Palestinian life, enveloping the average person in a web of constraints and controls. Severe restrictions on the planting of crops and their sale hits an already impoverished population hard, especially when combined with Israel’s practice of uprooting hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees since 1967, either to clear land for settlement activity or for “security” purposes.

Even seemingly innocuous practices such as licensing and inspection of Palestinian businesses are exploited as a way to harass businesspeople and stunt the local economy.

## Barak’s “Generous Offer”

But what about Israeli Prime Minister Yehud Barak's "generous offer" of 95 percent of the territories, presumably made at the Taba talks in January 2001? Taken at face value, it seems to be "generous" indeed (who, after all, gets 100 percent in negotiations?). At a distinct disadvantage are those who say it was not a good deal, that it would leave the Matrix of Control intact and that it would not lead to a viable Palestinian state. These positions seem to contradict common sense. It is much easier to pin the blame on the Palestinians and justify Israel's policies of repression.

First off, let's state the truth: there never was a "generous offer." In an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (September 6, 2002), Barak explained: "It was plain to me that there was no chance of reaching a settlement at Taba. Therefore I said there would be no negotiations and there would be no delegation and there would be no official discussions and no documentation. Nor would Americans be present in the room. The only thing that took place at Taba were non-binding contacts between senior Israelis and senior Palestinians." The 95 percent figure comes from Bill Clinton's proposal, to which both sides responded favorably but with "reservations." According to Barak, Israel's "reservations" filled twenty pages.

But even if there was such an offer, we must be careful not to equate territory with sovereignty. Israel can retain its Matrix of Control by establishing a Palestinian Bantustan. Even if the Palestinians "receive" 85 to 90 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, they still would not have the prerequisites of national self-determination: coherent territory, economic viability and genuine sovereignty. Retaining just 10 to 15 percent of the West Bank would enable Israel to:

Create a Palestinian entity truncated into at least four cantons—the northern, central and southern parts of the West Bank and Gaza—which would render a Palestinian state non-viable and easily controlled by Israel.

Consolidate its strategic settlement blocs around the city of Ariel and in the Greater Jerusalem area, blocs that comprise 150,000 Israeli settlers—or 80 percent of the West Bank settlers. In doing so it would create territorial contiguity for Israeli settlements while dividing the West Bank into isolated Palestinian islands; remove Jerusalem from the Palestinian sphere, thus cutting out the economic heart of any Palestinian state; and leave Israel in control of the West Bank's water resources.

Retain control over highways and Palestinian movement. Over the past decades, and especially during the Oslo "peace process," Israel has been constructing a system of major highways and "bypass roads" designed to link its settlements, create barriers between Palestinian areas and incorporate the West Bank into Israel proper. Even if physical control over the highways is relinquished, strategic parts will remain under Israeli control. There are other restrictions as well. The "safe passages" from Gaza to the West Bank, crucial to the viability of a Palestinian state, will continue to be controlled by Israel, and Israel insists on retaining rights of "emergency deployment" to both the highway system and to the Jordan Valley, severely compromis-

ing Palestinian sovereignty. Indeed, the highways would retain the status of Israeli "security roads," meaning that Palestinian development along them would remain limited.

The settlement blocs and highway grid play key roles in the process of incorporating the West Bank and East Jerusalem into Israel proper. Again, seemingly innocuous planning lies at the center of this supremely political program. As early as the late 1970s, Ariel Sharon, then head of the Ministerial Committee on Settlements, presented a Master Plan of incorporation that called for contiguous Israeli urban growth straddling both sides of the "Green Line."

The massive Trans-Israel Highway project, now nearing completion, provides a new "central spine" for Israel along the West Bank. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis will be resettled in the many towns and cities planned along the length of the highway, especially along the Green Line and in areas of Galilee heavily populated by Arabs. New and expanded Israeli cities, towns and settlements on both sides of the Green Line form a new "metropolitan core-region" in which metropolitan Tel Aviv meets metropolitan Jerusalem, which in turn stretches across most of the central West Bank. The Trans-Israel Highway, integrated with the highways and settlement blocs of the West Bank, reconfigures the entire country and moves the entire population center of the country eastward.

#### The Political Role of Israeli Planners

The schemes for imprisoning Palestinians in impoverished islands while leaving Israel in control of the entire country—the essence of Barak's "generous offer"—dovetail with strategies to "transfer" them out of the country altogether, the thrust of the Sharon government's policies. Looked at in a historical perspective, they form part of a century-long program of displacement—*nishul* in Hebrew—in which the Jews reclaim the country as their exclusive patrimony.

In this process planning has always played a key role. It started with the placement of Jewish settlements before 1948 to determine Israel's future borders. Land use policies following the '48 war were intended to alienate Palestinian refugees from their lands. Current policies allow settlement expansion, displace Palestinians from their land, and result in house demolitions and the incorporation of the Occupied Territories into Israel proper. As both a means to control a subordinate population and as an "invisible" way of conquering land, planning has few equivalents.

Indeed, the active involvement of professional planners, most of whom identify politically with the peace movement, raises thorny questions about subordinating professional activities to political and financial considerations. Even more troubling, it may indicate that planners are either not aware of the political uses of their work, or simply do not want to know. In a situation where occupation, repression and displacement are largely carried out by administrative means that involve planning and law, these are issues that deserve wide debate. At the very least, Israeli planners should be confronted with the implications of their professional work at international conferences or in university settings.

# Planning at the Frontline: Notes From Israel

By Oren Yiftachel  
*Fall, 2002*

There are few societies in which urban and regional planning has been so central to nation-building and state policy as Israel. Over the years, Israeli planning has been a pivotal activity for reshaping the landscape according to the Zionist image of a modern, European-like settler society, while erasing its Palestinian-Arab past and present. Planning did not only locate, but had much to do with creating the Zionist nation, through the narratives, values, heroes and practices embedded in settling and building the land.

Planning in Israel has had many faces, including a major welfare role as provider of housing, land and communities to accommodate the masses of Jewish refugees and immigrants that flocked to Israel starting in the 1940s, following the European holocaust. During the same era, it also facilitated the absorption of masses of Jews fleeing from the Arab world. These benign activities have continued during the last decade with large-scale planning for immigrant Ethiopian and Russian communities.

## Ethnocratic Planning

Despite this benign aspect of Israeli planning, one of the most prominent aspects has been the use of planning for “Judaizing” the contested land of Israel/Palestine. It has thus functioned as a centerpiece in a settler society driven by a project of ethnic expansion and domination, chiefly at the expense of Palestinian-Arabs. This occurred first within “the Green Line” (the official border of sovereign Israel, within which Arabs are citizens) in the years following the 1948 Palestinian nakbah, when two-thirds of Palestinians fled or were driven out of their homeland. Israeli planning was heavily involved in confiscating refugee lands and settling them with Jews.

Later, expansionist planning took place in the occupied Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, where hundreds of Jewish settlements were implanted as colonial outposts, supported by a thick network of roads, industrial areas and army installations. I have termed this ethnocratic planning, enhancing the expansionist territorial and economic goals, aspirations and interests of a dominant ethnic group while ignoring or deligitimizing the aspirations and needs of other communities.

Since space is the core of the tension between Jews and Palestinians, spatial planning (that is, management of land use, settlement patterns and development) has been a major bone of contention. Under such circumstances, eth-

nocratic planning has become a major generator of ethnic conflict over land, settlement, boundaries and development, typically between the powerful Jewish majority and marginalized Palestinian-Arab communities.

Nonetheless, the oppressive aspects of planning have not been reserved only for Arabs. During the 1950s, the massive Judaization project saw the planned settlement of most Mizrahi Jews (hailing from Arab countries) to the state’s distant peripheries, chiefly into twenty-seven newly constructed urban localities named, somewhat ironically, “development towns.” These quickly became, due to planning policies, centers of Mizrahi isolation and deprivation, and since then the Mizrahi have remained the most disadvantaged sector in Israeli-Jewish society.

## Privatization of Confiscated Lands

During the last decade, powerful elements within Jewish society have pushed an agenda of privatization, putatively aimed at “freeing” development and enhancing the economy, but concentrating resources in an ever-decreasing group of major economic players. Here too, land became a major bone of contention, given the vesting of large state land resources with the country’s economic elites, most of whom are Ashkenazi (formerly European) Jews. These lands, the majority of which were confiscated earlier from Palestinian refugees, are now being developed by agricultural landholders and several large developers, with the regressive effect of transferring public (state) resources into private pockets. This has accelerated a process of social polarization, causing ethnic and class disparities among Jews to rise to unprecedented levels.

Hence, over the years much of Israeli planning has had a conservative, often reactionary, character, which I have described elsewhere as “the dark side of planning.” This trend, however, somewhat waned during the 1990s, with growing signs of democracy and equality in the planning and land systems. But during the last two years, in the wake of the Palestinian “al-Aqsa” uprising, the Israeli (Jewish) planning agenda has returned to a more aggressive, expansionist and developmentalist mode.

The recent Jewish-Palestinian violent conflict, which has claimed over 2,000 victims (1,400 of them Palestinian), and which has been accompanied by waves of murderous Palestinian terror and an Israeli reconquest of Palestinian cities, has provided a background against which Jewish planners and developers could move quickly to enhance

their long-term interests. This is all couched in terms of “national goals,” within a public discourse thick with a strange (and often contradictory) mixture of anti-Arab and pro-development sentiments. This did not occur without opposition, but the conservative agenda has indeed recaptured center stage.

To illustrate these trends, I have chosen two telling episodes from the recent volatile chronicles of Israeli planning that deal with coercion, privatization and Israel’s ethnocratic planning.

#### Episode One: Planning with Poisonous Chemicals

On February 14, 2002, several light planes were sent by the Israeli government to spray 12,000 dunams of crops with poisonous chemicals. The destroyed fields had been cultivated for years by Bedouin Arabs in the southern Negev region, on land they claimed as their own. Avigdor Lieberman, the minister responsible for land management, explained, “We must stop their illegal invasion into state land by all means possible. The Bedouins have no regard for our laws. In the process we are losing the last resources of state lands. One of my main missions is to return the power to the Land Authority in dealing with the non-Jewish threat to our lands.”

Lieberman’s words clearly exposed a forceful separation between Arab and Jewish citizens, with expressions such as “our” land, “our” law and “their” invasion, seeking to demarcate sharply the limits of identity and rights in “the land” (in Hebrew *ha’aretz*) as belonging first and foremost to its Jewish citizens.

Not surprisingly, Lieberman (a West Bank settler, and thus, ironically, an illegal invader himself!) failed to mention that the Bedouins are citizens of the state of Israel, and hence can, and should, be allocated state lands to fulfill their residential and agricultural needs. This is especially so of the land of their ancestors, the very area of the destroyed fields.

The minister also failed to explain why the state used such violence and never attempted to resolve the issue by administrative or legal means. Worse still, he overlooked the ramifications of this unprecedented brutal attack: a growing sense of alienation among Bedouin Arabs, once a community anxious to integrate into Israeli society.

This brutal incident is but the last in a long string of ethnocratic planning measures aimed against the Negev Bedouins. In the late 1940s they were concentrated in a small area, the least fertile area of southern Israel, and were placed under military rule. During the 1960s, military rule was replaced by a plan to urbanize the (previously semi-nomadic) Bedouins. The state planned to move them into seven towns and clear the rest of the land they occupied for Jewish settlement and military purposes.

A large number of Bedouins, however, refused to be force-

fully urbanized, as such a move would necessitate giving up their land claims. They were subsequently declared by the state to be “invaders”—illegally occupying their ancestors’ land—and their villages (or shantytowns) were classified as “unrecognized.” For three decades the state has attempted to force their migration into the towns with a range of pressure tactics, including denying many social services and refusing to build physical infrastructure or initiate plans for the village.

A common practice involves house demolition. Since no plans existed for the villages, land permits were impossible to obtain, and all houses were deemed illegal. During the 1990s, for example, the state demolished over 1,400 such homes, generating constant fears among the Bedouin citizens, and growing hostility against the state. This has most recently become patently clear, causing the state to prepare plans for several new “recognized” Bedouin localities, beyond the original seven towns, which had been regarded for decades by policymakers as a “final number.” But until such plans come to fruition, we can expect further confrontations between a state driven by the goal of Judaizing the land, and the indigent Bedouins, who seek to reside and cultivate their traditional lands. Given this, the bitter words of Hassan abu-Quider, a Bedouin activist echo loudly, “Only in one instance shall we, the Bedouin Arabs, get what they say is full and equal rights in the Jewish state: only if miraculously we’ll stop occupying, needing or using any land. Then we shall receive what we truly deserve—full air rights...”

#### Episode Two: Planning by Intimidation

In early 2002, the struggle over controlling agricultural land in Israel entered a new stage of escalation, in readiness for an expected watershed decision of the Israeli High Court of Justice. The Court was about to rule whether Jewish agricultural settlers, who had leased public land for farming purposes, could claim profits from urban redevelopment, or whether a freeze should be placed on such development.

The main challenger to the farmers’ aim to redevelop the land was the Democratic Mizrahi Rainbow—a nongovernmental organization (NGO) promoting social justice in the distribution of public resources, especially pertaining to economically deprived Mizrahi Jews. In February 2000, the Rainbow launched the High Court petition against land redevelopment and the allegedly illegal privatization of public land held by collective agricultural settlements, and has since been joined by a number of other civic organizations. The main defenders of privatization and development came, not surprisingly, from among the Ashkenazi Jews, who have traditionally occupied the upper strata of society, and from large-scale land developers, who have struck many lucrative redevelopment deals on agricultural lands.

During the early months of 2002, a smear-and-scare ⇨

campaign was launched by some of the major landholders. Taking advantage of the public atmosphere charged by violent Israeli-Palestinian hostilities, they began to claim that the challengers were driven by “a secret goal of flooding the country with Palestinian refugees.” In large road signs, newspaper advertisements and numerous media appearances, the speakers for the agricultural lobby heaped scorn on the Rainbow and its leading activists, claiming that they “aim to destroy the state of Israel...have become enemies and haters of Jewish settlement.” Attorney and large-scale developer Shraga Biran, who represents many holders of agricultural land, issued similar accusations in the brief he submitted to the High Court:

The acceptance of this petition, God forbid, is the acceptance of a post-Zionist, anti-national argument...Would this honored Court accept an argument that property should be taken from the Jewish public in the name of the [Palestinian] Right of Return? ... In a time of terrorism and bloodshed, this honored Court is asked to totally reject the petitioner's attempt...

Responses of the Israeli public to the scare campaign were mixed. The Rainbow issued several strong statements refuting the allegations. But the responses of the main social interests aggrieved by the marked inequality of the Israeli land system were particularly illuminating.

The Development Town Forum, comprised of the mayors from most peripheral, and mainly Mizrahi, development towns, began to mobilize and supported the Rainbow challenge, claiming that they have been discriminated against for years by the farmers' firm grip on national land. As noted by Haim Barbibai, mayor of the peripheral development town of Kiryat Shemoneh:

Finally we have a group attempting to address long-term inequalities of the Israeli system of land. Their accusation of “secret” goals to help the Palestinian refugees is nothing but a farce which aims to divert attention from the ongoing “strangling” of our towns by the agricultural settlers. It will not change our resolve to support the Rainbow challenge or other initiatives which promote our rights.

Leaders of the second main group deprived by the Israeli land system, the Palestinian Arabs, were more skeptical. For example, Hanna Suyaid, mayor of the peripheral Arab town of Ilabun, and head of the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, noted:

It is interesting that the Rainbow claims

to advance goals of social justice, but why is this limited to Jews only? They want to stop Jewish farmers and developers from making large profits, but forget to mention that the original holders of the land were Arabs, and that they should be the main beneficiaries of any land redistribution; as usual, Jews fight among themselves, at the expense of the Arabs.

### The Dark and Light Sides of Planning

What do these episodes tell us about Israeli planning at the beginning of the 21st century? On the one (right?) hand, they reflect the remaining strength of the oppressive elements in society, which spare no effort in manipulating planning procedures and mechanisms to advance their own nationalist and class interests. These are clearly apparent everywhere in Israeli society, where anti-Arab and pro-development planning is taken for granted and the order of the day. This indeed reveals a dark side of planning, running roughshod over professional and social considerations of equality, justice and even efficiency.

But on the other (left?) hand, and perhaps as a consequence of the above, Israel has also seen the establishment of new civic organizations. These attempt to challenge, bypass or influence the stagnant political process, caught as it is in the firm grip of Zionist-capitalist hegemony. Such organizations have become conspicuous in the planning, land use and development fields, and include: Bimkom (architects and advocacy planners); the Mizrahi Rainbow (mentioned above); Adva (an NGO working on social equality); the Committee Against Home Demolition; Adala (a legal center working for equality for Israel's Arab citizens); the Arab Center for Alternative Planning; Sikkuy (an NGO for Arab-Jewish equality); and the Negev Forum for Coexistence.

In recent years, these organizations have generated new discourses in the Israeli public sphere. They have pushed planning, legal, media and political agendas toward exposing the injustices of the current land and planning systems, and have offered progressive alternatives. They have worked with peripheral and marginalized communities, in the best tradition of activist advocacy planning “from below.” Such organizations represent a “lighter side” of Israeli planning. Needless to say, between these two imaginary dark and light poles there exist a multitude of organizations, agendas, discourses and practices which oscillate between the two.

But make no mistake: the nascent progressive organizations, working outside the Israeli planning establishment, are no match yet for the established, conservative interests. The nationalist and economic forces connected to the centers of power and influence are far stronger

and far more versed in the mechanisms of legal, economic and violent power that they use to advance their goals. But the growing appearance and steadfast activity of progressive organizations does give some hope that Israel can one day become what is so often promised in the powerful texts emerging from the ancient place—a land of peace and justice.

[For an elaboration on this discussion, see Yiftachel, O. (1999), "Ethnocracy: the Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine," *Constellations: International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*, Vol. 6: 3: 364-390; Yiftachel, O. (2000), "Social Control, Urban Planning and Ethno-Class

Relations: Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24: 2: 417-434; Yiftachel, O., Alexander, I., Hedgcock, D. and Little, J., editors (2001), *The Power of Planning: Space of Control and Transformations*, Kluwer Academic Publications, Boston.]

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## War and the Urban "Geopolitical Footprint"

By Michael Dudley  
*Spring, 2003*

Mushroom clouds blossoming over dense cityscapes. Thousands of gun emplacements throughout Baghdad promising fierce resistance. Civilians killed by the hundreds in open marketplaces, in cars, in their homes. Brutal building-by-building urban warfare, with heritage sites thousands of years old destroyed in the crossfire. Thick oily smoke billowing through the city in a vain attempt to misdirect missiles.

It should, I hope, be apparent to the reader that the impacts of this war are germane to a whole range of concerns integral to the planning profession. Iraq's built environment, its infrastructure, its social fabric, the health and well-being of its impoverished citizens, its natural environment—all have been harmed during this conflict. For these reasons alone this war should be of great concern to urban planners. And indeed, in March, shortly after the attack on Iraq began, the Planners Network Steering Committee released a statement citing six compelling reasons why planning professionals should oppose the attack (see page 7). Yet planners have far more at stake in these events than one might initially suppose.

I argue that planners must now consider the geopolitical footprints of our practice, in much the same way that we have begun to consider the ecological footprints of buildings, cities and metropolitan areas. The geopolitical footprint is not a new issue, but it has taken on new forms in the present era of globalization.

However much the Iraqi people needed and deserved to be free of America's former ally Saddam Hussein, the level of cynicism both internationally and in the US over the actual motives for the war is substantial. According to critics, the Bush administration was always more motivated by securing a geopolitical and strategic advantage over Mideast oil than by neutralizing alleged

banned weapons. The recent controversial ad campaign from the Detroit Project linking gas-guzzling SUVs to terrorism played off of the fact that so much of the oil consumed in developed countries comes from unstable Islamic nations where the geopolitical and military positioning for control over oil has—literally—fueled intense anti-American sentiment that cannot be long ignored or contained.

Before and during the war, one of the principal arguments raised against the attack on Iraq was that the sight of Americans killing large numbers of civilians would be just what Osama bin Laden and other violent fundamentalists would need to spawn more terrorism aimed at the US. Media images of Iraqis mourning over their dead and bloody children in the streets of their blasted cities only confirm that this anger is all too real.

### Dark Times for Urban America

The level of anti-American rage now gestating portends dark times ahead for urban America, for it is more than likely that attacks of revenge against the US will take place in its cities. Attorney General John Ashcroft's pre-war announcement that raised the "terror alert" from yellow to orange specifically referred to "soft targets" such as hotels and apartment blocks. More 9/11-style attacks aimed at public spaces, office towers, crowds, apartment buildings, public transit and other urban areas would not only be a tragic catastrophe, they could easily undermine all that we, as planners, work for. Even if no such attack actually materializes, in an urban environment filled with the continual threat of one (even if voiced only by American officials) it may become increasingly difficult to get people to take subways, visit parks and fill arenas—much less care about "sustainability." The civil and nurturing urban life we strive to create may become almost unreachable. ⇨

All this makes it crystal clear that planners have neglected something very important—that international conflict and injustice are directly related to, and can have an impact on, our planning practice in North America. The context for all our planning, i.e., the wealth and prosperity which we have for so long considered normal, was always a mirage. It was only made possible by globalized inequities so grotesque that they could not endure forever. The philosopher Wendell Berry has said that the globalized economy, which considers such disparities essential and has such devastating consequences for both communities and the planet, has become indistinguishable from a war economy. (See “The Failure of War,” *Resurgence* 215 (2002) 6-9.)

In *Our Ecological Footprint* (New Society Press, 1995), Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees point out that our cities appropriate resources from regions outside their own boundaries. A major goal of urban sustainability is to lessen this so-called “ecological footprint” and reduce the amount of “appropriated resources” taken from elsewhere. What is often overlooked is that the extraction of those many resources occurs within a variety of geopolitical contexts—and in the case of oil, it is a violent and repressive one. Almost all of the nations in the Middle East from which most of the world’s oil is derived are oligarchies or dictatorships. Our cities, in other words, have “geopolitical footprints” as well as ecological ones; they “appropriate” stability, democracy and freedoms from resource-rich but politically oppressive regions around the world.

The link between this geopolitical footprint and the current war is not difficult to find. In articles printed in the UK in the months leading up to the war, British public health professor Ian Roberts goes so far as to blame urban planners for the crisis. He argues that the very reason the United States is so intent on attacking oil-rich Iraq is because of the sprawling car-dependent cities planners have designed. (See full story at [www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,877203,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,877203,00.html).)

#### Our Planning is Global

Awareness of the geopolitical footprint of the city confronts planners with new priorities. We can no longer, for instance, see our professional practice in solely local, regional or even national terms; we cannot simply be “American” or “Canadian” planners. Our work occurs in global and geopolitical contexts that we ignore not only at our peril, but the peril of people a world away. We can no longer design a car-dependent suburb without acknowledging that the fuel needed to shuttle its residents to work and home each day may have come from a country seething with hatred for America, or an environmentally and politically ravaged place such as the Nigerian delta. We cannot design a discount “power center” without knowing that most of the cheap goods that fill its shelves have been manufactured in sweatshops in unstable and repressive countries with some of the worst human rights

and environmental records on Earth. We cannot assist in designing an office park for multinational corporations that have been accused of unethical or criminal practices internationally without becoming a participant in those acts.

It is, ultimately, not too much of a stretch to say that the decisions we make regarding the local built environment are fundamentally connected to the peace and stability of the world.

I urge the planning profession to consider two principles. First, consider that war—and in particular, this war—should be opposed and disavowed. Our practice is about working with people to create livable environments, not about imposing new order on the unwilling and unconsulted. Second, we need to re-evaluate the context of our work in a world of want and violence. The March anti-war statement from Planners Network is correct; we cannot entirely “design” security into our cities, any more than the Department of Homeland Security can stop terrorism through vigilance alone, and particularly not through a clampdown on civil liberties. We must begin by working towards a more equitable world where resources are not hoarded and squandered by a few. We must begin by empowering and working with—and most importantly listening to—the disenfranchised and disempowered. We must begin by respecting other cultures and traditions, not imposing our own homogeneous models of development and political structures on them. Such processes can only be accomplished through collaboration and multilateralism, and they are quite in opposition to the “unipolar world” currently being pursued by the Bush administration and its intellectual partner, the “Project for the New American Century.”

While such strategies can hardly be considered novel, they have taken on a new imperative. What we need is nothing less than “regime” change—regime in the sense of a pattern of action. We need to begin to transform our world from one of exploitation and immoral inequities enforced through globalized capital and military might, to a more just world where all regions are empowered to better and more fairly use and manage their own resources for the benefits of their own citizens, and to do so within organic political structures arrived at from within.

Planners are significant players in creating the sort of world we want. We need to ask ourselves if the world we are now seeing emerge is one in which we want to share credit. The peace movement did not stop the attack on Iraq. But perhaps, in what I shall optimistically refer to as the “post-war” world, planners can work to prevent its sequel.

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# URBAN PLANNERS OPPOSE THE WAR IN IRAQ

We are urban planners and professionals in the fields of community preservation and development. We oppose the U.S. war in Iraq as a politically unacceptable means of resolving the problem of disarmament and dealing with the despotic regime in Iraq. The Bush administration has turned its back on the United Nations and proceeded despite overwhelming opposition throughout the world. The invasion of Iraq increases instability and heightens the dangers of terrorism throughout the world.

Urban planners and professionals in community development have special reasons for opposing this war.

1. Urban planners are dedicated to the preservation and development of cities. We cannot support a war that destroys the physical and social infrastructure of cities. Baghdad is a city of 4.5 million people and large numbers of civilians will die as the result of U.S. bombing.

2. Urban planning is concerned with human welfare and improvement in the quality of life. We cannot support a war that will bring widespread hunger, homelessness and extensive human suffering.

3. The earliest cities were founded in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in what is now Iraq. The numerous ancient historic treasures in Iraq are threatened by the extensive U.S. bombing campaign.

4. Urban planning in America is based on principles of participation and equity. We cannot support a war that imposes the will of the mightiest nation in the world on a population that is helpless and at a foreign military force. U.S. occupation of Iraq will only expand inequalities and facilitate the plunder by the U.S. of Iraqi resources and labor.

5. Democratic urban planning is based on preserving and developing open and integrated cities with accessible public spaces. The U.S. is reinforcing the establishment of elite, walled enclaves in the Middle East, and on its own border. The U.S. supports, through its foreign aid, the construction of walls, very much like the Berlin Wall, that divide people based on ethnicity.

6. Since 9/11, urban planners are being called upon to consider security concerns in the urban development process. We do not believe there are any methods for building "defensible cities" simply by using physical design. Public security is best guaranteed by building cities and societies that minimize social inequality and maximize social interaction. We are concerned that the Bush administration's homeland security efforts are reinforcing inequalities, creating more fear and instability, and increasing social isolation.

We call on all professionals in the urban planning and community development fields to join the global protest against the U.S. war.

The Planners Network Steering Committee, 2003

Tom Angotti  
Ann Forsyth  
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Barbara Rahder  
Ken Reardon  
Gwen Urey  
Ayse Yonder

# Strategic Planning and Urban Competition: The Agenda of Multilateral Agencies in Brazil

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By **Fabricio Leal de Oliveira**  
*September/October, 2000*

In Brazil today, the same solutions for cities come up in almost all forums, debates, and institutions: sustainability and competition. Competition, which is expressed through strategic urban planning, affects all local policy, including environmental policy. It favors relations between local government and entrepreneurs, the actors seen as most capable of carving out the city's place in the world market.

In Brazil, the main event launching strategic planning was the arrival in 1993 of a delegation from Cataluña (Spain) in Rio de Janeiro. They were invited by Mayor César Maia, who was elected by a right wing coalition. The Seminar "Urban Strategies - Rio Barcelona" introduced a new discourse on city administration which soon spread throughout the country and to other cities in Latin America. The consultants, TUBSA (Tecnologías Urbanas S. A.), among them Jordi Borja and Manuel de Forn, took part in seminars in many countries and gave advice to other Latin American cities, helping governments of many different political orientations.

The model of urban strategic planning adopted was an adaptation of the business model of strategic planning to the public sector. Guiding the urban model are powerful certainties about economic globalization, the inevitability of competition between cities, and the need to establish new relations between public and private sectors.

In the strategic planning discussions, the issues are not urban transformation based on justice or truth, or the possibilities of a future not exclusively dictated by the present. On the contrary, strategic planning is used to approach the future by following more or less current trends, and elaborating strategies to manage them efficiently. The diagnosis and prescription for the city are almost always the same. It needs modern infrastructure and new compromises between public and private actors, to carry out events such as conferences, international fairs, Olympic games, and festivals. It needs to reform public administration, usually involving privatization and contracting out public services. There is a portfolio of actions and projects often recurring throughout the world. These include renewal of central areas, the development of teleports in big cities, redevelopment of port areas, rehabilitation of commercial areas, and the construction of roadways.

## Investments to Attract Investments

The projects in strategic plans are legitimized when they are considered capable of inserting the city in a globalized world so it is competitive. To determine this, all actors in the elaboration of the plan should reach "consensus." However, since the accomplishment of the plan's actions and projects depends on private resources, the actors most able to make investments define the plan's content.

In strategic planning, and in some agendas sponsored by international development agencies, the social actors are listed according to their relevance. The notion of "relevant actors" implies the opposite - "irrelevant actors" not directly involved or necessary to the process. In fact, the "relevant actors" category, actually, refers to the actors most capable of investment and influence, which excludes most of the population. In the Rio de Janeiro Strategic Plan experience, a partnership between City Hall, the Commercial Association, and the Industrial Federation conducted the planning process despotically and shut out segments of little strategic relevance to them.

Under the mantle of "consensus" between all social actors, the conflicts in the city are hidden and people with no participation in the final decisions are converted into "authors" and invited to applaud their own defeat. In the texts on urban strategic planning and in at least some of the international and environmental agendas for the cities, the solutions presented to the cities are often based on the assumption of "a truce on internal conflicts...[or for an] internal social peace," according to Professor Carlos Vainer. According to Vainer, when the purpose is to expand competitiveness, the call for the participation of local communities is a call for an "abdication [of power] in favor of charismatic leaders who represent the entrepreneurial project."

The prescription given to local governments includes steps to simplify rules and policies, adopt an entrepreneurial attitude open to the development of partnerships, and efforts to guarantee the "quality of urban life," a "livability" that would attract and keep skilled workers.

The documents supported by the World Bank are the most transparent in the support for competitiveness, and for limiting people's participation through a consensus

imposed from outside. The main topics are administration, decentralization, public-private partnerships, consensus, experimentation, the diffusion of best practices, deregulation, institutional development, and the obsolescence of comprehensive planning. And they never forget to emphasize poverty relief.

The Bank's discourse on sustainability is basically the same. According to Fernando Rojas, who wrote Sustainable Cities for the World Bank, the development agencies should see "local institutional development as a continuous and interactive process of consultation," and should work for the "creation of learning environments that could be receptive to the continuous incorporation of lessons learned through the period of implementation of projects." This modest suggestion, however, does not contradict the fact that rules keep

being defined by "international consensus." Rojas gives detailed advice about citizen participation, such as how to avoid the interference of political parties while making decisions, and how to avoid public hearings which could be controlled and manipulated by the most powerful members of the community. Oddly, Rojas does not question with the same emphasis the building of public-private partnerships, which certainly involve the participation of powerful members of the local entrepreneurial elite. Throughout his prescription for the task managers of international development agencies, Rojas emphasizes the danger represented by an undesirable invasion of politics in the process of city management. According to Rojas, the development agency's program should stimulate and institute public-private partnerships that incorporate local governments as promoters and coordinators, motivate local actors to partici- ⇨

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pate on the basis of their own private interests, and help relieve poverty in the short, medium, and long terms.

This depoliticizing of the relations between local public sector and entrepreneurial elites, and the denigration of politics, which could pollute the relations among local government, national government and political parties, take us back to a technocratic representation of the city. The participation of the community is welcome only when it serves to legitimize the "evident" proposals of the globalized world and the inevitable competition between cities.

Brazil's Agenda 21, which is being produced with resources from the federal government and United Nations Development Program (UNDP), touches on the same themes. Consensus, public-private cooperation, shared administration and social control are the main points around which proposals are developed in the document "Sustainable Cities," which refers to Brazilian cities. Themes such as the reduction of social inequality through universal public services, environmental quality, public participation in decisionmaking, and housing for diverse social groups are presented not as goals in themselves but as tools for improvement of the "condition for city insertion in the world of competitiveness established regionally, nationally, and globally."

Public participation in the elaboration of this document was very limited. There was a three-day workshop and a one-day national seminar. Although workshop participants have contributed by making changes to the proposals, the basic ideas in the document were formulated in

advance and did not change at all. In the national seminar on Agenda 21, the amount of time given to debates was so limited that the majority of participants didn't even have time to speak.

The international discourse on sustainability fits in with the model of competition. In the name of a consensus almost everything can fit the sustainability guidelines. There is room for everything, from defending federal government policies to an open economy, guidelines set by multilateral agencies, and principles that compromise social equality and income redistribution. But the debate about urban sustainability also reflects the ideal of imposing the market as an efficient regulator of urban reproduction. In fact, in the documents produced by multilateral agencies, to manage sustainable cities always means promoting urban productivity and reinforcing competitive advantages.

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## Confronting Globalization: The Role of Progressive Planners

By Tom Angotti  
May 1996

Thinking global these days can make you gloomy.

All the progress made empowering communities and making national governments more responsible is threatened by the latest wave of globalization. Giant transnationals are moving capital around the globe at lightning speed, beyond the pale of government regulation and local activists. They're closing factories, downsizing, and abandoning workers and their communities in the North; they pillage and pollute in the South. They seem to be accountable to no one. They are using new information technology to expand the global assembly line and con-

quer every corner of the earth without a fast food outlet and ATM.

It also seems that with capital's new-found mobility there are relatively more constraints on labor. Labor protections are being undermined and regulations governing the quality of life in working class communities are under siege by right-wing ideologues. "Free trade" agreements like NAFTA spur the mobility of capital across borders but place greater penalties on the free movement of labor. And with the collapse of the Soviet Union, we are being told that all thoughts about an economic system based

on labor are utopian, the market is supreme, socialism is dead, and government, anyway, is socialism.

At the same time, global inequality is growing. Hunger, shantytown housing, polluted air and water, traffic-clogged streets, crime and violence are the reality for a majority of the world's urban inhabitants, who live in the former colonial countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Western world, with the United States in the lead, is having a grand banquet, consuming far more than its share of the world's resources and living off the surplus drained from the rest of the world. The Western world, Japan and a handful of "newly developed" countries continue to hog the lion's share of capital and commodities. This feast is warming and fouling the globe. And the most powerful of the onlookers are waiting to sit at the same table instead of planning a more sustainable menu.

But we have to go beyond this gloomy outlook. Things are bad, but not that bad.

We are two decades into a new phase of globalization (it all began at least 100 years ago) and much remains of the social reforms and welfare state institutions erected in response to early unbridled capitalism. Even in this North American free market paradise, the major New Deal reforms, though seriously threatened by the insurgent right wing in Congress, remain intact. More importantly, communities all over continue to build social relations based on cooperation instead of competition, social need instead of profit, people instead of property. Maybe it doesn't add up to a full-blown alternative like socialism. But it also cannot be said that within capitalism all social relations are based on profit and greed. In brief, confronting today's globalization there are yesterday's labor victories and many nascent alternatives.

The myth of the monolithic global market tends to paralyze political action and limit our ability to organize and plan for alternatives. And when we do act, we too often limit ourselves to the local level. It is easiest for planners to think locally and act locally. Planners growing up in the tradition of plain old pragmatism find it tempting to get lost in our own grass roots. What we need to learn how to do is to help build the power of historically disenfranchised communities, while fighting for national reforms and global alternatives.

#### Global Action

There now exists an alternative network of community-based organizations and planners that is helping to build community power, national reforms and global alternatives. We should join it. This is a loose network like Planners Network that brings together professionals and communities struggling against displacement and eviction, for better housing, health care, and education, and for a better quality of life. Part of this network has come together to participate in Habitat II -- the second United Nations

Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul in May/June 1996. During over a year of preparatory conferences and sessions, thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world came together to pressure governments and international agencies to pay attention to the needs of historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.

As a whole NGOs have helped to brake the neo-liberal escape from government responsibility. But not all NGOs, and the policies they advocate, are progressive. Indeed, some of them help reinforce the neo-liberal agenda of government downsizing by giving credence to the conservative myth of self-help. They offer themselves up as shining examples of the myth that unassisted self-help is the solution to urban problems.

#### The Myth of Self-Help

At international forums like Habitat II, the U.S. is a major advocate of self-help. The many grassroots efforts in the U.S. are offered as an example of the merits of local action. They glorify grassroots activism -- not to help empower the poor but to deny them any assistance from the powerful. This is a cover for national government disinvestment, downsizing and deregulation. It takes the pressure off international lending agencies (which are dominated by the U.S.) to back government expenditures that benefit the poor. Progressive planners need to contest this distorted view both at home and abroad.

The U.S. advocates of local action leave out any mention of the history of U.S. government subsidies of urban development. Through highway and infrastructure development, loan guarantees, and tax benefits, government intervention in the U.S. is plentiful and favors the wealthy. The public-private partnerships favor the private; the public is usually the junior partner.

In reality, self-help is a survival strategy for the majority of the world's urban population. It describes the way most poor people are forced to act because they don't have the resources available to buy urban services in the marketplace. It is telling that most progressive NGOs are in fact committed to political agendas that call not for self-help but for greater government aid to grassroots efforts.

#### Decentralization and Local Control

Another crusade led by the U.S. is for decentralization and local government control. While real decentralization of power is sorely needed everywhere, for the most part the U.S. and the global aid establishment propose decentralization as a cover for national government downsizing, privatization and withdrawal of assistance to low-income communities.

The U.S. federal system is often seen as a model for ⇨

decentralized government. Home rule is equated with democracy. Not discussed is how powerful central government policies support private growth. Nor are the racial and class divisions between central cities and suburbs that are reinforced by local home rule.

Local and national efforts to improve cities need to be informed by a global vision or we can easily end up endorsing simplistic calls for decentralization and grassroots initiative. Progressive planners should find ways to support local efforts in community development and planning that contribute to broader structural change at the national and global levels. If we are not aware of the global trends and do not act to confront them, our local efforts can solidify the international structure of poverty and inequality.

#### Unsustainable Sprawled Growth

The urban agenda needs to be strongly linked with the global environmental agenda by pointing to the wasteful process of urbanization propagated in the West. This is an issue that planners should be especially concerned with as it directly concerns the work we do.

Urban development and planning in the U.S. are dominated by a pro-growth mentality, spurred by the real estate, auto and oil industries. Metropolitan growth is sprawled to

accommodate the private auto as the main transportation mode. Urban sprawl consumes large amounts of land and encourages higher rates of energy consumption and waste than more compact forms of development. In large part because of its sprawled metropolitan regions, the U.S. is the largest source of carbon dioxide in the world, and a major contributor to global warming.

Reliance on the auto not only wastes energy and pollutes the environment, but wastes human resources because people spend excessive time in traffic. In international forums, the U.S. is relatively silent about sprawl. The main strategies it advances for dealing with its consequences is treatment of tail-pipe emissions and alternative fuels. By themselves, these strategies can help rationalize sprawled growth and permit greater auto use without necessarily lowering pollution levels.

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## Transnationalism, Not Assimilation

By Arturo Sanchez

July 1999

The contemporary urban landscape is rapidly being transformed by massive waves of non-European immigration. This movement of Third World peoples to the "American City" is viewed by many influential decisionmakers as problematic. In the popular mind, large-scale immigrant clusters are seen as sites of disorder and are associated with the breakup of the national social fabric. Policies of "containment and control" like the recent attacks on immigration, bilingual education, affirmative action, and welfare are presented as a re-imagining of what "America" could and should be.

This dubious linkage between urban disorder and immigration is not a new theme in US political history. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, urban immigration was seen as a threat to the established socio-political order by elites and the emerging middle class. As the United States made the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, reformers crafted a project to address the contradictions of the Industrial-immigrant City. The rise of urban planning was a central element in this reformist political project. Urban planning and municipi-

pal reform were presented as instruments for taming and assimilating the disorderly immigrant masses. This led to a form of community planning that stressed dominant "American" values as a way of homogenizing and assimilating the newly arrived immigrants into the "American way of life." It sought to obliterate the "subversive" immigrant baggage of unionism, ethnic solidarity, and their linkages to progressive political movements. In this context, urban planning was a clear and explicit political project. How do we address the massive transformations in the political economy today and the emerging role of immigration without falling into the anti-immigrant trap of earlier urban planning?

#### Problems with the Assimilationist Model

New forms of analysis are needed to address the issue of immigration. The mainstream conceptual framework used by most planners to analyze immigration was originally formulated during the early 20th century. This assumes that individuals made the decision to migrate based on rationally calculating costs and benefits. Moreover, it is argued

that the long-term outcome of immigration is the social, economic, and political assimilation of newcomers. This “crisis-driven” assimilationist model clearly stresses the individual migrant’s incorporation into the larger political economy. In a word, the process of “Americanization” is the linchpin that traditionally defines immigrant incorporation. Thus, the fundamental “problem” for the planners is supposedly to develop a set of strategies and policies to successfully incorporate immigrants into the national social fabric and the larger political economy.

Contemporary globalization undermines the traditional assumptions used to analyze and address the “immigrant problem.” New communication and transportation technologies compress time and space and facilitate the easy movement of people worldwide. This spatial integration has been complimented by a set of neo-liberal economic reforms at the international level that lubricate the flow of capital, technology, and commodities across national borders. Moreover, as the international economy shifts from a nation-centered system based on barriers and borders to one based on permeability and fluidity, many immigrant workers can move back and forth between their respective sending and receiving societies. For many people immigration is not a static place-specific phenomenon. Therefore, a significant number of today’s immigrants are able to maintain strong economic, cultural, political, and physical ties to their place of birth. Large numbers of immigrants are simultaneously carrying out their everyday lives in more than one nation at a time. This has called in to question the traditional notions of citizenship, entrepreneurship and cultural assimilation associated with place-specific immigration.

The qualitative and quantitative changes in international migration require us to develop a new conceptual framework and language. Recently, a small group of academics and activists has begun to develop a new way of looking at immigration as a transnational process that goes beyond the traditional geographical confines of the nation.

#### The New Perspective of Transnationalism

As the international economy becomes increasingly globalized, transnationalism is emerging as a perspective necessary for understanding the new and dynamic realities of immigration. Many sending nations, such as the Dominican Republic and Colombia, have instituted dual nationality provisions for their respective diasporic populations. These dual citizens now have the option of engaging in political activities in more than one nation. This new development undermines standard notions of political assimilation and what it means to be an “American” citizen. Dual nationality provisions have resulted in increased rates of US naturalization. Colombian and Dominican consular officials encourage their respective nationals to apply for US citizenship. Via dual citizenship, immigrants will be better positioned to ensure that their political, civic, and economic interests are addressed in both countries.

Transnationalism is undermining traditional notions regarding immigrant enterprises. Historically, immigrant entrepreneurial activity has been viewed as a stepping stone towards economic incorporation into the “American” mainstream. These notions are no longer valid (if they ever were). Today, many immigrant enterprises are deeply embedded in a web of transnational networks that condition the “inevitable” process of assimilation. For example, many Dominican, Colombian, and Mexican entrepreneurs in New York City invest their profits in small-scale enterprises and real estate in their countries of origin. In the short term, these investment strategies allow entrepreneurs to strengthen their economic solvency, solidify their social networks, and augment their social status back home. These emerging processes are undermining the place-bound notion of local economic activity. The transnationalization of petty commerce, investments, and family-remittances is reconstituting and linking business activities, labor markets, and consumption patterns in both receiving and sending societies.

#### Immigrant Networks

The dense social networks that immigrants maintain and cultivate have also reconstituted everyday cultural practices. Mainstream immigration theory views individual rational-economic calculations as the driving force behind migration. The transnationalism perspective argues that migration patterns are socially embedded. In other words, individuals don’t migrate; networks migrate.

The emphasis on immigrant networks as the point of departure brings to the foreground the notions of culture and ethnic maintenance. For example, many Mexican immigrants send their children home for extended visits as a strategy of cultural maintenance. The cultural and social dislocations that accompany transmigration are experienced in both sending and receiving societies. In both countries, population movements across borders have increased the levels of street crime and youth gangs, and have diminished traditional notions of social hierarchy and parental respect.

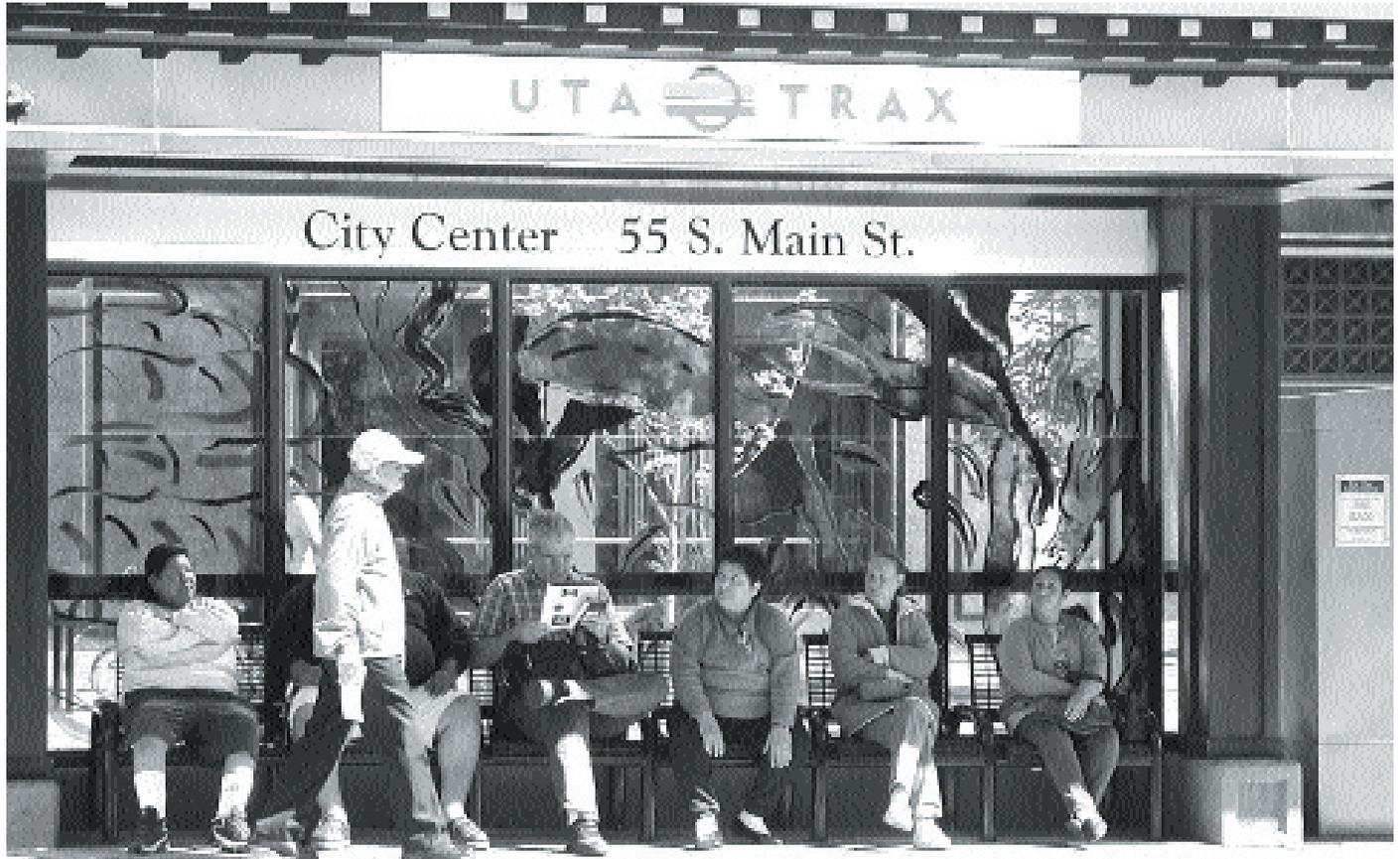
In sum, globalization and its offshoot, transnationalism, have fundamentally transformed immigration. In light of the resurgence of “American” nativism and conservative social movements, it would behoove progressive planners, activists, and academics to systematically address these new realities. By understanding the underlying political, economic, and social dimensions of transnational migration, progressives will be able to develop viable strategies for resisting the conservative onslaught against newcomers.

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# Transportation and Information

Photo By Ann Forsyth



Waiting for mass transit in Salt Lake City.

## The Costs of Auto Dependency

By Lisa Schreibman

*Fall, 2002*

We are paying dearly for the American love affair with the car. We pay through taxes and out of our pockets. The environmental costs are staggering, and the toll in deaths and injuries is comparable to the casualty lists from major wars.

Automakers tell us their products are increasingly safe because they have anti-lock brakes, side-impact airbags and lots of other gimmicks. But what they don't tell us is that dependence on cars means we are driving more, thereby negating the benefits of safety improvements.

The cost of cars and trucks should be compared with their benefits. The benefits: goods arrive cheaply, jobs get created and formerly remote places become more accessible. But since auto advertising reminds us on a daily basis of these advantages, I will refrain from doing the same.

### Economic Costs

In 2002, the federal government will spend \$27 billion on transportation. Of that, only \$3.3 billion will be dedicated to pollution-reducing transportation modes—mostly transit. \$200 million will go to planning, \$500 million will go to recreational trails and the rest will go to roadway spending. The money to pay for roads comes mostly from taxes on gasoline and tolls on roads and bridges. According to Stephen Goddard in *Getting There*, however, 40 percent of all the funds necessary to build roads come from general taxes levied on people regardless of their use of cars.

With the exception of interstate highway maintenance and a few pork projects explicitly mandated by federal transportation

policy, most federal money is allocated by the states. The states' modal choices vary widely. In 2000, Mississippi spent just 4.1 percent of its federal dollars on non-automobile modes, translating to \$.07 per Mississippian for bicycle and pedestrian projects and \$2.96 for transit. New York State, on the other hand, led the way in spending on alternatives to the private automobile, spending 47.5 percent of its federal funds on these modes. Per capita, \$.48 was spent on bicycles and pedestrians and \$45.02 on transit.

And that is just for capital construction. Car owners and goods purchasers—in other words all of us—also pay to operate vehicles. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), the average US household purchased \$7,118 in transportation services in 2000, accounting for 18.7 percent of the average household budget. That made transportation second only to shelter as a household expense. For households in the Houston-Galveston area, transportation costs now make up 22.1 percent of the average family budget and cost \$8,840 annually—more than the cost of housing, which is \$6,536 or 16.3 percent of the average family budget. Of total transportation costs in Houston, a mere 1.1 percent was spent on public transportation.

These operating costs do not impact everyone equally. According to Jane Holtz Kay in *Asphalt Nation*, “In large cities 60 percent of mass transit riders are women, and 48 percent are African American or Hispanic, more than twice their number in the population...The 9 percent of households that own no car comprise one-quarter of the population with the lowest economic strata and the most oppressed minorities among them.”

Of course, if the only costs of auto dependency were to personal finances, supplementing lower-income household budgets—similar to a food stamp program—might solve the problem. The societal payments, however, go far beyond cash outlays for roads, cars and gas.

#### Inefficient Mobility

The Texas Transportation Institute's 1999 Mobility Report found that Americans spend 6.2 billion hours stuck in traffic. The Federal Highway Administration figures that time to be worth about \$43 billion. Other economists give price tags as high as \$168 billion.

It's not easy to build our way out of the congestion mess. When delays are caused by highway widening projects, the time delay for present motorists may never be made up by the time savings of future motorists. According to STPP, the four-year project to widen I-15 in Salt Lake City, Utah from six to ten lanes will delay motorists fifteen minutes. When complete it will save drivers only seven minutes and take seven years to break even. An interchange project in northern Virginia that will widen I-95 is estimated to cause half-hour delays for eight years and save motorists only thirty seconds when complete. And this project will never break even.

#### Destruction of Open Space

Cars are reshaping land uses. The advent of the car allowed commerce, jobs and housing to be separated. As a result, compact urban cores have been replaced by suburban shopping malls, and dense neighborhoods by suburban sprawl. Each year from 1992 to 1997, 2.2 million acres of open space was developed for housing, according to the Department of Agriculture. That rate was 50 percent higher than in the previous decade.

Even in places that we do not associate with cars or trucks, roadways are being cut at a dizzying rate. According to the National Forest Service, there are 380,000 miles of roads crossing just 300,000 square miles of forest land.

#### Resource Depletion

Roads have tremendous impact on wildlife. According to Matthew Braunstein, writing for *AutoFree Times*, US drivers kill or maim 400 million animals each year—more than all hunters and animal experimenters combined. Roadways built in forests disrupt ecosystems and housing scattered across the landscape brings people and animals into conflict, with animals always losing.

Cars use energy resources. Again in *Asphalt Nation*, Holtz Kay estimates that in the United States more than 50 percent of oil, 64 percent of rubber, 33 percent of iron, 27 percent of aluminum and 20 percent of electronics and carpeting goes to producing and maintaining cars and trucks. To make cars run, we buy 133 billion gallons of gasoline a year.

#### Pollution and Health

Cars cause asthma attacks. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2001 found that acute asthma care events for children—those that required hospitalization—dropped by 41.6 percent in Atlanta when the city banned many passenger cars from the central city during the weekday morning peak period. That policy was instituted to keep traffic moving during the 1996 Olympics. As a result, the number of vehicles decreased by 22.5 percent and the ozone levels dropped by 27.9 percent. Auto emissions also trigger emphysema attacks and cause lung cancer and a host of other maladies. The American Lung Association calculates the medical cost arising from auto pollution at \$50 billion per year.

#### Casualties

Driving kills people. According to the US Census Bureau, in 1998 auto crashes caused six million injuries, two million of which were maiming and 42,000 of which were deaths. The West Nile virus, by comparison, will kill a few dozen people this year. Yet there will be no large-scale government-sponsored programs to eradicate cars and warn people ⇨

of their danger.

### National Transportation Policy

Although most of the news about auto use is bad—miles driven annually is up and costs for transportation are rising—federal policy has been moving in the right direction.

Transportation policy over the past ten years has shifted away from focusing solely on the automobile. In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for the first time let state and local governments use federal dollars for a broad range of transportation investments. Federal funds spent on transit almost doubled, from just over \$3 billion in 1990 to close to \$6 billion in 1999. The amount of federal money spent on bicycle and pedestrian projects grew from just over \$7 million at the beginning of the decade to more than \$222 million by 1999.

At the same time, spending on road repair increased from \$5.8 billion in 1991 to \$16 billion in 1999, growing from 39 percent of the federal transportation budget to 49 percent. Thus there was a dramatic reversal of using the vast majority of highway dollars to build new roads. With the federal shift, state and local money began to be spent on a wider variety of transportation uses. From 1990 to 1999, local and state funding of public transit grew by 34 percent, from about \$5.8 billion in

1990 to \$7.8 billion in 1999.

In one of the most progressive government policies, Fannie Mae, the largest source of financing for home mortgages, recently began a two-year \$100 million experiment that allows banks to lend more money to people with lower transportation costs. The brochure for what has come to be known as Location Efficient Mortgages (LEMs) compares a non-car owning household to a car-owning one, explaining that car owners have more costs and therefore should qualify for a smaller loan, assuming that incomes and properties purchased are equal.

But transportation policy doesn't exist in a vacuum. Dependency on autos may continue even while these new federal transportation policies evolve. Housing decisions must also support sustainable transportation, but because many housing policies are local by nature, decisions are made state by state, community by community. And as more federal transportation functions are shifted to the states, it will be more difficult to develop a sustainable national transportation system. We will continue to pay the price for auto dependency.

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## Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice

By Rich Stolz  
*Fall, 2002*

West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT) has fought for years to mitigate the high concentration of bus depots in this New York City neighborhood. Diesel exhaust has been linked by researchers to asthma and cancer, and WE ACT continues to demand that transportation agencies deal with the health impacts of their facilities.

This is one of many examples that show how low-income and minority communities face the negative impacts of transportation investments. Over the last decade, an environmental justice movement has arisen to fight the toxic dumps and polluting industries that are more likely to find their way into these communities. Transportation facilities, from depots to highways, can be just as threatening to health as chemical plants and incinerators.

In response to the inequities in transportation planning, most would agree that an equitable transportation system should:

- Ensure opportunities for meaningful public involvement in the transportation planning process, particularly for those

communities most directly impacted by projects or funding choices;

- Be held to a high standard of public accountability and financial transparency;

- Distribute the benefits and burdens from transportation projects equally across all income levels and communities;

- Provide high quality services—emphasizing access to economic opportunity and basic mobility—to all communities, but with an emphasis on transit-dependent populations; and

- Equally prioritize efforts to revitalize poor and minority communities and to expand transportation infrastructure.

### The Transportation Equity Network

In 1997, as Congress prepared to rewrite the federal transportation bill, grassroots organizations across the nation began to discuss how they might develop a low-income, grassroots response to transportation reauthorization. In January 1998 they formed a national coalition called the Transportation Equity Network (TEN). The Network developed the following issue priorities:

- Clarify federal law to require involvement of transit riders in the metropolitan transportation planning process;
- Require greater transparency in the transportation planning process so that local communities could better track how federal funds are spent in their metropolitan regions;
- Enact the Job Access and Reverse Commute program to address the welfare-to-work needs of local communities; and
- Ensure that local residents may have access to jobs on transportation construction projects built in or near their communities.

Since then, TEN, staffed by the Center for Community Change, has been an active presence in Washington, DC and in local communities across the nation, educating Congress and the Administration on the community impact of transportation planning and policy. Over the last three years, members of TEN have opened doors to significant breakthroughs in transportation policy.

### Sprawl and Metropolitan Equity

Nationwide, community residents are conscious of the impact of transportation investments on metropolitan growth patterns, particularly transportation's relationship to sprawl. It is not simply a coincidence that economic development tends to follow transportation investment further and further out into suburban communities.

From the perspective of low-income and minority communities, particularly in metropolitan areas, sprawl has a particularly pernicious and deleterious impact. A growing body of research, and an emerging consensus among researchers and advocates, asserts that in metropolitan areas the relationship between the concentrated poverty of central city communities and the relative affluence of suburban enclaves is not coincidental.

John A. Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota describes sprawl and regional fragmentation, and concentrated poverty and social inequity, as two sides of the same coin. ("How Sprawl Makes Us Poor" by John A. Powell in *The Albuquerque Journal*, March 22, 2002) The same factors that push and pull families away from urban centers and to the suburbs trap the families left behind. Those able to leave—who have the human and financial capital to do so—leave for better jobs and schools, and invest their financial capital in property likely to increase in value. Those left behind must deal with struggling schools, less human capital and fewer financial resources.

This metropolitan dynamic has driven a number of organizations to embrace strategies to arrest suburban growth and to create new lifelines to economic opportunity connecting inner-city communities to job-rich suburban centers. In southeastern Wisconsin, for example, a coalition of congregations known as Communities United to Serve Humanity (CUSH) is organizing in Kenosha County to

create a new bus line that will link the City of Kenosha to a job-rich suburban community further west.

### Welfare Reform and Transportation Deficits

The 1996 welfare reform law pushed millions of low-income families with limited skills into jobs. But studies show that up to 96 percent of welfare recipients do not own a car and two-thirds of the job growth in the nation's metropolitan areas has taken place in the suburbs. While the strong economy of the 1990s helped to mitigate the impact of existing transportation deficits in many communities, lack of reliable and convenient transportation remains a significant obstacle to families trying to pull themselves off welfare and out of poverty.

Many low- and moderate-income families struggle daily with inadequate public transportation systems, but the consequences of this transportation gap are felt most acutely by welfare recipients struggling to leave welfare for employment. Welfare recipients and employers alike consistently cite transportation as one of the most significant barriers to employment. Here are three examples:

- A study by the State of Illinois found that 45.7 percent of former welfare recipients were unable to find or retain employment because there were no employment opportunities nearby. Almost 41 percent reported transportation as a significant barrier to employment.
- A study by the State of Kansas found that lack of reliable transportation was the second biggest obstacle to finding and retaining employment.
- The Welfare to Work Partnership, a coalition of businesses, found that transportation was one of the most significant barriers to employment for their employees. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents identified transportation as the top barrier to employment.

Recognizing these same barriers in their own community, in 1998, the Interchurch Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE) in Jacksonville, Florida, initiated discussions with members of Jacksonville's local metropolitan planning organization, the local transportation authority and the local workforce investment board. Jacksonville's traditional hub-and-spoke transportation system helped connect residents from more distant neighborhoods to its central city, but failed to readily link residents in one neighborhood to another or to job opportunities in the suburbs. In response to ICARE's recommendations, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority and the local workforce investment board developed a joint strategy for new and expanded bus service to better connect job seekers to job opportunities.

### Los Angeles Bus Riders Union

One of the major breakthroughs of the transportation equity movement came when the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the Los Angeles ⇨

Bus Riders Union, a project of the Labor/Community Strategy Center, negotiated a binding consent decree as part of a court settlement. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits recipients of federal funds from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin. In the court case, Labor/Community Strategy Center and Los Angeles Bus Riders Union, et al v. Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the court essentially found that the MTA had wrongfully provided inferior services to Los Angeles' largely minority and low-income bus riders. Furthermore, the MTA was directing resources to its commuter rail lines, which served a more affluent and primarily white population, at the expense of its bus users. (See the article by Eric Mann in PN 149, Fall 2001.)

Beyond the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union and Harlem's WE ACT, there are scores of community-based efforts for transportation equity around the nation. They are the basis for the efforts of the Transportation Equity Network to

change national policies and priorities for transportation planning and spending.

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Rich Stolz is Deputy Director of Public Policy at the Center for Community Change and the coordinator of the Center's Transportation Equity Project. The Center, a thirty-five year old national non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, is committed to building the capacity of grassroots organizations in low-income and minority communities across the nation.

For more information on the groups mentioned above:

West Harlem Environmental Action:

[www.weact.org](http://www.weact.org)

Transportation Equity Network:

[www.transportationequity.org](http://www.transportationequity.org)

Labor/Community Strategy Center:

[www.thestrategycenter.org](http://www.thestrategycenter.org)

## Transportation in Toronto: Car Culture Is Alive and Well

By Janice Etter  
*Fall, 2002*

In the last few years, Toronto's newspapers have been full of references to "gridlock" as the city's major transportation challenge. Letters to the editor—mainly from car drivers—rant about the amount of time it takes to travel around the city, while municipal politicians debate widening expressways and giving priority to buses and streetcars on roads. Meanwhile, the police conduct periodic enforcement campaigns, the main intent of which appears to be to limit the obstacles posed to motorized traffic flow by specifically targeting pedestrians and cyclists.

The alternative but minority view about gridlock lies in reducing the number of cars on the road (in absolute numbers and in terms of the number of trips they make each day); making public transit an attractive and viable travel option; encouraging people to make short trips by alternate means (such as walking or cycling); making movement of goods by truck more efficient; and establishing land use polices and infrastructure that support citywide public transit use, cycling and walking.

Toronto is at a critical point. It can continue to rely on motorized vehicles as the primary means of moving people and goods, or it can choose to acknowledge the enormous social, economic and environmental costs of such an approach and shift its attention to setting goals that promote alternative modes of transportation and implementing planning policies that support them.

### Background

Five years ago the City of Toronto had a population of approximately 650,000 and, under the leadership of a progressive City Council and staff, was moving steadily towards a more sustainable transportation system. With a reputation as "the city that works," it had a strong culture of citizen participation. Since much of the city had been laid out before the automobile became dominant, it had the potential to be walking-, cycling- and transit-friendly.

Toronto was surrounded by five other municipalities—three of them essentially post-World War II bedroom suburbs—with which, since 1954, it shared an upper tier of government, the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, or Metro for short. Metro ran both the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC, known for over fifty years as one of the premier public transit systems in North America) and the arterial road system, while the individual municipalities had jurisdiction over local roads and land use. Pedestrian infrastructure was a local issue, while responsibility for cycling infrastructure was shared. Metro was also responsible for consolidated police and fire services.

In 1997, the Province of Ontario forced the amalgamation of the seven municipal governments (six local, one regional) into one "megacity." Overnight, the City of Toronto had a population of 2.5 million people and faced the challenge of merging local and regional governance structures that had operated

separately for almost half a century. Compounding the challenge has been that the new City of Toronto is the heart of the Greater Toronto Area, whose total population is over 4.5 million. The consequences of amalgamation for the future of sustainable transportation in the post-1998 Toronto have been enormous.

Amalgamation presented an unparalleled opportunity for new and creative thinking about a citywide approach to transportation. At the same time, it exacerbated the pre-existing tensions between the high-density downtown core, the medium-density inner ring of early suburbs and the outer ring of more recent lower-density suburbs that were built for the automobile. Further, the balance of power on the new City Council lay (and continues to lie) with the outer suburbs and their councilors who, with few exceptions, believe that increased car usage, and therefore expanded road capacity, is inevitable. They have little appreciation for the former city's approach to dealing with its problems of clogged roads and a deteriorating environment through car reduction, travel demand management, transit priority and the development of an improved travel environment and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Mixed and intensified land use—both so critical to reducing car dependency through facilitating expanded public transit and increased walking and cycling—are not concepts they tend to be familiar with or friendly towards. Downtown councilors have struggled to formulate transportation and land use policy alongside suburban councilors representing wards with three times the rate of car ownership, one-third the rate of transit use and very low levels of travel by cycling and walking. Five years after amalgamation, residents in the older parts of the city easily get around their neighborhoods by foot, bike or transit, while many residents in the outer suburbs have little choice but to depend on the car to access the most basic goods and services.

The opportunity for new and creative thinking about transportation was quickly squandered in the jockeying for position by a former suburban mayor, city councilors and newly-formed city departments (some of them headed by former suburban bureaucrats). The only significant nod towards acknowledging the need to reduce car usage, especially in the downtown core, has been a dramatic increase in parking fees and the installation of parking controls in areas where there were previously none. One strong indicator of the extent to which the issue of sustainable transportation was lost in the aftermath of amalgamation was the passage in 2000 of a consolidated Road Classification System, which reflected suburban values more than those of the old downtown. In the opinion of many advocates of sustainable transportation, classifying roads strictly according to traffic operations and maintenance criteria verifies the existence of a rigid hierarchy of road users. At the top is the private automobile, with transit users, pedestrians and cyclists all relegated to secondary and tertiary roles. The Road Classification System also placed control over the entire system of road rights-of-way—the major portion of the city's public realm—under the control of Transportation Services. This created the potential for pre-empting policies

aimed at better integrating transportation, transit and land use planning goals, and the long-term vision of transforming arterial roads into mixed use “avenues.” By affirming the primary function of major roads as conduits for private motorized traffic, the adoption of the Road Classification System signaled to advocates of sustainable transportation what an uphill battle they faced.

The market-driven proliferation of big-box stores and drive-thrus, especially in the suburbs, has further undermined attempts to combat car culture. Attempts are being made to prevent the incursion of these facilities into the older parts of the city, and to limit their expansion in the suburbs. On a larger stage, the Province of Ontario compounded the chaos faced by the new City of Toronto by downloading responsibility for many services and facilities, including former provincial highways that pass through the city. The province also eliminated its capital support for the transit system, and continued to cut back drastically on its operating subsidy. The city's effort to absorb these new financial responsibilities and at the same time avoid tax increases resulted in a highly politicized battle over funding priorities that cost sustainable transportation dearly.

The only limited but substantive gains have been made by cyclists, who have been more effectively organized and vocal for the last twenty years than either transit users or pedestrians. The obstacles to furthering the cause of sustainable transportation in the new City of Toronto are daunting:

- a monolithic, corporate-style municipal government that is more subject to influence from paid lobbyists than from the voice of citizens (who have been officially labeled “customers”);
- the retention of power by municipal engineers whose training has made it difficult for them to make the transition to thinking about the role of urban streets as multi-functional, and the need to treat all road users—including pedestrians, cyclists and transit users—equitably and with respect;
- a local police force that, like the Road Classification System, views pedestrians and cyclists basically as “obstacles” to motorized traffic;
- the province's view that Ontario's auto industry—one of the world's largest—is to be protected at almost any cost (since it provides 375,000 jobs, produces vehicles and parts worth \$249 million a day, generates billions of dollars in provincial taxes each year, and accounts for approximately 20 percent of the province's gross domestic product);
- an antiquated provincial Highway Traffic Act that has not caught up with the need to protect and advance the interests of public transit users, pedestrians and cyclists;
- a provincial government that does not view financial support of public transit in Canada's largest city as its responsibility;
- a federal government that has eschewed responsibility for supporting sustainable transportation in urban centers across Canada through funding and tax incentives; and
- society's love of car culture, which under the influence of highly sophisticated and relentless advertising, industry lobbying and the economic power of the auto industry in Ontario, strongly ⇨

influences the political decision-making process at all levels. Despite these hurdles, there are local organizations and individuals promoting sustainable planning and environmental solutions that are in harmony with global movements to make our communities more livable. Indeed, increased public concerns about air quality encouraged city politicians to sponsor North America's first Car Free Day (albeit a modest affair) here in 2001. Additionally, local activists are fighting to rescue roads and neighborhoods from the domination of the automobile through regular demonstrations such as Critical Mass bicycle rides and Reclaim the Street events. These efforts are as much a struggle to create safe and equitable conditions for all citizens as they are a fight to take back lost public space.

Citizens' efforts to renew the momentum for sustainable transportation are detailed in the accompanying articles. Over the past three years, the City of Toronto has been developing a new Official Plan to replace the plans of the seven former municipal governments. Still in draft form as of September, 2002, it is a visionary document intended to guide city planning for the next thirty years. At its heart is a strong emphasis on improving the city's public realm, reducing car dependen-

cy, managing travel demand by private vehicles, promoting transit-supportive land use and transit priority, and in general creating conditions that support walking, cycling and transit use. The proposed plan has many detractors who continue to defend the prevailing car culture. It also has many supporters, however, who believe that if it is adopted and used effectively by citizens, Toronto's transportation system can move in a new and more progressive direction that will address existing social, economic and environmental inequities.

Until then, and until the accumulated small successes of individual advocates and groups become part of a broad movement for change, the transportation system in the new Toronto will continue to: be dominated by car usage; discourage increased walking, transit use and cycling; compromise air and water quality; contribute to noise pollution; drain local economic vitality in parts of the city; impede the maintenance and development of healthy, sustainable communities; and result in thousands of collisions that alter the lives of pedestrians, transit users, cyclists and responsible motorists.

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Janice Etter is a resident of Toronto and responsible urban

## The "Digital Divide" and the Persistence of Urban Poverty

By Blanca Gordo  
*May/June, 2000*

In the last six months, the "digital divide" has attracted a lot of public attention from corporate leaders, politicians, and scholars. The growing interest is in part a response to the release of the Department of Commerce's report, "Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide," a PBS documentary, a series of public summits on the topic, and the announcement of a multi-million dollar program funded by the Clinton Administration called Clickstart. Despite the attention devoted to it, talk about the "digital divide" and proposed solutions to this "new phenomenon" both mis-specify the problem of the digital divide and consequently present an overly simplistic solution.

The general definition of the "digital divide" is that it is the divide between those individuals and places that have a connection to the Internet and those who do not. The popular solution is to simply provide the hardware, software, and sometimes the infrastructure, to those who do not have it. The presumption is clear: having a computer and online connection will provide opportunity and solve the problems of the poor. However, the problem of the digital divide is greater than mere connection to technology.

The "digital divide" and its solutions can only be understood within the context of the social and economic problems and tragedies that low-income and under-served populations face.

Lack of access to the digital world will continue as long as low-income communities are burdened by massive economic and social problems. Ultimately, the "digital divide" must be seen within this framework. When we speak of access, we need to push further and ask: access to what, for what, where, how, for whom, when, and why?

Even more, planners interested in and working on digital divide issues and solutions should stay away from overly simplified conceptions of technology and its direct "impact" on people and places. The context and setting in which technology is used provide strikingly different "impacts." Technology is not deterministic, but is socially-constructed. What matters is how technology is used and for what purpose. Under what conditions does access to enabling technologies have more prospects for leveling or (re)creating inequalities? Research efforts should focus on figuring out the causal mechanisms, points of intervention, and measuring the context. Right now research should be based around: context, context, and context.

A movement of community technology has emerged throughout the United States as a response to the growing digital divide in our society (see [www.ctcnet.org](http://www.ctcnet.org)). Community Technology Access Centers (CTCs) are embarking on an ambitious plan to bring information technology to traditionally

under-served and low-income communities for the purpose of improving their socioeconomic status. I have been examining the potential role of CTCs throughout California and New York. In doing this work I have redefined the "digital divide" concept to include not just internet access but the divide between those individuals and places that have the opportunity to participate, compete, and prosper in an increasingly information and knowledge-based economy and society and those who do not.

Community technology providers are addressing and grappling with these issues, realizing that technology is a tool to achieve other ends. As they see it, the inability to participate, compete, and prosper in a digital economy and society can only cement the process of underdevelopment of the physical space and the continued underemployment and unemployment of populations, increasing the possibilities for more concentrated poverty.

Thus, community technology is about providing what I term enhanced access. Enhanced access is about the production of knowledge rather than simple consumption of information. It is a combination of technical and soft skills (including social skills) needed to compete in a flexible and contingent labor force. In this way, technology is viewed as an enabling and productive tool, an information resource, and a vehicle for communication. The power of the Internet for some CTCs is the ability to expose, to fuel curiosity and motivate people to know and learn more. Thus, enhanced access includes the ability to use and manipulate technology and recognize and obtain the needed information; and the skills to be able to organize and transfer information into productive knowledge. It also includes the ability to apply and communicate this knowledge to meet personal, economic, political, and social needs and goals. Providers of enhanced access offer training (structured and informal), and

hands-on experience which serves to credential individuals in the labor market, the school, and the community at large. Furthermore, the opportunity to be part of a CTC—where people gain skills and acquire valued labor market experience—increases the symbolic value, prestige, and status associated with being part of a formal organization. Some CTCs provide more than affordable connections, they provide the know-how (how to use technology), and relevance (how the tool can be used to meet economic, social, political, professional, and personal goals). This requires the time, space, assistance, guidance, and hands-on experience.

Plugged In in East Palo Alto is a place that provides enhanced access. This CTC is the community production studio, copy center, cyber-library, self-paced learning studio, and telecommunication booth for East Palo Alto. Plugged In uses technology to help community members of all ages to access the Internet, and information that can help them find jobs, start small businesses, get information on health resources, or receive homework assistance in a safe place. This CTC works with other local organizations to complement their services with job training, business development and other social programs.

Much can be learned about the places and conditions under which low-income communities benefit or not from enhanced access. The challenge and opportunity is to recognize the critical importance of how the problem of technology is framed and constructed, for this determines the solutions envisaged. It is imperative to be critical of the conditions in which technology is being provided. The results for some individuals can be harmful and irreversible.

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## Household Information Strategies and Community Responses

By Gwen Urey  
*May/June, 2000*

For progressive planners, the "digital divide" should be thought of as a "digital wedge." Technology-based strategies to improve the flow of information at the local level may have perverse effects if we don't really understand the needs of the most marginalized neighborhoods as suppliers and demanders of information. Technology-based strategies that ignore competing demands for scarce resources within the household may unintentionally exacerbate inequalities between men and women, old and young, and other inequalities. In short, we should keep our focus on the "information gap," and seek to better understand the many dimensions of that gap, before conflating it with a

"digital divide" to be transcended by a digital bridge.

### Households and Individuals

Households and individuals generate information needs. A household may need to know which day trash will be collected during a holiday week or if the air quality is expected to be poor today. A teenager may need to know if there is an employment opportunity at a local establishment, or a parent may need to know when the local clinic will provide immunizations against childhood diseases. Individual members of a household may have different or even competing information needs. As ⇨

with money, time, and other resources, we shouldn't assume that the distribution of access to information and information technologies within households is equitable. Rather, it is subject to intrahousehold negotiation or conflict.

Individuals can develop personal information strategies, but the collective strategy of a household may involve more difficult choices. A household's decision to maintain a telephone line usually serves the needs of many members. Intrahousehold competition for use of that line may intensify with the introduction of internet access to the household's technological resource base.

The relationship between information strategies at the household level and programs to facilitate those strategies at the community level needs to be better understood. In low-income communities, programs that provide access or training in a community center more often address the needs of individuals who have time and motivation to come to the center.

#### Programs Serve High-Income Households

The comprehensive and better known community-based programs serve households that tend to have higher incomes, more wealth, more education, and the resources and motivation to get computers set up at home. Two of the better known programs are Santa Monica's Public Electronic Network (PEN) and the Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV). BEV was in the vanguard of providing robust internet access to households by collaborating with the local telephone company to install ethernet connections in apartment buildings. Neither PEN nor BEV specifically target low-income populations, however, and profiles of their users reveal a more privileged community. For example, a 1997 telephone survey of Santa Monica households, PEN's target group, found that 59% used computers, whereas nationally 37% of households had computers. In Santa Monica, PEN found that 30% of households had a fax, 20% had a second phone line; of households with computers, 78% had modems and 58% used the Internet.

In Blacksburg, BEV found their 1997 user profile consistent with previous years: average age was 45 years. Thirty-eight percent

of all respondents had completed graduate school. The majority (65%) were members of a church or local club; 66% used the public library. Developing comprehensive programs and programs that can empower more members of a household is much harder in low-income communities. In 1997 field work to investigate household information needs in low-income neighborhoods of Pomona (District II of Pomona, which lies in Eastern Los Angeles County), it was found that very few households had computers. Internet access was limited primarily to schoolchildren, some of whom have limited access to classroom computers. Households relied primarily on face-to-face word-of-mouth strategies for satisfying information needs in basic areas, such as finding employment, health providers, recreational and educational opportunities, and housing.

According to 1990 Census data, the area was 71 percent Hispanic and 61 percent of the adults had less than a high school education, 11 percent of households had no telephone service (and in some block groups the figure exceeded 20 percent), and 16 percent had no vehicle. Data from 1998-99 suggest that the distribution of computing resources within the local school district strongly favors schools with more economically and socially advantaged students. The data are most striking for the middle schools, where the only school with internet access is the one in which Latinos are a minority and the only one where less than one third of students are learning English as a second language.

In the low-income neighborhoods of Pomona, lack of access to computer technologies did not stand out among the concerns of residents. People articulated the difficulties of getting and communicating information, but telephone access and the alleviation of language and literacy barriers were perceived as higher priorities for addressing these issues. The school data suggests that computer and internet access parallel other dimensions of segregation in the school district.

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## Transportation Struggles in The Post-Apartheid City

By Jon Orcutt  
*September, 1997*

The transportation system most South Africans face today is a mixture of patched-up, third-rate public transport inherited from apartheid and a chaotic, unregulated minibus-taxi system that is a source of swelling public complaint. But political transformation in South Africa has opened the

door for equitable and sustainable transportation policies. New government policies seek to reverse apartheid policy by dramatically expanding and improving public transport and discouraging urban motoring. But the application of these policies across the country is uneven, and possibly in serious

jeopardy.

The evolution of South African transportation policy is not only of great concern to South Africans seeking to integrate their badly fragmented cities. It is also of interest to transportation advocates globally, because:

The combination of high social wealth, huge transit-dependent populations and a political mandate for sweeping change contains very strong potential for the development of modern transit- and pedestrian-based cities

In one major metropolis, policymakers are advancing principles that western environmentalists and transit advocates have succeeded in advancing only slightly -- financing a "transit first" policy by taking urban motorists for the congestion, pollution, and other harms they cause.

In the many cities where transportation reform is receiving little or no political attention, growing grass-roots action in the townships could produce transportation policy insurgencies by poor and working class people on an unprecedented scale.

Rising incomes and redistribution of wealth are likely to produce fast growth in South African households with access to a car. South Africa's per capita income is indeed approaching a level that, in other countries, has touched off rapid motorization. The growth of motorists as an interest group will complicate the politics of transport and may dull the urgency of adopting "public transport first" strategies. That in turn will perpetuate the profound have/have not gulf and leave South Africa's cities blighted and deserted.

### **Background: The Apartheid City**

Apartheid required a massive program of spatial engineering. Establishment of largely rural African "homelands" or bantustans and internal passports attempted to control urbanization so that black "influx" was tailored to the labor needs of white-controlled industries. In the cities, black populations were restricted to residential townships on the metropolitan fringe, necessitating long trips to work and other destinations on white-controlled transit systems.

The establishment of legislated apartheid after 1948 accelerated the destruction of black settlements near urban centers and the removal of their populations to the urban periphery. The razing of Sophiatown, one of the most culturally and politically vibrant black communities in Johannesburg, and the removal of its population to an area south of Johannesburg's mining belt in 1955 was only one notable case. In other cities, industrial zones, transportation corridors or other barriers separated black townships from white commercial and residential areas.

### **Apartheid Transport**

The blueprint for post-apartheid development issued by the African National Congress and its allies, the Reconstruction

and Development Programme (RDP), notes:

The policy of apartheid has moved the poor away from job opportunities and access to amenities. This has burdened the workforce with enormous travel distances to their places of employment and commercial centres, and thus with excessive costs. Apartheid transport policy deprived the majority of the people of a say in transport matters; exposed commuters to vast walking distances and insecure rail travel; failed to regulate the kombi-taxi industry adequately; largely ignored the country's outrageous road safety record; paid little attention to the environmental impact of transport projects, and facilitated transport decision-making bodies that are unwieldy, unfocused, unaccountable, and bureaucratic.

For these reasons, transportation has a prominent history in township and anti-apartheid politics. Nelson Mandela's first political action was participation in a 1943 mass march supporting a bus boycott in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township -- the boycott effectively rolled back a fare increase. The 1955 Freedom Charter, which launched the African National Congress on its 35-year drive to end minority rule, specifically called for the provision of public transport adequate to serve all urban dwellers.

The transportation void was filled by 12-20 seat minibuses, or "kombis." The government encouraged small black capital to invest in minibuses as it retreated from its investment in public transport. At the same time, the reality of accelerating urban migration led to the formal abandonment of "influx control" in the mid-1980s. Burgeoning squatter settlements on the edge of already marginal townships had no access to formal services, and even residents in long-established townships increasingly had trouble reaching destinations as jobs and white populations began to move away from central cities.

### **Kombis: "Economic Miracle," Transport Chaos**

The kombis were thus well-suited to navigate the increasingly complex and de-centered metropolitan areas of the late 1980s and 90s. They are now the central feature of South African urban transport, accounting for up to 50% of many urban transport markets and competing with buses and trains on major routes. Taxi industry growth was fueled not only by need, but also by the barriers black capital faces elsewhere, and because driving is a relatively ubiquitous skill in the townships.

The unfettering of private transport services produced the first major black-run South African industry, but the absence of regulation also promoted chaotic service and schedules, the absence of safety standards or accountability, unregulated fares and the operation of hundreds of vans in major corridors served more effectively by buses and trains.

Worse still is the violence between rival companies or asso- ⇨

ciations vying to control over-supplied routes and stations. National, provincial, and metropolitan government initiatives to bring stability and regulation have fallen short. Though some measure of peace seemed to have been established in early 1996, violence in several cities flared again later in the year. Official efforts have generally not sought to situate the kombis within an overall passenger transport plan based on expanded public transport, and have failed to address fundamental problems of regulation and oversupply. But the unabated conflict has fed growing public support for revival of traditional public transit.

### Cape Town: Transit First

The RDP's recommendation for a strong "transit first" investment policy is being developed into a metropolitan action plan in Cape Town. The Provincial (Western Cape) Transport Minister, Leonard Ramatlakane, has proposed a series of parking and road levies to reduce the impacts of urban driving and generate revenue for expanded public transport. In a recent opinion piece, Ramatlakane wrote that dramatically expanded public transport was essential to overcome the legacy of the apartheid city and that motoring taxes are "to make [motorists'] costs closer to the costs they impose on society. These costs include congestion, pollution, traffic enforcement and road accidents." The minister, a former trade union activist, is working to broaden support for the strategy by using the media and recruiting support among other provincial and municipal officials. Cape Town's new regional transport plan aims to reduce car commuting by 20%.

Ramatlakane has also made a priority of changing a monopolistic bus company concession policy that has inhibited new service in cities around the country. A new plan to significantly increase the metropolitan passenger rail system's capacity will be released next year. It dovetails with Cape Town's "Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework," which restricts new development at the urban periphery to promote higher density and contain sprawl. It also designates established transport corridors as recipients for new business "nodes" and much-needed new public housing. Cap Town also looks likely to be the first region to integrate policy-making and resource allocation among its various transportation agencies into a new "Metropolitan Transport Authority," as required by national law. If structured and managed effectively, the MTAs could be critical mechanisms for reorienting transport policy along the lines described in the RDP.

### Johannesburg: Disarray

But Cape Town appears to be the exception among South Africa's major cities. In Johannesburg, by far the country's largest city, no public figure has emerged to put transportation on the public map the way Ramatlakane has done for Cape Town. On the contrary, Johannesburg's most well-known transport figure of late is a mid-level bureaucrat who unilaterally altered many bus routes and schedules without any public notice.

Other than problems in the taxi industry, transport issues seem all but ignored by top leadership.

On the streets, levels of bus service have remained static since the last years of the apartheid regime, while capital investment in the commuter rail system -- with the exception of a few high-profile projects like the renovation of Johannesburg's central train station into a regional intermodal bus/train/taxi hub -- is barely sufficient to repair old infrastructure. Regional planners saw that rail station upgrades in the townships are not being carried out in coordination with other metropolitan transportation and land use planning initiatives. Meanwhile, a number of expensive highway expansion projects are underway. Institutional competition and resistance, as well as political inattention, is hampering the formation of an effective Metropolitan Transport Authority. The provincial (Gauteng) Transport Ministry, traditionally in charge of highway construction and operation, favors a provincial scale MTA, encompassing Johannesburg and Pretoria, while Johannesburg municipal and metropolitan governments favor MTAs for each city.

### Mobilizing the Masses

Growing popular discontent with bad conditions and the pace of change has the potential to make transportation reform a serious social movement in South Africa. Key roles would likely be played by grassroots civic associations (many of which are integrated into a national organization, the South African National Civic Association), rail passenger groups, local political organizations, and environmental groups.

The key issues for launching potent grassroots transportation improvement campaigns include listed below. Modest research and organizing capacity could turn each of these areas into a major arena for significant public mobilization:

Regional fair-share campaigns for public transport, especially serving townships vs. roads that benefit rich car owners. One estimate says South Africa spends about \$18 billion on cars every year, so the problem is not lack of money, but the political power to channel it where it is most needed. Advocates should support efforts like Cape Town's policy of using motorist user fees to boost public transport.

Fair share campaigns for pressing township infrastructure needs like pavement, drainage, sidewalks, lighting and better transit stations vs. high per capita investment in well-off, infrastructurally rich communities. An important component of this need is reflected in pedestrian safety. 50% of black traffic fatalities are pedestrians, in large part because of nonexistent or poor walking facilities.

Structuring metropolitan planning and resource allocation to recognize the full fiscal, social, and environmental costs of the automobile/ highway system and to prioritize the needs of the transit-dependent. Intervention in the formation of the mandated Metropolitan Transit Authorities presents an opportunity for grass-

roots initiatives to heavily influence the direction of future policy.

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Jon Orcutt is an editor of Mobilizing the Region, the weekly bulletin of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign in New York City.

# Eight Myths of Traffic Planning

**By Roger Baker**  
**September, 1997**

A growing number of planning experts realize that current trends in transportation are unsustainable. Like an addictive drug, a transportation policy oriented around the private automobile dictates urban policies in a way that can seem deceptively sensible.

In the short term, automobile-oriented land-use patterns encourage economic segregation into wealthy suburbs in conflict with a struggling core city economy. In the longer run, they slowly drag down the livability of the entire metropolitan area.

Urban growth policies dictated by the automobile are gradually making many cities in the United States uncompetitive with other areas in the United States and in the larger global economy. Here are the contradictions that lie behind the comfortable myths used to justify a losing battle to keep up with the endless demands of the car:

**MYTH 1: Traffic projections are important in deciding what roads are needed.**

While such an assumption looks reasonable at first glance, such a computer-oriented projection of past trends assumes first that current trends are healthy, and second that present travel habits are worth projecting into the future. The computer models rarely if ever look at the side-effects of the projected roadway policies they justify. This myth is closely tied to myths 2 and 3.

**MYTH 2: Planners are not responsible for how much people want to drive.**

In every city of the world the volume of traffic is limited, intentionally or unintentionally, by government policies. For example, Houston residents use six times more gasoline than London residents and eight times more than Amsterdam residents. Past and current infrastructure policies affect current and future travel patterns and are subject to change. People don't love their cars any more than politicians love to keep raising gas taxes to try to keep building roads to keep up with ever-increasing demand.

**MYTH 3: Predicted traffic growth must be provided for.**

In practice, there is a sort of Parkinson's law that peak-hour traffic almost always expands to fill available road space. Bigger roads act like magnets to attract and generate traffic for the following reasons: First, new trip destinations are made practical. Second, the frequency of some trips increases because access becomes easier. Third, people take jobs farther from home. Fourth, some people shift from mass transit to private cars. Fifth, the reduction in mass transit ridership encourages land-use patterns oriented to car travel. Each increase in capacity ratchets up demand, attracts more traffic, and thus "justifies" further increases.

**MYTH 4: Bigger roads are safer.**

Since more and bigger roads generate their own increasing demand, the important consideration is per-capita roadway mortality. Yet the death toll keeps increasing despite decreasing mortality rates per mile because of more miles driven. Bigger roads also tend to encourage higher speeds and faster driving until the roads become as unsafe as ever. During the 1974 fuel crisis, speed limits were reduced with an estimated saving of 3,000 to 5,000 lives per year.

**MYTH 5: Bigger roads increase mobility.**

With bigger roads we are obliged to use more time to reach fewer and fewer destinations; we have to run faster to stand still. Bigger roads encourage sprawl and longer trips. Also, small, functioning communities are destroyed by roads so that local stores are replaced by big-box "category-killing" chain stores, shopping centers, etc. Each new car requires 30 times as much roadway space as the transit it replaces, encouraging low-density, high-cost suburban sprawl. Mobility should be redefined as being able to reach desired destinations rather than average speed or how far it is possible to travel.

**MYTH 6: Bigger roads help more people than they disadvantage.**

Clearly, an emphasis on automobile-related urban development disadvantages those without cars -- in particular the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and children. In addition, heavier traffic disrupts local communities and small business viability and sprawl makes cities spend more per ⇨

capita on infrastructure. The end result is that bigger roads disadvantage everyone and benefit only the narrow range of those who directly profit from roads and automobiles and are an inherently more expensive mode of land development.

**MYTH 7: It is not the job of traffic planners to look at the wider social, political, and environmental trends implied by transportation policies.**

Roadway planners and traffic engineers are trained to focus their attention solely on moving cars faster and farther. They are not taught to consider the results such as global warming and other subtle social, economic, and environmental side-effects of their policies. Planning that reacts to past needs is ill-equipped to respond to the patterns of the future. Traffic engineers fail to focus on these current problems, and current policies fail to anticipate the real likelihood that oil shortages or economic downturns may have an unexpected but catastrophic effect on future mobility.

**MYTH 8: Planning should be left to the experts.**

The community should have an opportunity to undo past mistakes and shape the future. The most important questions that arise in urban policy are not matters of expertise, but rather the general goals of what the community should be like in 20 years.

The choices and decisions should be determined by a well-informed public able to understand the implications of current policies and trends. The results are now all too often the hidden consequences of roadway policies implied to be inevitable using projections generated with a computer based on current trends.

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Roger Baker is a long-time Austin, Texas-based transportation activist.

## East St. Louis Citizens Put Transportation Planners on the Right Track for Light Rail Expansion

By Patricia A. Nolan  
*September, 1997*

Light rail is a proven technology with 25 light rail systems nation-wide in cities like Portland, Sacramento, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Diego, Denver, St. Louis and numerous other cities beginning to plan light rail systems.

The benefits of making light rail an integral part of a city's transportation network include: increased energy conservation, reduced travel times, lower transit operating costs, and increased transit ridership.

Most citizens readily recognize these benefits and show their support by voting to approve tax increases to create and/or expand light rail lines. Such has been the case with the MetroLink light rail system in St. Louis and Illinois.

In 1993, St. Louis launched its 18-mile regional light rail system, aptly named MetroLink. As with any major undertaking, there were those critics who said the train would never leave the station. But MetroLink has become a tremendous success. MetroLink's 31-vehicle fleet transports as many as 100,000 people per day to and from all of the region's major centers along the 18-stop MetroLink route.

MetroLink's initial success was a major motivating force in creating plans for expansion. In 1994, the Bi-State

Development Agency, the region's public transit operator for MetroLink, buses and para-transit service, began working with planning organizations and government officials to expand the light rail system into other areas of the region.

MetroLink is a study in transportation success, but it also serves as an example of regional political cooperation and active citizen participation. This article will not focus on the environmental and economic advantages of a light rail system, but it will focus on the strategy undertaken and the lessons learned by a neighborhood organization in East St. Louis who saw what the planners had missed.

The Emerson Park Development Corporation (EPDC) organized themselves to teach planners, developers and city officials the important lessons of listening to and carefully considering the input offered by citizens when making decisions for the common good.

**East St. Louis, Illinois**

The city of East St. Louis has a rich transportation history. In the 1790's, Illinoistown (later renamed East St. Louis) founder, James Piggot, built a landing for ferry boats to transport people across the river to Missouri. Long before

St. Louis gained prominence as a railroad hub, Illinoistown was the second-largest railroad center in the country. Before the Eads Bridge opened to rail traffic in 1874, all railroads connecting St. Louis with the east terminated in East St. Louis.

Thus, the stage had been set for a city that would for many years thrive on being a transportation hub. However, with changes in technology and more efficient modes of transporting goods and people the railroad no longer dominated the marketplace. East St. Louis suffered from this transformation and began a downward economic, physical and social spiral of deterioration and abandonment.

Today, East St. Louis has lost nearly half of its population since 1960, and the city continues to lose many of its middle-class residents to more prosperous suburban communities. In 1990, the population was 98% African-American, with over half the residents living below the poverty level. Unemployment is nearly 30%.

Despite these acute conditions, the residents of East St. Louis have shown tremendous will and resolve. Many local residents are actively involved in neighborhood organizations committed to revitalization. Local churches have also maintained a strong presence in their neighborhoods and often lead these improvement efforts.

The residents of the Emerson Park neighborhood are a shining example of one organization committed to a city that many people have given up hope on every being a thriving urban center again.

Emerson Park has suffered many of the same devastating trends as the city as a whole, but in many cases this neighborhood has been hit the hardest by the decline. Between 1970 and 1990 the Emerson Park neighborhood lost more than 75% of its population, additional population loss has been incurred since the 1990 census. Unemployment is high- 33.7% as compared to 14.4% for the county. In Emerson Park, over 58% of the families are living below poverty level

The Emerson Park Development Corporation (EPDC) first organized itself in 1985 when neighborhood residents began organizing neighborhood self-help projects in conjunction with the local settlement house.

Today, EPDC is a 50- member 501(c)3 non-profit which has grown from a small group of residents interested in small beautification projects to an organization with a 150-page neighborhood improvement plan, an executive director, several environmental improvement projects, rehab projects and most recently the construction of two new homes for two low-income families in the neighborhood.

Needless to say, EPDC has been successful in many of its ventures in a relatively short period of time. One of the most valuable "projects" though that the EPDC committed itself to was the extension of the MetroLink light rail system

through East St. Louis.

### The St. Clair County Extension

The second phase of MetroLink is an extension into St. Clair County, Illinois. The route will begin at the existing 5th and Missouri MetroLink station in East St. Louis and end at the Mid-America Airport in neighboring Belleville, IL. Twelve stations are planned along the extension which is approximately 27-miles long.

The preliminary engineering of the MetroLink Extension is being funded through an \$8 million federal capital discretionary grant, \$2 million of local funds provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and revenue from a 1/2 cent sales tax approved by voters. All Illinois municipalities (except East St. Louis) are providing additional funds for station location improvements.

The project cost for the extension is \$339, 169, 856. The federal share in the Full Funding Grant Agreement of capital cost for the project is \$243,930,961 (71.92%). The local share of \$95,238,895 (28.0%) will be provided by revenue from a 1/2 cent sales tax approved by voters of St. Clair County Transit District in November 1993.

### The Highway Divides Us

The Emerson Park Development Corporation first heard of the plans for the MetroLink extension in a newspaper article which appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

In that article, the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council first proposed that the extension pass through East St. Louis on the south side of a major interstate which has historically divided the city.

Emerson Park believed that the initial route was unsafe as the proposed route travels through areas of vehicular traffic and residential use. Residents feared that children would find themselves playing near the tracks or that a car would run a grade crossing.

In addition, the initial proposed route was more expensive to build than the alternative route later advocated by EPDC. EPDC also argued that the south side route did not have an adequate amount of land available for redevelopment activities and commuter parking which would be required for the station.

The EPDC enlisted the University of Illinois's East St. Louis Action Research Project to help them develop an effective campaign for getting public officials and developers to consider an alternative route.

EPDC, with the help of University of Illinois planners and architects, suggested that the rail line be routed across along the interstate and cross over to the north side. The route chosen by EPDC would enable a station to be ⇨

built at 15th Street which would service the residents of Emerson Park, who desperately needed better access to mass transit. Moreover, EPDC recognized that the construction of a light rail stop in their neighborhood would be a strong incentive for future redevelopment projects in Emerson Park.

### Emerson Park's Campaign

In order to strengthen their voice, EPDC conducted an aggressive lobbying campaign to local, state and nationally elected officials. By gaining the support of legislators EPDC found a way to be heard by agency's like the Bi-State Development Agency, East West Gateway and other agencies involved in the planning of MetroLink.

The citizens of Emerson Park testified to local officials that they "wanted those making the decisions to realize that the expansion of MetroLink through East St. Louis is an investment not just in transit, but also in neighborhood economic growth and revitalization".

At countless city council meetings and public hearings, EPDC focused on the following three points:

1. The advantages of the north side alternative transit route
2. Concerns that the revitalization impact upon residential neighborhoods was inadequately considered as part of the preliminary engineering review.

For example, after reviewing the preliminary engineering study EPDC found that the study focused mostly on how and where suburban commuters could access the system, hence the original route located the stops adjacent to the highway.

Little analysis was made of the transit needs of ESL residents, who because of their low incomes are less likely to own automobiles and, as a result of area disinvestment, are more likely to have to travel out of their community in search of employment.

3. Concerns that the future citizen participation process would be too limited and result in inadequate representation of neighborhood concerns.

The common method of holding public hearings without the public having any input in the planning process before the hearing would not suffice in this instance. EPDC demanded that neighborhood organizations be given representation on the planning committee for the extension. As an official part of the planning committee EPDC would be able to share its concerns and offer suggestions for improvement in a timely and effective manner.

### Lessons Learned and Future Challenges

In the spring of 1995, after months of lobbying local officials and developers; EPDC's message was finally heard and

affirmed by the announcement that the north side route with the 15th Street station had been officially adopted.

It would be nice if that is where the story ended. However, EPDC now faces additional challenges in getting the local government to commit its share of resources to making the 15th Street station more than a slab of concrete. As was mentioned earlier, each Illinois municipality where a stop is located has agreed to contribute at least \$1.5 million to the development of the station. At this point, East St. Louis has refused to commit any funding to the 15th Street station.

Although the city is facing tough financial times and has only recently begun to provide many essential services, the city does have the funding needed for the station in its Business and Economic Development and Community Development Block Grant departments.

One member of the EPDC stated that by refusing to fund this type of project the city is "making it look like they are fair and equitable by doing nothing for any neighborhood".

In its struggle to get the city to support the station, Emerson Park has been recruiting other neighborhood organizations in its struggle so that they can build the necessary numbers of people and votes that will gain the attention of elected officials.

On the positive side, Emerson Park has been a focal point for many of the city's redevelopment activities, including a recent application to HUD for the Homeownership Zone. Also, within a half-mile of the proposed station Emerson Park has witnessed record numbers of demolitions of vacant and dangerous structures, clean-ups of vacant lots, several rehabs of homes and for the first time in twenty years the construction of two new homes.

In addition, the value of property has increased in anticipation of the MetroLink extension. A month before the route was officially announced one was able to purchase a parcel for \$250, a month later that same parcel went for no less than \$2,000.

In the end though, the most important success from this endeavor was the ability of regular citizens, through organized and logical thinking and action, to make their case and ensure that the train did not leave the station without them.

(Special thanks to all the members of the Emerson Park Development Corporation, Dan Hoffman, Prof. Robert Selby and the Bi-State Development Agency for contributing to this article.)

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Patricia A. Nolan is the planner for the University of Illinois East St. Louis Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center.

# Regional Planning



Photo By Donovan Finn

Community planning input at the University of Illinois' Community Design Center in Urbana, IL

## Portland, Oregon: How to Link Growth Management and Affordable Housing

By Tasha Harmon

*March 1998*

The Portland Metro region is hailed all over as the mecca of growth management - a unique regional planning tool that limits suburban sprawl and central city disinvestment.

But is growth management good for low-income people? Can growth management incorporate strategies to increase equity? Our experience as advocates of affordable housing in Portland suggests that it can, but not without concerted action by activists.

### Arguments for Growth Management

Recent work by David Rusk, Myron Orfield, Manuel Pastor, John Powell and others demonstrates that suburban sprawl and urban disinvestment increases the isolation and challenges faced by low income people and reduces the overall quality of the regional environment. Others argue for growth management as a less costly alternative to sprawl. They say that sprawl increases public expenditures for new infrastructure while existing infrastructure in central cities and older suburbs is ⇨

allowed to disintegrate.

However, there are also costs to growth management. When you make the choice (in our economic system) to limit the available land supply, require more parks, protect environmentally sensitive lands, and build mass transit, someone's got to pay the price. Poor people usually carry a disproportionate burden and rich people benefit most from growth management - as they would from unregulated growth. As with many neighborhood revitalization efforts, the success of growth management is too often measured by asking whether "the community" or "the neighborhood" improves, without asking whether that improvement comes at the expense of low income residents.

I side with the folks who believe that sprawl is ultimately more costly for the poor (and for all of us) than growth management (done right). Many costs are born by households because of the kind of region they live in - transportation costs, the costs of services or amenities in regions where they are very inequitably distributed, the costs of not being able to find work because the regional economy is doing poorly, or because there are no entry level jobs in some communities and no affordable housing in others. Well thought out growth management strategies are more likely to help us produce affordable communities where people of different incomes can live.

I would rather see us deal proactively with the problems of growth management than allow disinvestment and sprawl. The issue is how we redistribute the burdens and benefits of growth management more equitably and how we can use growth management strategies to reduce inequities in the region.

#### **What Metro Has Done**

The Portland region has taken a unique approach to growth management. In 1979, voters in the region created Metro, the only directly elected regional government in the U.S. Its charter gives it broad powers to do regional planning and regulate land use throughout the three-county region, and to address what it identifies as "issues of regional concern." Metro started the 2040 planning process which has, over the past nine years, engaged broad public debate and input as it developed a vision for the region's future. The results are the 2040 Growth Concept (a map) and the Regional Framework Plan, which defines the shape that growth will take in the region for the next 45 years. This Plan is binding on local jurisdictions through Functional Plans that cover various topics. It calls for a compact urban form, with higher density development focused along transit corridors and in town and regional centers, a more diverse housing stock in all communities, a diversified transportation system, and protection of green spaces and natural resources within the urban growth boundary. Lands outside the urban growth boundary are to be preserved from urban development.

The 2040 strategies and the Urban Growth Boundary appear to be succeeding in preventing the worst of the "donut" effect we see in many urban areas, where poverty is concentrated in the central city and older suburbs and jobs and wealth flee to the outer suburbs. Still, there are strong counter-trends. We are seeing gentrification in many "undervalued" neighborhoods in Portland and some suburbs. There is a great deal of redevelopment of old industrial areas in Portland into new residential neighborhoods, largely for middle and upper income singles. Though many of the jobs in other Portland neighborhoods and inner suburbs have left, and much of the job growth in the region is taking place in the wealthier suburbs, downtown Portland has shown strong job growth in the past few years. Housing densities in the region are increasing and there are more housing options (i.e. smaller homes on smaller lots, townhouses, apartments, etc.) for both rental and homeownership. But these new options are not "affordable" by advocates' standards, except in some cases where they are directly subsidized.

All of this appears to leave low-income people less geographically isolated than they are in many other urban regions, but far less integrated than we would like them to be. Growth management strategies already adopted have had some positive effects on equity compared to the strategies (or lack thereof) in other regions. But the burden of growth still falls disproportionately on low-income people.

#### **Activists Bring Equity to Growth Management in Portland**

Housing affordability and the displacement of low-income people from communities undergoing "revitalization" and reinvestment were not on Metro's radar screen in 1994 when the Coalition for a Livable Future was founded. An association of 40 non-governmental organizations, the Coalition is determined to make the question of the burdens and benefits of growth, and growth management, major issues throughout the region. It came together to propose amendments to the 2040 growth concept and in the past three years, equity issues have become much more central to discussions at Metro, and among elected officials and others concerned with growth management in the local jurisdictions.

The Coalition has focused the initial stages of our fight on two issues: housing affordability and reinvestment in existing "distressed" communities. We recognize that there need to be larger regional and local economic development strategies, policies to address wages and income polarization, and tax-base sharing and other strategies to address fiscal inequities between local jurisdictions in the region. We have done preliminary work on these issues, but have neither the expertise nor clout to be able to use land use planning (and therefore Metro) to move forward in these arenas.

The Coalition was successful in its attempts to get Metro to include in its objectives stronger language on the importance of focusing public investment in existing com-

munities with excess capacity to absorb more housing and jobs. This philosophy fits well with Metro's larger vision of a compact urban form with vital "regional centers" spread throughout the region. Metro has also taken some land use actions to move towards this goal. They have kept the urban growth boundary tight, and required upzoning and mixed-use zoning in some areas. Metro also designated some of the former vital commercial strips in now distressed communities as "main streets", signaling to local jurisdictions that these areas should be primed for reinvestment. This strategy seems to be succeeding in many sections of Portland by directing new public and private investment to neighborhoods that for over a decade had seen no redevelopment except by non-profits.

Affordable housing became a central organizing issue in the Coalition's platform because the need was so compelling and because it was so clearly an issue that had to be addressed on the regional level. We have found it easy to get people to understand that we live in a regional economy. Many people live in one community, work in another, and shop in a third. But the property tax system for funding local government infrastructure and services makes some kinds of development more welcome than others. A few jurisdictions have the lion's share of the new job growth and very little of the housing needed by the low- and moderate- income workforce that keep those businesses profitable. This means that the services and infrastructure (schools, police and fire protection, parks, etc.) provided to those workers and their families are paid for by jurisdictions that are not benefiting directly from the property taxes paid by the businesses. In addition to resulting in the perpetuation and growth of fiscal inequities between regions (as is well described in the work of Myron Orfield), this dynamic also leads to long commutes, increased traffic congestion and air pollution, and high transportation costs. Time and money are lost that might otherwise be invested in housing, education, family and community activities.

### Growth Management and Housing Affordability

The real estate industry has been quick to blame growth management for raising housing prices and making housing unaffordable. But consider a few facts:

1. Housing prices in the Portland region have nearly doubled in the last 10 years. Many "undervalued" neighborhoods have seen housing prices (and rents) double in the past two to three years. Meanwhile, real wages for low- and moderate-income people have stayed essentially flat.
2. The Portland region was rated the second least affordable housing market in the nation by the National Homebuilders Association in 1997. While the Portland area has nothing that looks like a "ghetto" to most people, there is a severe shelter-poverty problem in the region.
3. The Homebuilders Association's lobbyists argue that the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), over-regulation and high system development charges (SDCs) are responsible for the

housing price increases. They cite rapidly increasing raw land prices since 1990 and argue that the way to insure sufficient affordable housing is to add well over 10,000 acres to the UGB (the urbanizable land), decrease regulation and SDCs, and let "the market" take care of the problem.

There are several deep flaws with this analysis. First, there is no evidence that bringing more land inside the UGB would actually bring home prices down significantly. Data provided by Metro shows clearly that an almost identical rapid rise in home prices occurred from 1973 to 1979, the last rapid growth boom in the region, when there was still so much undeveloped land inside the UGB that even the Homebuilders admit it couldn't have been influencing prices. Secondly, the Homebuilders' strategies would not address the many factors beyond land prices in the housing cost equation. For example, average house size in the region has increased by 20% in the last 15 years.

The Coalition believes that housing prices are set at "what the market will bear" in this consumer society where many middle and upper class people willingly pay exorbitant prices for more housing than they need. Most low-income people have no choice in the matter. There is no reason to believe that lowering land costs for the homebuilders will achieve any significant decrease in housing prices while the boom goes on.

Many homebuilders also note that there is deep resistance in many communities to housing built on smaller lots, townhouses, duplexes, accessory dwelling units and, of course, multi-family housing. Banks have also been reticent to lend on projects that differ much from the standard suburban subdivisions (despite strong demand for Portland's fine and much loved stock of old, neighborhood-scale multi-family housing built along the streetcar lines and just north of downtown in the early 1900s).

Affordable housing advocates and the Homebuilders agree that barriers to affordable housing exist. Metro is currently addressing these barriers by mandating major zoning changes. However, it remains to be seen whether the public will go for it. While there is a clearly stated popular preference for a tight UGB, many people have serious qualms about the increased density required to accomplish it. Whether they will allow real changes on the ground in their own communities is an open question.

The Coalition believes the rapid increase in demand, very weak requirements for housing diversity, and greed have created higher land and home prices and higher rents. Our solution is to get Metro and local governments to make proactive housing affordability strategies a central part of the growth management strategies for the region. To this end, we have supported the kinds of zoning changes Metro is mandating, pushed (with some success) for more local and state funding for subsidized housing, and worked to strengthen the nonprofit housing sector. We have proposed adoption of a wide variety of regulatory tools on the ⇨

regional level, including:

1. **A Fair Share Approach.** Each jurisdiction in the region should provide a "fair share" of the affordable housing needed in the region.
2. **Inclusionary Zoning.** A percentage of the housing units in any project above a given size should be affordable to people of moderate incomes without public subsidy.
3. **Replacement Ordinance.** This would require the replacement of affordable rental housing lost to demolition or conversion. (The Community Development Network, the Community Alliance of Tenants and others are also proposing a more comprehensive replacement ordinance for adoption by the City of Portland).
4. **Condo Conversion Ordinance.** This would regulate conversion of affordable rental housing to ownership, providing protection for tenants and the rapidly shrinking affordable rental stock.
6. **Permanent Affordability in Exchange for Public Subsidy.**
7. **Government Investment Tax.** This measure would capture a significant percentage of the increase in land values that occurs due to government regulation (i.e. bringing new parcels inside the UGB) or investment.
8. **A Speculation Tax** to penalize rapid resale of properties for high profits.

#### **Regional Affordable Housing Successes**

This past December Metro formally recognized affordable housing as "an issue of regional concern." They incorporated affordable housing in Metro's Regional Framework Plan (RFP). They mandated the use of a "fair share" approach to affordable housing in the region, based in part on an examination of the jobs-housing balance. And they committed themselves to setting "fair share" standards for housing in each jurisdiction in the region. The RFP mandates a replacement ordinance, and several preliminary steps that could support inclusionary zoning. The Metro Code regulating the expansion of the UGB also includes strong language about housing diversity. It includes a requirement that some percentage of the housing developed on the added lands be affordable to people at or below 80% of median family income without public subsidy (a working definition of inclusionary zoning). Metro also made a commitment to staff an Affordable Housing Technical Advisory Group, which will include planners, advocates, homebuilders, elected officials, and other interested parties, to refine the policies in the RFP and work on other housing affordability strategies. Metro is likely to commit funds to hire a housing planner in July of 1998. We are moving forward.

Despite this progress, growth management can only do so much to address equity issues. There are many counter-

trends, including:

Oregon passed two regressive property-tax limitation measures in the past four years. These severely restrict local government funding for important infrastructure and services. In general, anti-tax attitudes appear to be getting stronger in Oregon despite the fact that people here get more from local governments for far fewer dollars than in many other areas.

Major fiscal inequities still exist between local jurisdictions in the region. The property tax system is so complex that any kind of tax-base sharing will be difficult without a total overhaul of the tax system.

The apparently progressive state policy of shifting school funding from local property taxes to the state and "equalizing" funding across the state (combined with limits on property taxes) has resulted in a significant cut in funds for Portland's public schools, which educate 90% of school age kids in Portland. Portland had been one of the few central cities in the nation that did a better job of funding its schools than most of its suburban jurisdictions.

A recent ballot measure on mandatory sentencing is forcing the state spend massively on new prisons. In one community in the region, a prison is being sited on what was a major affordable housing site. At the moment a major backlash is building among some local jurisdictions against Metro's stance on affordable housing. Whatever the outcome, we are convinced that growth management can be a tool for efforts to create equity in our region. Growth management can play a positive role in addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income people.

As the struggle progresses, we need to be asking ourselves what it would take to create a truly progressive growth management program. Would costs somehow be borne in proportion to one's ability to pay? How would this be designed? What would a fundamentally progressive settlement pattern and urban form look like? And, how do we get there from here?

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Tasha Harmon is a founding member of the Coalition for a Livable Future and Executive Director of the Community Development Network in Portland.

# New York: RACE, CLASS & SPACE

## *A Historical Comparison of the Three Regional Plans for New York*

By Tony Schuman and Elliott Sclar

*March, 1998*

The raw material of American planning history derives from two concerns: the physical problems associated with regional growth and the social ones connected to race and class. New York, because it is simultaneously one of the nation's oldest cities as well as its largest, has been the crucible in which these powerful forces have engendered the now standard pattern of segregated sprawl which characterizes all too much of metropolitan America.

This is a critical juncture at which to focus on issues of race and class in the tri-state metropolitan region. The physical isolation of African-Americans in compacted inner city ghettos has reached such proportions that serious scholars now invoke the specter of apartheid to describe the situation. The two largest cities in the region, New York and Newark, are among the most segregated in the United States; both cities score highly on every index used to measure racial isolation and concentration. Moreover, both cities have shown an increase in these indices from 1970 to 1990, indicating that racial segregation is now firmly built into the physical and social fabric of the region.

As this racial concentration has consolidated, structural changes in technology and the global economy have transformed the local job market. This is most notable in the loss of 140,000 production and craft jobs in the region that provided good paying jobs to unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Concomitant with this shift in the economic base has been a dramatic redistribution of income to the point where the United States now has the highest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation, an imbalance that is particularly severe in the tri-state region. There are at present more than two million poor people in the region. Many of them reside in the area's central cities. As Douglas Massey and Nancy A. Denton persuasively argued in *American Apartheid*, this interaction of poverty and segregation is responsible for the creation and perpetuation of a black "underclass." The contemporary black ghetto is a place of consistently high unemployment, low median income, low median house values, low school test scores, a high percentage of single parent families and births to unwed mothers and a high incidence of substance abuse and crime. The result is an environment where these effects not only occur, but are common or normative.

This article explores the relationship of physical and social planning through an analysis of the three regional plans for New York produced by the Committee on the Plan of New York and Its Environs, established in 1921, and its successor,

the Regional Plan Association (RPA): the 1929 Regional Plan for New York (RPNY), the 1968 second regional plan, and the 1996 third regional plan. For over sixty years, the RPA has been the voice of the progressive business community, whose leaders seek to assure economic efficiency by promoting coherent regional planning competitiveness. While the first two plans treated the minority and immigrant workforce as a burdensome nonproductive sector, the current plan identifies this population as a critical component in workforce growth and competitiveness. Recognizing discrimination and segregation as obstacles to labor force productivity, the third plan gives prominence to issues of education and access to jobs. At the same time, however, the plan stops short of a concerted attack on segregation.

### **The (first) Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs (1929)**

From the closing decades of the nineteenth century, when transit severed the ancient tie between residence and work place, there has been a strong impulse to channel the spatial evolution of walking cities into coherent metropolitan regions. Although the roots of conscious regionalism antedate the RPA and its predecessor, the Committee for a Regional Plan, the RPA is America's oldest formal regional planning organization. It owes an evident intellectual debt to earlier attempts at regional rationality found in the English Garden Cities Movement and Burnham's Plan for Chicago. In 1921 when the Russell Sage Foundation established the first Committee for a Regional Plan under Charles Dyer Norton's leadership, a powerful consensus behind the notion of regional rationality was already in place.

At about the same time that regionalism was becoming a clearly articulated focus within the nascent planning profession, the mechanization of agriculture was transforming large numbers of rural African-Americans into urban immigrants. In the opening decades of the present century this population of former slaves and their descendants began leaving the southeast for the great cities of the northeast and midwest. In 1910, 90,000 African-Americans lived in New York City, less than 2 percent of the population. By 1920 their numbers had grown to 150,000, about 3 percent of the population. By 1930, when the RPNY was released, the African-American population had more than doubled again to 327,000, roughly 5 percent of the city's population.

The framers of the RPNY were concerned that the foreign and Negro population, in addition to constituting a ⇨

nonproductive burden on the economy, would interfere with the efficiency of the residential and commercial real estate market. Chief economist Robert Haig expresses this concern succinctly in his study "Major Economic Factors in Metropolitan Growth and Arrangement" in Volume I of the Regional Survey that underpins the first Regional Plan:

Some of the poorest people live in conveniently located slums on high-priced land. On patrician Fifth Avenue, Tiffany and Woolworth, cheek by jowl, offer jewels and gimcracks... on substantially identical sites.... In the very heart of the 'commercial' city on Manhattan Island south of 59th Street, the inspectors in 1922 found nearly 420,000 workers, employed in the factories. Such a situation outrages one's sense of order. Everything seems misplaced. One yearns to re-arrange the hodge-podge and to put things where they belong. This, of course, is in large measure the logic behind New York's first zoning resolution whose passage, along with slum clearance and tenement house reform, was championed by Lawrence Veiller and Robert DeForest, later head of the Russell Sage Foundation, the principal sponsor of the first Regional Plan. These earlier efforts shared with the RPNY an overriding emphasis on physical infrastructure as cause and cure for the region's problems. The poor, including immigrants, Jews, and Negroes, are not viewed as human resources worthy of attention and assistance in their own right, but as impediments to the efficient functioning of the regional economy. The "sense of order" that Haig and his colleagues sought to promote reflects class prejudice as well as the desire for economic efficiency. The physical plan itself is a series of proposals of breathtaking scope to re-order the region through the construction of an elaborate network of bridges, tunnels, highways and parks. While the intention of the first regional plan was primarily to ease congestion and improve productivity, as implemented by New York City construction czar Robert Moses, it ultimately had a devastating long term impact on the social stratification of the metropolitan region.

This is especially poignant in light of the authors' express denial of such an intention: "What we have to refrain from are those details of housing or sanitation or social order that have no direct relation to the development of the land, the transportation system, or the general scheme of city building. What we have to pursue as our primary task is the making of a comprehensive ground diagram."

### **The Second Regional Plan (1968)**

By the time the second plan was promulgated, the question of race was unavoidable. Deteriorating conditions led to urban riots and the appointment of a Presidential Commission on Urban Unrest - the Kerner Commission - whose final report warned that the United States was rapidly becoming two nations, black and white, separate and unequal. In this context, of the eight reasons the RPA gave as warranting a second regional plan, number two on the list (after "Uncontrolled Urbanization") was: "A

segregated society: the growing separation of rich and poor, Negro and white. The movement continues of white, middle- and upper-income families from the older cities to the suburbs."

Despite the prominence that race is given in the plan, however, instances of overt discrimination such as willful housing segregation are never discussed. Instead the issue is handled mainly as a matter of economics. The absence of African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the spreading suburbs is seen as a problem of insufficient affordable housing. In terms of employment the report calls for the perennial solution: more job training and, however quaint it may appear in our *laissez faire* age, guaranteed public employment.

On the issue of metropolitan fiscal resources the second plan was remarkably prescient. It called for a federal take-over of welfare as the necessary condition for allowing cities to cope with the pressures of the urban in-migration of poor people: "[Cities] will never be pleasant places to live compared to the newer areas until the cost of poverty-related public services is lifted from them. Nor will the poor ever have the quality of education and other public services needed to raise themselves from poverty as long as the cities must contribute a large share of the costs." As with the first plan, the second regional plan places its heaviest emphasis and greatest specificity on those matters which lead to a more efficient and compact region. The principal difference is that the role assigned to the center has shifted. The second plan reverses the doctrine of decentralization and projects Manhattan as a national center of commerce and finance. To a large extent it formed the basis for the Master Plan published in 1969 by the City of New York. One of the key innovations of that plan was the introduction of special district zoning to attract and retain an elite work force in a new national center. Thus the first special district, at Lincoln Square, had two goals: to reinforce New York's hegemony as a cultural capital and to provide a southern anchor for the revitalization of the Upper West Side.

Concurrent with this courtship of an elite workforce, the 1968 regional plan reflects the social turmoil of the times in its recognition of issues of race and poverty. Written in a period of economic expansion, however the plan permits itself the luxury of assuming that education and training will rapidly open the doors to universal economic prosperity, placing its faith in "the steep climb in income that this economy could provide for everyone if recent economic trends can be continued and the prosperity widely distributed." The history of the past thirty years demonstrates how much this over-optimistic economic projection was off the mark.

In similar fashion, the plan invoked the contemporary political climate, notably the rise of the black power movement, to justify not taking a strong stand on residential segregation: "In many ghetto areas, a suggestion to move out is not popular right now... However, it does seem likely, that good housing outside the ghetto would be welcome by many Negroes and Puerto Ricans, as long as it were con-

venient to jobs and services and good schooling. This effort to improve housing quality and promote integration would fail in large part if housing that should be replaced is filled with new unskilled unemployed in-migrants as soon as it is vacated, as has been happening in the Region's core." This section is notable both for its frank description of the dynamics of ghetto housing and the affirmation, in passing, that integration is a goal.

### The Third Regional Plan

In its emphasis on the metropolitan transportation network the third regional plan follows the general thrust of the RPA's earlier efforts. It calls for expanding rail freight and for filling in missing links in existing commuter rail lines to create a regional rail system, including access to La Guardia and Kennedy airports. But the third plan, entitled "A Region At Risk," is very different in tone from the previous documents in its expression of alarm over both wasteful land consumption and a decline in the economic competitiveness of the region. It is the latter aspect that bears most directly on workforce issues. Between 1989 and 1992, the region lost 770,000 jobs, the largest job loss in any metropolitan area in the country since World War II. At the same time, the composition of the region's work force has changed: nearly half of those working or seeking work are women, and over a third (36 percent) are Hispanic, Asian, or African-American. Over the past decade, white male workers have decreased in absolute numbers. In New York City, 59 percent of the work force is comprised of racial or ethnic minorities. Moreover, the future work force will, in all likelihood, continue this trend because all population growth in the region is accounted for by foreign immigration, principally from the Dominican Republic, China, and the newly independent states of the former Socialist bloc.

The result of these demographic changes is that the third plan reverses the RPA's historic perspective on minority and immigrant labor: instead of being maligned as a nonproductive burden on the overtaxed resources of the region, this group is seen as a critical component in the region's return to economic vitality. As a consequence, the plan is focused on measures to bring the immigrant work force into the cultural and economic main stream, primarily through education programs. The RPA cites evidence linking education levels to a rise in income and, notably, productivity: "[A] recent study by the National Center on the Educational Quality of the workforce indicates that a 10 percent increase in the education level of a company's workforce improves its productivity by nearly 9 percent... a larger increase than that caused by comparable increases in hours worked or investments in computers, machinery or other equipment."

In other words, the ethnic and racial minority work force is now cast as human capital. In a region forecast to be a majority minority society by 2010, the education of this labor force is a matter of paramount concern. The difference in skill levels is identified as the most significant

cause of the increasing polarization of the economy into high- and low-income segments. The draft plan emphasizes the dramatic decline over the past decade in wage levels of high school versus college graduates: in 1989, a 30-year old high school graduate made only 68 percent of the income of a college graduate, compared with 88% in 1979. Consequently the plan's recommendations seek to improve the skill level of the immigrant and minority workforce by bolstering English language programs, currently over-subscribed in the region, and calling for state assumption of local school budgets. While these measures reflect a new generosity towards the minority workforce, there is also evidence that the RPA is making a virtue of necessity. The plan also calls for tightening immigration policy to better match the supply of incoming skills to the demands of the local labor market.

At the same time the plan demonstrates a high level of appreciation for the nontraditional contributions of the immigrant and minority community to the general well being through development of an informal economy. The plan endorses activities such as home-based business, street vending zones or bazaars, and incubator facilities to help unlicensed businesses improve their performance and gain necessary skills and credentials. Impressively, while the plan emphasizes assimilation of foreign immigrants, it also calls for foreign language instruction for native English speakers to improve their entry into the global economy.

Thus the third regional plan represents a major step forward in focusing on labor force participation as a critical component in regional prosperity. It elevates "equity" along with "economy" and "environment" as one of three foundation stones for improving quality of life in the region. But if the plan is forthright in acknowledging that the region is "shamed by its persistent racial and income segregation," it soft peddles many of the formidable obstacles to transforming the region's social and economic imbalance. While a concern is expressed for bringing low-income communities into the economic main stream, no concerted campaign is articulated for breaking up the ghettos. In fact, the word "ghetto" does not appear in the document. Rather, "racially-segregated inner cities" are identified along with older working-class neighborhoods and immigrant ethnic "enclaves" as areas physically isolated from suburban job markets. The emphasis is on the relation to employment, not on the differences in levels and causes of isolation that distinguish these three forms of residential concentration.

While the issue of segregation is identified, including the desire of the white middle class to keep "them" out, the plan offers no targeted response to this issue. A case in point is the discussion of "housing" incorporated into the "Governance" initiative, which, as in the second plan, speaks more to issues of affordability than to racial integration. For this it relies on voluntary efforts and moral exhortations: "Communities should welcome and include all races, ethnic groups, income groups and age groups." The review of New Jersey's experience with the Mt. Laurel court decisions ⇨

is instructive here. The Mt. Laurel cases, resulting from a lawsuit brought by the NAACP against exclusionary zoning in the New Jersey Township of Mt. Laurel to open up the suburbs to lower income inner-city residents, resulted in a court-ordered mandate for all New Jersey municipalities to provide their fair share of low- and moderate-income housing. The Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), established by the New Jersey legislature to oversee compliance with the decisions, created a mechanism called the Regional Contribution Agreement which permits municipalities to buy their way out of up to half their obligation by making a financial contribution to another municipality within the same housing region. The result of this experience is that while New Jersey has added thousands of new units of affordable housing under the Mt. Laurel program, it has had little impact on inner city movement to the suburbs.

During a series of Roundtable discussions preceding the draft plan, the Mt. Laurel experience was discussed in some depth at a session on "The Habitable Region." When this discussion found its way into the draft third regional plan, however, its thrust had shifted. Instead of identifying the absence of black migration to the suburbs as a shortcoming of the Mt. Laurel plan as implemented by COAH, the draft plan tries to reassure its readers who fear that "affordable housing" will bring unwanted "outsiders" into their communities: "The fears are misplaced, because the 'outsiders' are the community's own grown children, teachers, firefighters, and police officers who want to stay in the town where they grew up or now work but cannot afford to." Similarly, a discussion of the Gautreaux court decision in Chicago, which mandates housing vouchers to allow public housing residents to rent apartments in outlying suburbs, fails to examine fully the improved life circumstances these families have found outside the ghetto. While the recommendations call for building housing for all residents of the region regardless of race or income, there is no mechanism suggested as to how this might be accomplished, only a brief allusion to federal Fair Housing Laws. There is no discussion of pro-integrative strategies which have been successful elsewhere, such as targeted mortgage assistance.

### The RPA's Dilemma

The timidity of the RPA's discussion of suburban segregation is emblematic of the internal contradiction at the heart of that organization. More importantly it is emblematic as well of the political difficulty we as a society have in effectively addressing our urban problems. On the one hand, the RPA is at the forefront of efforts to promote coherent regional development that conserves natural resources as it nourishes human ones. On the other, the corporate sponsorship that helps to make it an effective planning organization also limits the scope of practical initiatives which it can put forth. Typically, where longer term social issues clash with more immediate political imperatives, the social issues are given second priority.

Thus "the sweeping vision" heralded in the first plan or the

"radical restructuring of the status quo" promised in the second are compromised from the start. It was precisely this tension that was at the heart of the famous Adams/Mumford debate in the early 1930s. Writing in *The New Republic*, Lewis Mumford argued that there was no "regionalism" in the plan, that it merely confirmed chaotic methods governing regional growth and proposed no serious attempt at regionalizing the organization of production. The Regional Plan for New York and Its Environs, Mumford charged, "was conceived... in terms which would meet the interests and prejudices of the existing financial rulers... and its aim from the beginning was as much welfare and amenity as could be obtained without altering any of the political or business institutions which have made the city precisely what it is." Thomas Adams, author of the plan, responded angrily by accusing Mumford of being an ineffectual idealist, an "esthete-sociologist," and defended the plan as a practical and workable set of proposals. As a later commentator observed, Adams was "so concerned not to interfere in any way with existing rights and institutions that he rejected even the possibility of public intervention in low-cost housing."

This pragmatism pervades the Third Plan as well. While the plan's section on "Equity" recognizes that "governance is critical to breaking down remaining segregationist barriers," the section on governance offers no specific proposals to address segregation directly. Except for a proposal for state assumption of school financing, the RPA relies again on voluntary cooperation among the over 2,000 separate administrative entities in the region. Here the authors acknowledge that problems besetting the educational system go far beyond formulas of per capita expenditure per student, but the proposed remedy does not address underlying inequities of neighborhood conditions, concentrated poverty and the like. The principle of "home rule" is held sacrosanct despite a very clear understanding of the costs of this system:

The net result of this property tax-based and highly fragmented system is a region in which the cost of living is among the highest in the nation and the quality of life it offers its citizens is declining. Unsustainable growth and development patterns are established; the future workforce is inadequately educated and unprepared. Low-density automobile dependent sprawl is encouraged; centers of all sizes are emptied of residents, jobs, and retail establishments; and open space and sensitive natural resources are consumed.

Citing widespread popular skepticism about big government, the authors are wary about proposing new layers of municipal or regional government. Instead they argue cautiously that the home rule-based governance system should be improved rather than dismantled. Their presentation misses the fire of former New Jersey Governor Jim Florio's keynote address at the RPA's 1991 Regional Assembly, where he spoke candidly about the need for government initiatives and tax increases to provide nec-

essary services and infrastructure improvements. Florio paid a high political price for his willingness to move ahead of current political wisdom. In his farewell "State of the State" address, Florio warned, "It's time to stop living in a fantasy where we think small is automatically better when in fact the price we pay is the duplication and inefficiency of maintaining 611 school districts and 567 totally independent municipalities awash in administrative redundancies. The bottom line cries out for more cooperation, coordination, and, yes, regionalization."

#### Conclusions: The Regionalization of Racial Conflict

When the first regional plan was gestating, in the late teens and early twenties, the orbit of racial conflict was within five miles of the central business district (CBD). Harlem was the flash point of urban racial change as speculators recouped their losses by converting a white community into a black one. By the time of the second plan, in the early 1960s, the racial front lines had moved further out from the CBD. The emblematic fight in Forest Hills, a middle income neighborhood in Queens, was triggered by a decision to locate a large public housing project at the edge of the neighborhood. The City was ultimately forced to back away from its original plan. Instead of a larger number of low income housing units, it substituted a drastically scaled back plan replacing most of the family apartments with units for the elderly.

The site of the most recent racial clash, unfolding as the third regional plan was being readied for release, is Leonia New Jersey, a predominately white middle class, inner ring suburb just across the George Washington Bridge, about 15 miles from the CBD. Leonia sits adjacent to Englewood, a racially integrated suburb with a heavily black public school population. The fight is over court ordered regionalization of suburban schools to promote racial integration. In none of these cases did or will the outcome bring a satisfactory resolution. By the 1930s Harlem was an overcrowded ghetto with a large concentration of very poor people. Forest Hills, which was a prestigious urban neighborhood until the 1970s, is no longer a preferred social destination, serving at best as a stopping point on the way out of the city for those with upwardly mobile ambitions. The pressures on Leonia are similar to ones felt in Yonkers and Mount Vernon in

Westchester County. They will only push more middle class people further into the hinterlands.

These three examples are important because they demonstrate that the unsolved regional problems related to race do not go away as a result of infrastructure improvement. Instead they make the next round of planning more difficult. Indeed if Massey and Denton are correct, the regional crisis will only get worse as the effects of racial segregation are compounded by fading economic opportunity. By not targeting the dismantling of the ghetto as a priority concern, the RPA is not only missing an opportunity to link social and physical planning in a comprehensive way, but is making a potentially serious error. Either we make a concerted effort to open up the region or we can stand by and watch as the white middle class withdraws into ever more remote and gated reserves and devotes an ever higher proportion of both private and public wealth to personal protection. The state of California already spends more of its resources on prison construction and maintenance than it does on higher education. It is hard to imagine how such choice an allocation of resources can ever be a recipe for a healthy and prosperous democratic society.

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## Dots Crying In the Wilderness

**By Jean Garren**  
**May, 1998**

Roughly a quarter of the nation's population lives in rural areas. Actually, most people think that roughly three-quarters of the nation's population live in urban areas, for that is how the data is normally presented. Thus, we in that "other" category conceptually

disappear behind rings of suburbs, walls of skyscrapers, miles of asphalt, and inner-city chaos. Rural America comprises a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse -- and largely ignored -- invisible minority under siege. ⇨

Perhaps the operative word is "invisible," for rural America is not labeled on maps; it is, when one thinks about it, only noticeable through absence. A tiny dot -- or no dot at all -- may mark a rural center whose constituency lies scattered in many directions for many miles, off the highways on rough dirt roads, behind hills or at sparse intervals across an empty horizon. Because it is invisible, rural America is at the mercy of the collective imagination and myth-formation of the urban majority, for, despite its invisibility, rural America is highly visible. Every *Dances with Wolves*, every 4x4 crashing through the empty terrain of a television commercial, every rugged lonesome handsome Marlboro man, every "Colorado Rocky Mountain High," every tourism Get-Away-From-It-All brochure, sends the message that out "there," where people are not, is where one wants to be. I am bemused by neo-Victorian architecture and neo-traditional town planning, and tend to agree with those who consider them manifestations of an urban wish to escape to sometime past, anywhere else. And escaping to rural America they are, in droves. It's the "quality of life." It's not, however, the way of life.

I confess to living in an attractive, rather isolated county of still less than 18,000 people. Originally settled around 1875, it has four incorporated towns (the core with a population of around 8,000, the peripheral rest smaller by great magnitudes) and a quota of "blink and you've missed it" unincorporated dots. I confess to tenanting from a rancher and a coal miner whose family homesteaded here eighty-some years ago. And I confess to believing that between those who have lived their generations on the land and those who have not, there are fundamentally different ways of being in the world. Where I live -- and, from having read journal articles and APA newsletters from around the country, elsewhere as well -- the two are becoming less and less compatible, more and more at conflict. Planning literature speaks much about preserving the form of rural life -- cluster development, open space preservation, and other "design solutions" -- and little about preserving its substance. Even the word "rural" itself has defied academic definition; nor do traditionally rural people tend to define themselves as "rural." From out here, then, it often seems as though we, the minority, are being invaded by foreigners hell bent on parodying, commodifying, and destroying our customs and cultures, and usurping our lands.

Over the past five years my county has grown by 15%. Over the past ten years, use of our adjoining National Forest has exceeded projections by 300%. Better than 3,000 acres per year (around 38,000 cumulative) are losing traditional uses, most recently to 35-acre building sites for the very rich who are able to retain a preferential agricultural tax rate. Eroding roads have been blazoned across our hillsides; castles built on our river banks and fragile ridges, and in the middle of our critical wildlife habitat. Under our state's statutes, enacted primarily by urban legislators, we have little power to do much about it. So we battle livestock-harassing dog packs, cut fences,

ditch destruction, flagrant trespass, proliferating noxious weeds, and the normal hazards of fluctuating markets, agribusiness conglomerates, and a welter of regulations. Beleaguered, since the value of our land for trophy homes far exceeds its value for agriculture, we capitulate to the 35-acre projects.

It is, however, the concomitant and crippling local and national economic shift that may, in the long run, be most insidiously destructive. As Rural America is "discovered" by the affluent, Service America finds us, too. One can talk about urban corporate layoffs; the past ten years have seen virtually all of our good-paying mining jobs disappear. For agriculture it's a double whammy: a century-long supportive symbiosis between the two has been erased. For those whose forefathers were miners and who themselves have been miners all their lives, the loss is severe. Along with no historical memory, Urban Cowboys, "hummingbirds" and "lone eagles" bring no jobs but low-wage jobs for those with rural skills. If one chooses not to sell out, what jobs are there in the increasingly high-priced tourism/recreation-oriented core, many miles away? And the socio-economic cost to labor is not calculated by employers. The small dots, once our social, cultural, and modest economic support systems, are becoming rising-cost bedroom towns of the core. Our schools are hard becoming overcrowded, our roads increasingly ill-maintained, and the county's "tax reform" budget follows the demands of urban money and power.

And rural America needs. Above all, we need the assistance of those who are not urban graduates of urban planning programs conceptualizing in terms of urban solutions for urban problems -- and there doesn't seem to be a Department of Rural Planning around. Although much can be learned from urban planning, there is much urban planners need to unlearn when they come to rural areas -- primarily that rural planning is not about design, and that rural customs and cultures are surely not those of the urban world. If rural America is to be functionally saved, if our customs, cultures, lands and children are not to be ousted by "foreigners," rural planning foremost needs to be about resistance mechanisms and about acquiring the time to accommodate change with dignity, hope, and economic resilience. It needs to be about fundamentally rethinking regulatory schemes for the benefit of those who are here rather than coming. It needs to be about job retraining and economic development unrelated to exploitative industries. And, it needs to be about advocacy in the public arena and above all about sensitivity and balance. For us all, it's a formidable challenge.

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Jean Garren has a master's degree from UCLA, has taught in the arts and humanities and other fields, has owned her own business, and is a member of her county's Planning Commission.

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