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Communities and Design

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The Seventh Generation

"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."
—From The Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy

Is the AIA a Place for Design that Matters?

By Kathleen Dorgan

DURING THIS YEAR'S 2012 American Institute of Architects (AIA) convention in Washington D.C., members left en masse following a standing-room only Gold Medal presentation, leaving the keynote speaker, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, to address a half empty ballroom. The remaining audience heard Donovan describe the ways in which federal partnerships are embracing principles of participatory design and neighborhood transformation, many of which were first nurtured within the community design movement with the AIA's support. This history, or a current vision for the role of the AIA in addressing today's critical issues, was conspicuously absent. As demonstrated by the convention audience, the institute's interest in design that matters-the-most is not dependable. This article traces the history of the AIA's relationship with the progressive community design movement and speculates about ways that the AIA could recommit to initiatives to make design matter, including learning from what Jeff Hou, leader of the Pacific Rim Community Design Network, describes as "an explosion of community design in Korea."

AIA engagement in community design resulted from Urban League Executive Director Whitney Young's

brutal keynote speech at the 100th convention of the AIA in 1968:

> . . . you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights . . . You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance.

> . . . But I have read about architects who had courage, who had a social sensitivity, and I can't help but wonder about an architect who designs some of the public housing that I see in the cities of this country—how he could even compromise his own profession and his own sense of values to have built 35- or 40-story buildings, these vertical slums, and not even put a restroom in the basement and leave enough recreational space for about ten kids when there must be 5,000 in the building. That architects as a profession wouldn't as a group stand up and say something about this is disturbing to me.

> . . . You share the responsibility for the mess we are in in terms of the white noose around the central city. It didn't just happen. We didn't just suddenly get this situation. It was carefully planned . . .

> It took a great deal of skill and creativity and imagination to build the kind of situation we have, and it is going to take skill and imagination and creativity to change it. We are going to have to have people as committed to doing the right thing, to "inclusiveness," as we have in the past to exclusiveness.

An AIA Task Force on Equal Opportunity, composed, using the terminology and perceived racial dichotomy of the times, of five white and five black members

Fall 2012 Issue Contents

Design for Regenerative Communities

By Kyle D. Brown

WITH THE current focus on the design of sustainable communities, the emphasis is on ensuring that we meet the needs of the present generation and that future generations are able to meet their own needs. This often-used definition of sustainability first offered by the United Nations' *Brundtland Report,* puts forth a challenge that is really two-fold: 1) in what ways will we ensure the continual regeneration of key resources necessary for survival over multiple generations, such as food, water and energy; and 2) in what ways are we nurturing leadership and capacity in future generations to empower communities to assert control over their futures?

Much has been written within the design and planning literature about the first challenge, as it engages the physical systems of urban form, which often characterize the core competencies of those of us engaged in sustainable design. Strategies for

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urban organic agriculture, water resource management, renewable energy and conservation receive much attention. However, far less attention has been paid to the second challenge within the sustainable design discourse, beyond vague and ill-defined references to economic and educational dimensions of sustainability. This is not surprising given the distance of these topics from the domain of traditional design practice, yet it stands to reason that if we are genuinely interested in the sustainable maintenance and operation of the systems we design, we should be interested in nurturing the commitment and capacity to do so within future generations.

The Need for Ecological Sovereignty to Advance Local Sustainability

The empowerment of local communities to assert control over their own sustainable futures can be described as a form of sovereignty, a term which is gaining prevalence, particularly around food issues. Food sovereignty has been defined as the right of people to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments.

While suggestive of self-sustaining local food strategies, the concept is not intended to suggest isolationist practices. Rather, the emphasis is placed on communities making their own decisions about food which nourishes the community, as opposed to having those decisions made for it via trade policies, government subsidies, multinational corporations or other external decision-makers. One may think of communities as existing on a sovereignty continuum, lying somewhere between total dependence on external resources and decisions and absolute independence.

While embracing food sovereignty may be an important step for a community, the community may also be dependent on many other vital resources. A community may be unable to develop a strategy for local food production without ensuring adequate water, land and energy needed for production, distribution and processing. A systems approach to sustainable communities shows us that in order to attain sovereignty in one system, sovereignty must also be exerted over other critical resource systems. Given the interdependence of these

community systems, a broader goal of ecological sovereignty should be considered whereby communities exert control over all the systems essential for sustainability, including food, water, energy, the built environment and waste, as well as relevant social and cultural systems and local ecological systems.

If we accept the concept of ecological sovereignty as a vital dimension of a sustainable community, what does this require from its citizens? How can interest in and capacity for attaining sovereignty be fostered in future generations? A review of related literature suggests that key strategies include promoting an asset-based culture, nurturing empowerment and continually re-generating leadership from within.

Promoting an Asset-Based Culture

All communities possess strengths or assets, which may include ecological, cultural or economic resources, as well as qualities and capabilities of their citizens. At the same time, all communities also possess problems, or deficits, which detract from the community's capabilities or quality of life. Communities of affluence are often characterized by their assets, which may include high-performing schools, cultural centers, parks and shopping, dining and entertainment options. These assets often become ingrained in the identity of the community, reinforced by media and social networks. While these communities undoubtedly face many problems such as pollution, substance abuse or other criminal activity, these

Participant's at the Lyle Center's "Low Impact Eating" community workshop, where participants shared a meal and discussed the environmental impact of food choices.

rarely define the community within our collective imagination, or within the mindset of the community members. Communities with an asset-based perspective often have active and progressive citizenry who mobilize to advance environmental initiatives around issues such as local food or renewable energy. It is easy for such communities to envision movement toward an ecologically sovereign future.

In contrast, many low-income, minority or otherwise marginalized communities are often characterized much more by the problems they face and the needs they have. These may include crime, homelessness, extensive contamination and low-achieving schools. While these communities undoubtedly possess valuable assets in the form of institutions, organizations, cultural resources or gifted individuals, these qualities rarely characterize external perceptions of the community, particularly as filtered through the media, which tend to focus on high-profile problems. While this external perspective can be quite damaging, the deficit perspective of the community's own residents may be even more damaging. Residents begin to believe their community is incapable of improving and unworthy of positive assets. It becomes hard for residents to imagine a future where problems are addressed and assets are a defining element of their identity. For these communities, an ecologically sovereign future may be impossible to envision.

The transformation of a community from one that has a deficit-based perspective to one that has an asset-based perspective is extremely challenging, however, it is a necessary cultural shift if future generations are going to be able to envision alternative futures, including ecological sovereignty.

Nurturing Empowerment

In order to assert its right to make decisions about the use of key resources, a community must be empowered to plan and act for itself. This empowerment requires not only an understanding of ecological structure and function, which characterizes these resources, but also conscious recognition of political jurisdictions, power relations, social justice concerns and other cultural constructs which shape community life. Only then can alternative futures be conceived and achievable strategies and tactics developed. The knowledge that is essential for this type of empowerment is characteristic of what the great community organizer Saul Alinsky described as "real education," where individuals make sense out of their relationship to their community and the larger world in order to make informed and intelligent judgments about how to change their situations.

Communities of affluence, and others defined by their assets, may be well-positioned to exhibit empowerment in advancing sustainability, whereas marginalized communities may require greater nurturing. Indeed, recent studies have highlighted the educational disparity between high-income and low-income Americans, noting that the gap between these groups has grown substantially in recent years. While these disparities reflect performance on standardized testing and other measures which may not effectively assess Alinsky's "real education," some studies have documented the importance of empowerment and other developmental assets in boosting overall academic performance, suggesting a possible relationship.

Regeneration of Leadership

If strategies and practices for sustainability are to persist for multiple generations, the emergence of leadership from within the community is important. Our perceptions of leadership are often influenced by notions of heroic leadership, where the leader is often a charismatic "expert" from outside the community who believes she knows best, that her own cultural values are better, that the communities she is helping are defined only by their problems or needs and that cultural differences can or should be ignored. Described as the "heroic leadership trap" by Paul Schmitz, this approach often yields simple and disconnected solutions which fail to appreciate the unique assets and challenges of the community and offer virtually no hope of the leadership torch being passed to subsequent generations. Recent community organizing efforts, however, have emphasized the multiplication and sharing of leadership from within. Under this approach, the characteristics of leadership are redefined to value local knowledge, value local assets, appreciate difference and mobilize

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TOP
Elementary students in Pomona, California, map assets in their neighborhood, including wildlife sightings.

BELOW
The students filter vegetable oil and use it to power a vehicle.

support. Leadership moves from being heroic to being contagious.

The Role of Design

What is the role of community design in the promotion of asset-based culture, the nurturing of empowerment and the regeneration of leadership? I see two important ways in which community designers can foster these qualities in the interest of advancing sustainable design for future generations.

The first is in the design of environments that promote healthy development in young people. This goes well beyond the design of schools and playgrounds, toward a healthy community approach based on developmental assets. The Search Institute has articulated a framework of such assets, which are positive factors in young people, families and communities that have been found to be important in promoting healthy development. Many of these assets are internal to the young person, including those that promote a commitment to learning, a positive value system, critical social competencies and positive identity. Others are assets which are external to the young person, embodied in either the family unit or community. These include mechanisms of support for the young person, assets to promote empowerment, boundaries and expectations and constructive uses of time. The framework offered by the Search Institute is robust, supported by significant data regarding academic achievement across numerous communities.

While not all of these developmental assets may have obvious connections to design work, many do. For example, the constructive use of time emphasizes creative activities, youth programs and other modes of organized youth engagement.

I see two important ways in which community designers can foster interest in sustainable design for future generations: First, is the design of environments that promote healthy development in young people. Second, is for the community design process itself to embody an asset-based culture, nurture empowerment and regenerate leadership from within.

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These have obvious implications for the planning and design of recreational facilities, gathering spaces and public art. Other assets, such as those associated with empowerment, emphasize neighborhood safety and the perception of youth

as a valuable resource within the community. These have implications for the prioritizing of youth spaces within the community, as well as natural surveillance and other design strategies to promote safety.

The second way regenerative communities can be promoted is for the community design process itself to embody the strategies of promoting an asset-based culture, the nurturing of empowerment and the regeneration of leadership from within. This may be a challenging shift for many who view the designer's role as one of providing technical assistance and expertise, as it takes on flavors of community-based education, community organizing and facilitation. Yet it may be a necessary shift if we hope to develop goals and strategies which are truly sustained across multiple generations.

At the Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies at Cal Poly Pomona University, we have embraced this approach, working with elementary-aged children and their families on a variety of environmental projects. While the topic is environmentally-based, the focus is on developing assets which will enable the children to succeed in academics and empower them to articulate alternative futures for themselves as well as for their community. We have found the environment to be a powerful subject because of its complexity, as well as its presence in daily life. We hope that it provides the "real education" described by Saul Alinsky and empowers the youth of the community to take action toward a more sustainable future. **P²**

Seventh Generation: *Is the AIA a Place for Design that Matters?*
By Kathleen Dorgan

chaired by David Yerkes, was formed to respond to Young's charges. In its single year of existence, the task force initiated the AIA/Ford Foundation On-the-Job Training (OJT) and scholarship program that went on to successfully support many students of color entering the profession, and published a handbook for local chapters, "Guideline: Community Design Centers."

The nomenclature "community design center" was adopted from the Community Design Center in San Francisco, one of a group of independent non-profit design practices embedded in distressed neighborhoods where students and recent grads were drawing plans and proposing projects with neighborhood residents. Playgrounds, community centers and rehabilitation projects were designed and sometimes constructed with volunteer labor. Active opposition was mounted against neighborhood-scarring highways and "slum" clearance.

At the 1969 AIA convention in Chicago, members, who clearly misunderstood the institute's prohibition on the use of free sketches as a marketing tool (since found to be a restraint of trade), argued that community design centers offering pro bono services was unethical. Yet a rousing speech by AIA student-president, Taylor Culver, galvanized the assembly, which pledged $15 million dollars to alleviating urban blight. A new task force, the Task Force on Professional Responsibility to Society, was formed to fulfill this pledge. Robert Nash was chair, Grady Poluard was staff administrator and Hugh Zimmer took leave from the Philadelphia Workshop to work on the task force.

The task force organized seventy-six AIA chapter-partnerships, a conference at Howard University, and action teams dedicated to "seeking out methods of actually changing many of the building restraints that affect the poor." In March of 1970, community design center leaders gathered with private practitioners and government officials, and a "fairly volatile" discussion ensued. Willie Vasquez of The Real Great Society in East Harlem charged: "We're wasting our time; we should be overthrowing the system." Architect and Episcopal priest Taylor Potter complained: "It's pathetic; these

people don't know that to win power in this country you've got to convince the moderates. Your message has to be reasonable." At the conference, an advisory committee of thirteen design center representatives was formed and the task force concluded that "the institute somehow is still living with an inordinate amount of self-serving programs to create a public image and programs which in terms of society's needs are archaic."

Tensions continued at the 1970 AIA convention, where George T. Rockrise revealed, "It sounds really negative to me to say this, because I'm part of the task force . . . [however] . . . I do know the AIA is not fully behind it. I'm sure we are more aggravating to the leadership than helpful." Sanford Goldman of the Architects' Center of Florida suggested that "individual efforts would be more effective than getting bogged down with . . . fundraisers, putting out pamphlets on what we are doing and what we want to do . . . " Harlem community designer Art Simms explained, "I don't think very many architects around the country would really want to deal with political problems that poor communities, black, white or Mexican or Puerto Rican, whatever, have to deal with. So it's a clear point for CD [community design]." Alex B. from San Francisco added, " For white architects to come down to local communities, whether Chinese, black or any other color and say I know the city councilors and I can get you through the zoning changes for this little project, is paternalism, it's white paternalism, and the missionary attitude that low-income communities don't want and reject it. It's about time the white society starts to learn to work with the minority community, work with them and not do things for them. We get sick and tired of you people doing things for us . . . the fact that CDCs gave away free architectural services still appalls some members of the profession, whether or not they realize the clients cannot afford a penny." A speaker from Florida pleaded, "I don't know how to start integrating with the blacks. Can someone help me?"

In July of 1970, Vernon Williams was hired as the AIA community design director. He and a staff, including

Marshall Purnell, who would later become AIA president, began providing technical assistance to community design centers. In September, an AIA administrative realignment led to the formation of a Human Resource Council, headed by Robert Nash and Nathaniel Owings, which was charged with fulfilling the 1969 pledge. Ten large architecture firms represented on the council contributed $10,000 each to supplement membership fees budgeted for AIA staff and administrative expenses in support of the community design centers.

Under the leadership of Williams, the number of design centers expanded and the network of practitioners was strengthened. By 1971, the community design center listing included seventy-four organizations. In 1972, the film "*We Have to Be Able to Do it Ourselves,*" which depicted the energy, excitement, anger and grassroots engagement of community design centers in Cleveland, New Orleans, San Francisco and Philadelphia, was distributed. Yet with the exception of a gift from the Ford Foundation, private fundraising efforts for the AIA initiative stalled. Still, individual centers were beginning to secure funding, including a few grants from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), to support paid staff and increasingly ambitious projects.

Williams led an AIA campaign for federal funding for centers and AIA staff designated for their support. Congress passed legislation, an attachment to a child care bill, which was vetoed by Richard Nixon for reasons unrelated to the community design provisions. This effectively ended the AIA's quest to fulfill its $15 million commitment and began the slow devolution of the AIA/design center partnership. The legacy of this initiative, however, inspired several HUD grants to community design centers during Geno Baroni's stint as assistant secretary during the Carter administration

Beset by recession and declining revenues, AIA leadership withdrew dedicated staff support for community design. The AIA Advisory Committee morphed into the Community Design Directors Association (CDCDA), which was formally incorporated in 1977 and later renamed the Association of Community Design (ACD). Annual gatherings of community designers migrated from AIA headquarters to community locations. AIA staff support declined and effectively ended by the end of the 1970s. In 1980, community design center concerns were incorporated in the AIA's Urban Planning and Design Committee.

The AIA Board of Directors confirmed support of design centers in 1973, 1977, 1982 and then in 1987 pledged, "The AIA supports community design centers and encourages members and components to do community service using community design centers as a vehicle." In addition, principles of participation and community collaboration that developed through community design practice infuse many of the recent publications produced by the AIA and current practice in architecture more broadly. ACD continues as a voluntary association whose membership now includes many university programs. Members, many of whom are major actors in their urban and rural communities, continue to exchange information about projects at an annual conference that includes planners and landscape architects as well as the original architectural constituency. Yet without staff, there is little follow-up on members' desire to share resources, forge partnerships, encourage the growth of the movement, build diversity or impact national policy.

Chuck Turner, executive director of the Community Design Center in San Francisco, who has been active in community design and engaged with the AIA from the initial meeting to the present, sums up the relationship as follows:

> The AIA played an important role in the support and acceptance of community design centers by the profession and government; it was particularly helpful in helping community design centers organize and maintain a network during the early years. In turn, community design centers gave the AIA and profession an active presence in low-income communities and in some ways changed the way the profession acted and was perceived by the public and government. But since the community design centers were not creatures of the AIA—they existed before and in spite of AIA recognition, were not in most cases supported or funded by AIA and were not dependent on AIA for survival—there was always an ambivalence about the relationship. Who could take credit, control and responsibility for the community design center's contribution and existence?

After a long silence, there are indicators of renewed interest in community design at the AIA and within the profession. In 2008, ACD and the AIA Housing and Custom Residential Knowledge Community collaborated on a symposium. The AIA's Communities by Design programs encourage collaboration with community design centers, and the Design Assistance Team's "Program Guidelines for Disaster Response and Recovery Programs" recommends establishing a community design center. The Boston Society of Architects supported the start up of a community design center in 2005 that has attracted over 300 volunteers. HUD experimented with engaging the Universities Rebuilding America Partnerships—Community Design (URAPCD) program in the Gulf Coast. Still, Ambassador Andrew Young's keynote speech at the 2008 AIA convention meeting in Boston, *Forty Years: The Anniversary of Whitney Young's Presentation to the Institute,* didn't mention AIA engagement with community design centers or the accumulated knowledge of almost a half of century of engaged transdisciplinary community design practice.

A recent AIA membership poll funded by the prestigious 2011 Latrobe Prize revealed support for public interest design (an emerging term for socially motivated practice that includes community design) by AIA members. Co-author Bryan Bell notes that an interim report on the research that includes this poll concludes, "Public interest design practices may represent a future trend of architectural practice in general in the U.S. as we adapt to a changed concept of client and changing economic conditions." The Housing Knowledge Community is launching a continuing education program in public interest design in the spring.

Community design is being embraced as a popular and cost-effective strategy in several Pacific Rim nations. The "Green Community Design" conference in Seoul in August 2012 attracted hundreds of students and practitioners. At the conference, public officials described their support of and funding for community design. Current projects in Taiwan include the design of environments to protect the black-faced

spoonbill, employing traditional building techniques to rebuild three villages ravaged by Typhoon Marakot and a high school curriculum for teenagers participating in green community development in Old Town Daxi.

In Japan, projects include disaster relief, increasing public participation in agriculture and a system of community flower gardens in Tokyo. South Korea has been especially aggressive in supporting community design projects, such as developing a community role in stimulating the Mapo-gu Pier Commercial District, community-built pocket parks, a Seoul urban forest movement and the Village of Namyangju's development of an eco-tourism strategy. Throughout South Korea there is a proliferation of plantings and art installations designed with and maintained by community members in spaces from highway verges to public parks. The scale of this transformation provides a window into the unrealized potential of community design in the U.S. There is an opportunity for the AIA to reclaim its leadership on this important topic.

Progressive planners can take many lessons from the history of the AIA's interactions with community design that can be applied to practice, policy and teaching. The first comes directly from Whitney Young: professionals are as responsible for what they don't do. A "thunderous silence" describes the AIA (as well as APA, ASLA and USGBC) position on issues of social justice in 2012. The second is that speaking up can make a difference. The AIA members who took up Young's challenge created a sea change within the AIA. Anyone who doubts this should watch *"We Have to Be Able to Do it Ourselves."* This flame can be reignited within our professional organizations. Roberta Feldman and her Latrobe Prize research team have opened a door at the AIA for this conversation. Finally, as evaluators, public officials, consultants and citizens, progressive planners are situated to recommend and plan ways for community design to play a large national role, as demonstrated in Korea and the Pacific Rim. Design professional are complicit in the disparity of opportunities and health outcomes between communities, however, it doesn't have to be that way. ᴾ²

There's a Whole Lot of Planning Goin' On

Supporting Citizen Planners and Incorporating Community Vision in Multiple and Overlapping Planning Processes

By Eric D. Shaw

INITIATIVES by all levels of government and by national and community foundations are developing new opportunities for increased community involvement in planning and development. This creates a need and opportunity for those committed to civic engagement to be involved in these initiatives: educating citizens on the planning process, mobilizing citizens to participate in the planning process and moving citizens to act in implementing plans. At the same time, it is imperative that community practitioners are not only working after the fact; they must work with elected officials, policymakers and foundation officers early on to ensure that the outcomes of initiatives will meet community needs and create effective long-term strategies inclusive of the community vision.

Eric D. Shaw was most recently the vice president of policy and programs for Foundation for Louisiana. He has worked in the field of community development and philanthropy for non-profits and government in Washington, D.C., Miami, the San Francisco Bay Area and Louisiana for more than ten years.

For many years the federal government has provided seed funding or total funding for community planning and implementation activities. Upon entering office, President Obama set a policy objective to align the budgets of housing, transportation, and environmental programs in an effort to create more sustainable communities. This led to the establishment in 2009 of the federal interagency partnership between the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT) and Environmental Protection Agency, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The charge of this partnership is to realize six livability outcomes through support for local partnerships in the development and implementation of innovative local and regional plans.

As part of their grant proposals, local partnerships were required to detail an approach to soliciting substantive input from citizens. Significant weight was given to innovative and ongoing approaches to community engagement in the evaluation of proposals. In 2010, the federal agencies awarded more than $400 million to more than 200 communities as part of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Through similar cross-agency partnerships, the federal government has provided support for more neighborhood-based planning and implementation projects. The Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, lead by the Department of Education, provides funding to develop plans to improve cross-population education opportunities in distressed neighborhoods. The department awarded $10 million in planning grants to twenty-one communities in 2010, and $60 million will be awarded in 2012. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, led by HUD, provides funding to develop plans to improve housing and economic development opportunities in neighborhoods that currently or once had public housing. HUD expects to award $115 million in planning and implementation grants in 2012. Applicants were required to show community support of their grant applications as part of the submission process. As with the grants awarded under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, significant weight was given to innovative and ongoing approaches to community engagement in the evaluation of proposals.

Recently, national and community foundations have launched placed-based initiatives with the

goal of addressing the needs of distressed cities and neighborhoods. The Ford Foundation Metropolitan Opportunities Program supports organizations throughout the nation that "pursue integrated approaches to housing, land use and environmental planning, public transportation and community infrastructure and aligned workforce opportunities." This year the program provided grants totaling almost $27 million to forty-six organizations. The New York City-based Surdna Foundation recently launched a series of initiatives aimed at creating a "healthy environment, strong local economies and a vibrant cultural life." In 2006, a number of foundations formed the Convergence Partnership. Administered by the Oakland-based think tank PolicyLink, the partnership provides seed funding for local foundations to invest in equitable planning and healthy built environments.

With all this planning taking place, the important question for progressive planners to consider is "What am I doing to help ensure that these planning activities are taking place in a transparent manner that ensures substantive community input?" This is an important question to ask, because while community engagement may be a goal of in many planning activities, too often community engagement is compromised in its execution, relegated to a few charrettes and a public comment period.

In an era where funding is limited, localities have their staffs hard at work looking for federal and state dollars to cover costs for planning and implementation. There is a need for those supporting communities that are known to be in target planning areas to be looking for private grant opportunities just as diligently. Such diligence pays off. In the case of the major grant opportunities, it allows progressive planners to begin working with communities on agenda-setting related to grant outcomes before applications are submitted. Communities are able to be proactive and work with local officials and their staffs to shape an application in its early stages.

This was the case in the development of the Sustainable Communities HUD-DOT Community Challenge Grant application submitted by the City of New Orleans. Residents, community leaders and non-profits worked in partnership with the City of New Orleans, State of Louisiana and other regional plan-

ning organizations to craft a framework for community engagement and identify key priorities and outcomes before drafting the grant application. When the City was awarded the grant, there already existed a structure to interface and test ideas with stakeholders and agreed upon expectations around community engagement when the planning commenced.

A conundrum exists in New Orleans based on its success in receiving grant funds for planning. The City was awarded the HUD-DOT Community Challenge Grant, a Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant, national and local foundation funding for neighborhood planning and a state grant funding community planning for a new hospital district—grants all for the same area. Overlapping processes, different planning firms, differing planning outcomes and differing outreach approaches have become barriers to engaging communities and stakeholders in a manner that obtains substantive input. Each planning activity may be transparent and actively seek community input, but so many activities taking place concurrently creates confusion for residents and stakeholders. Citizens are also beginning to experience "planning fatigue," overwhelmed with multiple meetings and discouraged by lack of action on ideas that they propose.

This situation is not unique to New Orleans. In other distressed cities and neighborhoods throughout the nation, this phenomena is also occurring. High-need and distressed cities and neighborhoods are the targets for federal, state and foundation funding and thus often times are recipients of multiple grants, all of which may require separate planning activities.

With the help of progressive planners, non-profits and community groups are seeking to overcome this unintended barrier to resident and stakeholder input in planning. They are doing this through programs that aim to increase the capacity of residents and stakeholders to understand planning methodologies, establish coalitions and play a more proactive role in plan implementation.

Foundation for Louisiana, a grantmaking public charity founded by Governor Kathleen Blanco after Hurricane Katrina, played a crucial role in increasing the capacity of residents, initially around recovery planning in New Orleans. Early efforts focused on educating residents
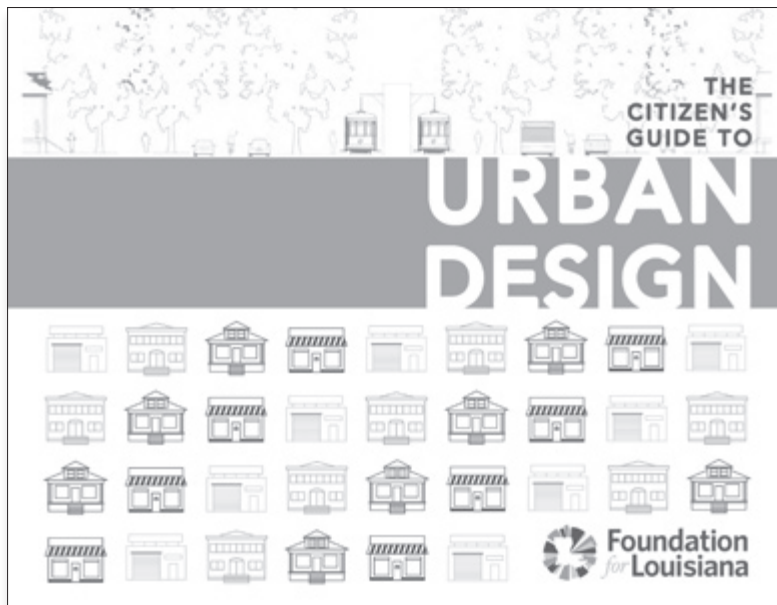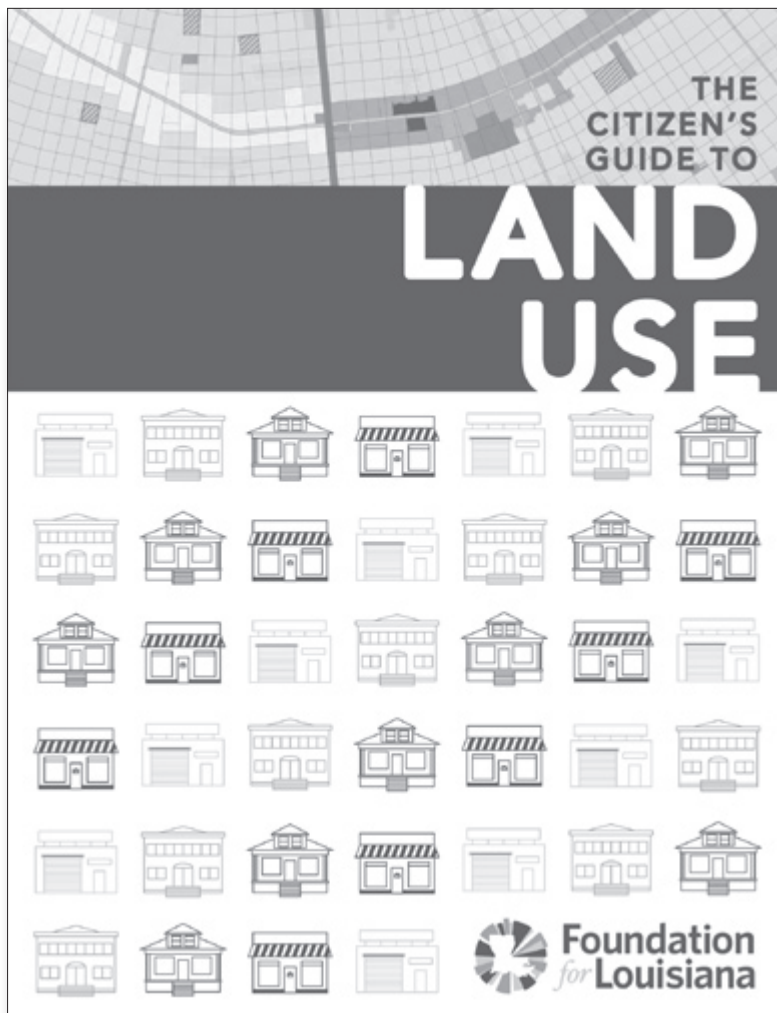
The Foundation for Louisiana's *Citizen's Guide to Land Use* and *Citizen's Guide to Urban Design* can be found at www.foundationforlouisiana.org/news_resources/citizen_guides/. *The Heart & Soul Handbook* is at www.orton.org/resources/heart_soul_handbook.

and stakeholders on how to formally provide input on proposed plans. This involved developing a one-pager that detailed how to get on the speaker's list at a public meeting, how long a person could speak, how to prepare talking points and how to follow up with planning commissioners and city council members with more detailed comments. Residents and stakeholders welcomed the resource, but at the beginning they were hindered in providing more substantive comments by a lack of understanding of planning methodologies and how planning decisions were made.

As all the major cities in the state began updating their master plans, foundation staff sought to develop resources for residents throughout Louisiana that explained the concepts of land use and urban design. This led to the development of the *Citizen's Guide to Land Use* and *Citizen's Guide to Urban Design*. The land use guide provides colloquial definitions of land use colors, explains density and shows how these two concepts are articulated on a land use map. The urban design guide includes the terms used by planners and architects to describe the built environment. It also details, through drawings and photographs, how architectural elements can shape neighborhood character.

Both guides are value neutral. No judgment was placed as to how a place 'should' be designed or what constitutes good or bad design principles. Instead, the guides invite users to analyze how a place looks and how it works—to negotiate the tradeoffs in design and planning decisions. The goal

is to expand access to the process and deepen community input in planning, not influence the outcome in a prescribed direction.

Other cities have made similar attempts at capacity-building. In New York City, the Municipal Arts Society partners with Hunter College to conduct day-long workshops for stakeholders covering the topics of zoning, active design, maps and data, historic preservation and local economic development. The workshops also offer case studies that allow for participants to share their experiences in community planning activities. The Vermont-based Orton Family Foundation created the *Heart & Soul Handbook* to outline approaches that residents and stakeholders can take when implementing community plans.

These capacity-building efforts seek to elevate the role of citizen to that of citizen-planner. Citizen-planners are able to do more than provide substantive input on planning issues; they are able to enter into dialogues on multiple levels with design professionals and elected officials. In understanding planning principles and how decisions are made, they are able to ensure that plans are accountable to the intent of the community.

Citizen-planners complement, not replace, planners. There continues to be a need for trained professionals, be it in the role of community organizer, non-profit staff or planner, to work with community groups to ensure substantive community input in planning activities. However, in the face of multiple, overlapping planning processes,

members of an informed public can be key allies in progressive practice.

Progressive practitioners are often times stakeholders in their own right, representing specific interests—transit and bicycling, sustainable systems, food access or affordable housing. As such, they too are working to ensure that their input is noted in the planning process and incorporated into final plans. It is important in these multiple planning efforts to think more broadly and work to create effective coalitions with one another and with citizen planners around a common

agenda. This agenda must be rooted in community needs and vision, and based on community input. In some instances there may be trade-offs, but having a common agenda is essential to maintaining a focus on the outcomes of all plans.

There have been instances in a number of neighborhoods in which I have worked where advocates promoting food access through community gardens and urban

farms may not take into account long-term community capacity or interest in maintaining the gardens. While the results in the short term appear to meet a need, in the long term they have the potential to increase problems and take land out of commission that could have been used to realize a longer term community vision. In another instance, shared by a colleague, stringent parking requirements advocated for by transit groups hindered the development of the multifamily affordable housing that included parking in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood.

Progressive practitioners must be proactive on the front end, working with governments and foundations to address the pitfalls of overlapping planning processes. They can bring their ideas, experience and expertise to the table with officials to develop programs to identify how best to realize a consistent community vision in multiple, overlapping planning processes.   P²

Three Food Arenas of Self-Help
Arizona's Needy Food Deserts

By Katherine Crewe

Food Security

In the planning world, much of the discourse about food security explores the dysfunctional nature of current food systems, from globalization and the destructive use of chemicals to crop modification and other issues. Solutions have been somewhat broad and sweeping as well, exploring the benefits of increased walkability and access for deprived parts of cities, organic foods versus conventional foods and zoning changes for urban areas. Yet others have looked at innovations for the future. A proposed food conference in Texas, for instance, calls for sharing the expertise of industry professionals, policymakers and innovators as they explore the re-invention of food systems for urban centers, novel ways of dealing with global markets and technological improvements for food sustainability and nutrition. Key questions for the conference are: "How can technology better account for climate changes, natural disasters and other variables affecting food production?" and "How might technology address water shortage to account for climate changes, natural disasters and other variables affecting food production?"

What is often not acknowledged is the distinctiveness of local urban gardens as they emerge to deal with prevailing stress. Each draws on its own arena of assets and institutions, and each involves people and communities in its own ways. This distinctness, as planners often discuss, is a source of strength.

Katherine Crewe is a faculty member at Arizona State University. With a joint degree in planning and landscape architecture, she has done much work with communities seeking to improve their outdoor quality of life.

Urban Farming in Arizona

Urban farming in Arizona cities has taken diverse forms. As a fast-growing Southwestern city of over four million, Phoenix has sprung from a spirit of pro-growth white (or "Anglo") boosterism since the early 1900s. The resulting environmental and social inequities have led not only to a range of urban environments over time, but also to a variety of food gardens depending on prevailing needs and tastes. On the one hand, mainstream urban farm systems are to be found throughout the more prosperous parts of the metropolitan areas of Arizona. In Phoenix, the Valley Permaculture Alliance supports tree planting, school gardens and robust Community Supported Agriculture groups working to provide fresh produce for residents. Also, throughout the more affluent metro areas, commercial projects such as Agritopia in Gilbert and The Farm at South Mountain in Phoenix offer fresh organic produce. Farmers markets are held each week; some last throughout the year.

Urban farming in the more impoverished neighborhoods of Phoenix, however, takes a different form. The contaminated mixed-use area of South Phoenix, a zone of industrial and waste sites plus low-income residential and commercial development, has much vacant land available for urban farming—the result of decades of disinvestment.

South Phoenix

One of the most noteworthy farms in South Phoenix is the Tiger Mountain Foundation, a network run by the evangelist Darren Chapman that consists of

seven community gardens. Boasting three liquor stores and seven fast food stores, this mixed-use area along Broadway Road between 7th Street and 32nd Street is considered a food desert according to USDA standards; there are no full-service grocery stores. Four of Chapman's gardens were formerly sites of illegal dumping, with piles of "glass syringes—dare I say—crack pipes?" One is named the "Field of Dreams Garden," another "Dare to Dream."

The seven gardens have several objectives, all targeted at meeting the needs of the community. The primary objective is to provide food for nearby food centers and homeless shelters, which, according to Chapman, "can't take it in fast enough." A second objective is to provide nutritious food for all members, young and old. A third objective is to serve as training centers for foundation members, many of whom have repeated prison sentences, or are indigent or homeless. Through gardening, members can learn skills in irrigation, planting, harvesting and marketing; they can also learn self-reliance and mutual support through the foundation's doctrine of "each one teach one," and they can develop a strong work ethic. Finally, the foundation gardens provide a community setting where all age groups and talents can co-exist, whether through part-time employment in return for a stipend or produce, or through participation in the biweekly concerts and events.

The Tiger Mountain Foundation has support from local and national institutions, including state and county health and education departments. Key assistance has also come from the Asset Based Community Development Institute in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University. This alliance considers the value of local assets, particularly the skills of local residents and the power of local institutions, as building blocks for community development.

Tribal Reservations around Phoenix

The urban sociologist Andrew Ross, in his book *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City,* identifies two grassroots endeavors which he feels promise hope, environmental restoration and social resilience to a blighted city. The first is the urban farm movement in South Phoenix, where local leaders are using agriculture to strengthen local institutions and encourage mutual cooperation. The second is the restoration of water rights to the Gila River Indian Reservation, which is triggering a resurgence of agriculture and solidarity.

Adjacent to Phoenix, the Gila River Indian Community and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community have faced challenges for decades: health problems and loss of traditional institutions, language and culture. While they have not been threatened by metropolitan encroachment—their status as trust lands promises that both will likely continue as predominantly farming communities—much of the land is leased out for cultivation by non-tribal entities. Many of the crops being farmed are cash crops such as cotton, alfalfa and turf grass, which use large quantities of toxic pesticides, causing high incidences of lupus and diabetes within tribal communities. And in spite of the predominance of farmland, both communities are food deserts, given the loss of traditional lifestyles and eating habits, together with their location adjacent to highway strips of fast food restaurants on the edge of the metropolitan area.

Vato or shelter of dried mesquite branches, Salt River Elementary

For both communities, the growth of urban farming since early 2000 has meant opportunities to revive cultural traditions and strengthen existing community institutions. The organic farm in Salt River was originally initiated by the USDA through the University of Arizona and Arizona State University. The farm has flourished independently since then, with farm produce circulated to the elementary and high school cafeterias, the senior center and the local food center. In addition to providing revenue, job training and nourishment, the organic farm has spawned a community-wide return to using native seeds. Interest in native seeds along with traditional food preparation and medicine continues to be shared by nearby tribal centers. The farm project has also connected with a distance learning center that has teleconference capabilities and is located on the reservation to host tribal ceremonies.

Dry Land Farming Harvesting

A third farm-related endeavor in Arizona, dry water harvesting, revolves around gardening more generally but includes food production. In response to the area's extreme desert climate, this movement has championed the salvaging of rainwater for cultivation.

Full-service market on Broadway Road, Phoenix

The movement, consisting largely of private residents, environmental activists and a few architects and designers, has sprung up in reaction to the copious irrigation practices in Arizona's cities, drawing either on borrowed water from out of state (in the case of Phoenix) or underground water (in the case of Tucson).

Most examples of water salvaging are to be found in Tucson, perhaps better known for traditions of water conservation than Phoenix. A noteworthy example is the Dunbar Springs neighborhood, where drainage basins, curb cuts and dry wells and tanks collect and store roof and stormwater for cultivation of native plants and crops. Residents of Civano in South Tucson also practice water harvesting in private homes—again for planting vegetables. While dry farming practices in Arizona draw on architectural and engineering innovations, pioneers have also turned to Indian farm practices, particularly through spiral mounts and the planting of arid-adapted corn and gourd species.

Grassroots Solutions

Planners have given much thought to the relevance of grassroots solutions, arguing that research into local communities can yield clues for targeted solutions and potentially encourage communities to act for themselves. In his 2010 book on market places and street vending, Alfonso Morales noted the diverse ways city dwellers (many of them temporary and undocumented) seek out ways to improve their lives through business transactions over food. Morales urged planners to take note of food bartering and food sales as means for providing opportunities to strengthen and secure communities. In Phoenix and other Arizona cities, urban farming has provided a setting for diverse grassroots solutions which both highlight challenges yet provide insight into the future strengths of places like South Phoenix and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Concerns about food often relate to a host of other seemingly unrelated issues, such as crime, heritage and youth employment. Planners would do well to consider local initiatives that address food deserts in neighborhoods. Local leaders often understand community needs in ways that outsiders cannot anticipate. P2

Heartstorming

Putting the Vision Back into Community Visioning with Guided Imagery

By Wendy Sarkissian

Community Visioning: Why a Conversation Is Needed

I enjoy workshops conducted by other planners. There is always something to learn, even for an old hand. But in recent years, I've become increasingly concerned about the proprietary offerings of consultants selling "community visioning" models to Australia, where I am based. It's bad enough being at the bottom of the Earth. We suffer from the "VOE" ("Visiting Overseas Expert") problem. Over the past few decades, we've had our share of VOEs offering advice on community visioning exercises and undertaking community visioning programs all over this country and in New Zealand.

I have real problems with their so-called "visioning" models. A first concern is that the proprietary models have not been subjected to any formal scrutiny. No formal evaluation has been undertaken and it seems these models have limited benefits and at best encourage inclusion and yield optimistic and short-term "feel-good" results. But more than that, these models are not about visioning; they are simply planning models. And planning models are fine, as long as nobody is claiming that they are creative, visionary, imaginary or likely to yield greater insights and creativity than we get with Delphi, brainstorming, mind mapping, scenario planning, role plays, future searches or just plain planning.

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Photos: Bonnyrigg, Sydney, 2005, *by the author*

Some of these models smell suspiciously like snake oil.

Definitions and Definitional Problems

In the past decade, researchers critically examining the notion of community visioning have teased out definitions and identified its origins. Canadian academic Robert Shipley, who has made an extensive study of community visioning, says that in planning, visioning has as many as twenty meanings, virtually none of them consistent with each other. While there is among planners a "tacit assumption" about the meaning, the terms vision and goal are often used interchangeably, and vision is often confused with the term mission. Maybe, states Shipley, it's nothing more than "old wine in new bottles."

Shipley's work reveals that visioning is nothing new: it has both scriptural and classical roots, as well as roots in utopianism. The use of backcasting and setting a social situation in the future can be traced to Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (1888), written as a direct commentary about current social conditions in a story set in the future. Humanistic psychologists can also take some responsibility, with management and sports psychology popularizing the notion of visioning. Particularly influential was Tom Peters's *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. Because Australian planners often don't operate in multidisciplinary realms and don't seem to get out much, they've mistakenly decided that visioning is something new. It's not; it's just new to them, having been around for a long time in other realms.

Systems of visioning that had a direct effect on planning began to appear in the early 1990s, with cognitive

mapping, Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* and Warren Ziegler's *Enspirited Envisioning: Transformative Practices for the Twenty-First Century.* More proprietary models followed, with consultant Steven Ames's (now) five-stage New Oregon Model, Visual Preference Analysis (Anton Tony Nelessen), community strategic visioning and community visioning. In planning, community visioning has been a popular planning tool for over a decade. A few models dominate, none of them "visionary."

Importantly, most community visioning processes are undertaken as part of planning processes initiated by government. I've had a manager of a large municipality explain that, while he didn't believe the five-stage approach was valuable, he was using the simple processes of a proprietary visioning model because it was easy to explain to his elected members and could be implemented within their short terms of office. Shipley's Canadian research found the same thing.

Enspirited Envisioning

The late Warren Ziegler did truly try to make his visioning processes "visionary." In *Enspirited Envisioning: Transformative Practices for the Twenty-First Century* (1996), Ziegler says that "true" vision is an expression of our spirit and not knowledge, wishes or goals. A vision can be empty or crass if the spirit is absent. He implores us, when undertaking participatory work with communities and organizations, to "listen to the voice of the spirit." We need to be fully engaged. His

A table of Spanish-speaking residents in the guided imagery

model of envisioning is not making a wish list. It is also not forecasting the future, cognitive mapping, social engineering, Delphi, trend extrapolation or goal setting. The components are dialogue, deep imaging (eliciting images of the future), deep listening (listening to yourself or to other people with silence, attention and empathy and without judgment) and deep questioning (listening for whatever questions inside oneself insist on being asked and asking them). Unlike most practices in planning and development, Ziegler's approach is all about yielding rather than forcing. The process begins with focused imaging, described as "a special way of telling stories about the future you want and intend to bring about." This is followed by a "leap into the future" and deep listening, a component that requires us to engage with the future without judgment or preconditions and to share our images in the present tense. There are other authentic and creative visioning approaches, such as the work of Otto Scharmer and colleagues with Theory U. It is possible to go beyond simple visioning in planning contexts.

My Approach to Community Visioning

In 1973, Professor Emerita Clare Cooper Marcus initiated me into the miracles of guided imagery. At the University of California at Berkeley, she used an innovative process called an "environmental autobiography" to invite students to explore their favorite childhood environments. A guided visualization called a "childhood fantasy" is a component of the process. Clare's work is chronicled in her book, *House as Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home*. Clare carefully prepared her students to explore their ideal childhood environments: "I find a period of quiet, relaxed breathing starts to get people out of their normal, academic, logical way of thinking, and opens them up into a more loose, fantasy state."

Once having entered into the guided imagery, the journeying person sees a figure in the distance walking towards them. They feel slightly curious to discover that the figure is a person—themselves as a child. (I remember looking down to see the small child's hand in mine and feeling a strong and palpable connection.) Then you-the-adult fades away and you-the-child starts to explore the favorite childhood place, experiencing

all its qualities from your unique child's perspective. Carefully worded cues encourage the sense of touch, smell, feeling and recollection of special events. In her guided imagery script, Clare leaves plenty of silent periods for contemplation and remembering.

How do we bring participants back so that they can record what they have experienced? Cooper Marcus reminds us that this can be a very profound experience that takes people into a state of consciousness not normally experienced in the classroom. Therefore, a firm and structured ending is called for to bring them into the next stage of recording what they experienced. Her suggestions are to:

> ask them to lie down in their fantasy, in what they consider to be the center or heart of their environment, to close their eyes (still in fantasy—they have them closed already in reality) and then listen to my voice slowly counting from ten down to zero; as they listen, they will gradually leave their child-self and their child-environment and return to the here and now—and open their eyes.

Clare asks participants to draw in silence with their non-dominant hand and to write about their experience both objectively and subjectively. Sharing insights with other participants adds another dimension.

Sharing my vision

My approach to community guided imagery builds on Clare's work and the work of many practitioners and theorists and reflects years of experimentation. The method I use is a variation of guided imagery, an approach widely used in management, therapeutic and sports psychology contexts. Guided imagery can cut through intellectual blocks by calling on people's imagination; it also enables people to tap into their own memories and instincts. I use a carefully crafted script to take a group on an imaginary passage into the future. People make themselves comfortable, close their eyes, clear their minds and, at my instruction, either recall and experience the past or imagine the future. It can be useful to give participants the "feel" for a situation or to understand how things might appear from another person's point of view or at another point in time. I have found that everyone is capable of visioning. In a workshop for builders working in small homebuilding companies in Melbourne in 1990, participants visualized their ideal suburban environment, incorporating sites with a mix of zoning and with medium-density housing, and then collectively drew their visions using their non-dominant hands. The result was a splendidly creative representation that surprised some onlookers. An angry builder retorted, "What makes you think that builders can't dream?!"

Setting the Scene

By far the most successful guided imagery workshops are those that are co-designed with community members and their advocates, who can help us with ideas that have worked before and can support deep work by demystifying the process with other community members. This collaborative approach enables you to tailor guided imagery approaches. Asking for and receiving permission is very important with certain cultural groups for which guided imagery or role plays may not be appropriate.

Guided imagery is a right-brain activity that forces people to break out of analytical thinking patterns, which may be exactly what critical thinkers need to solve their problem. There are ways to reach an understanding of a situation through guided imagery that are not possible exclusively via rational thought processes.

The beginning of the script must be well thought-out. Many proponents of guided imagery emphasize the importance of pre-framing. It's wise to prepare participants for the intensity of the process they are about to experience and to explain that guided imagery is not a strange "way-out" experience but is used often, especially in sports psychology, and increasingly in business and organizational development, to help people improve performance and achieve clarity about their goals and plans. My pre-framing is designed to put people at ease and convince them that this is not a recruitment session for the Church of the Cosmic Banana.

The wording of the script is critical to success. There is much more to community visioning than sitting around, brainstorming, imagining an ideal future and writing down the key points. By paying attention to careful wording, we can ensure that we prompt only in a generic sense. Rather than guide participants into a bus station or a train, we can ask them to visualize the transportation interchange, allowing them to work out for themselves what the mode of transportation might be. The key is to cue for a response but keep it generic while stimulating participants' unique intelligences, communication and learning styles.

The nature of the guided imagery is largely determined by the needs of the planning project. What is important is that the participants' privacy be respected (they can sign forms to allow us to use the material if we need to) and that all their material is analyzed in the most respectful and thorough manner. Drawings may be copied and themes and qualities drawn out for further analysis. We try to return the drawings as soon as possible to participants, so it's helpful to have a color printer or photocopier on hand. Where permission is given, all contributions must be acknowledged in reports. Participants may feel a strong attachment to the product of a deep process and may be unwilling to have their drawings reproduced.

I strongly believe that genuine community visioning—using principles of guided imagery—can help people tap into their heartfelt hopes and dreams for the future of their communities. In forty years of using this approach, I have found that it can be used in any setting. Sharing our dreams is part of the work of progressive planning. It's one place with a level playing field—anyone can dream! Working with the sophisticated and tested methods of guided imagery, we can help bring about the future that is waiting to be born.

And it's a lot more fun than rational five-step planning processes.

It's difficult to capture the quality of a guided imagery experience when participants seem to align with a common desire to create a happy future for their community. That's very different from a common vision—and it's very powerful. Listening to people share their images often brings me to tears.   P²

Sophia van Ruth reading the guided imagery script


An image of a "People Place"
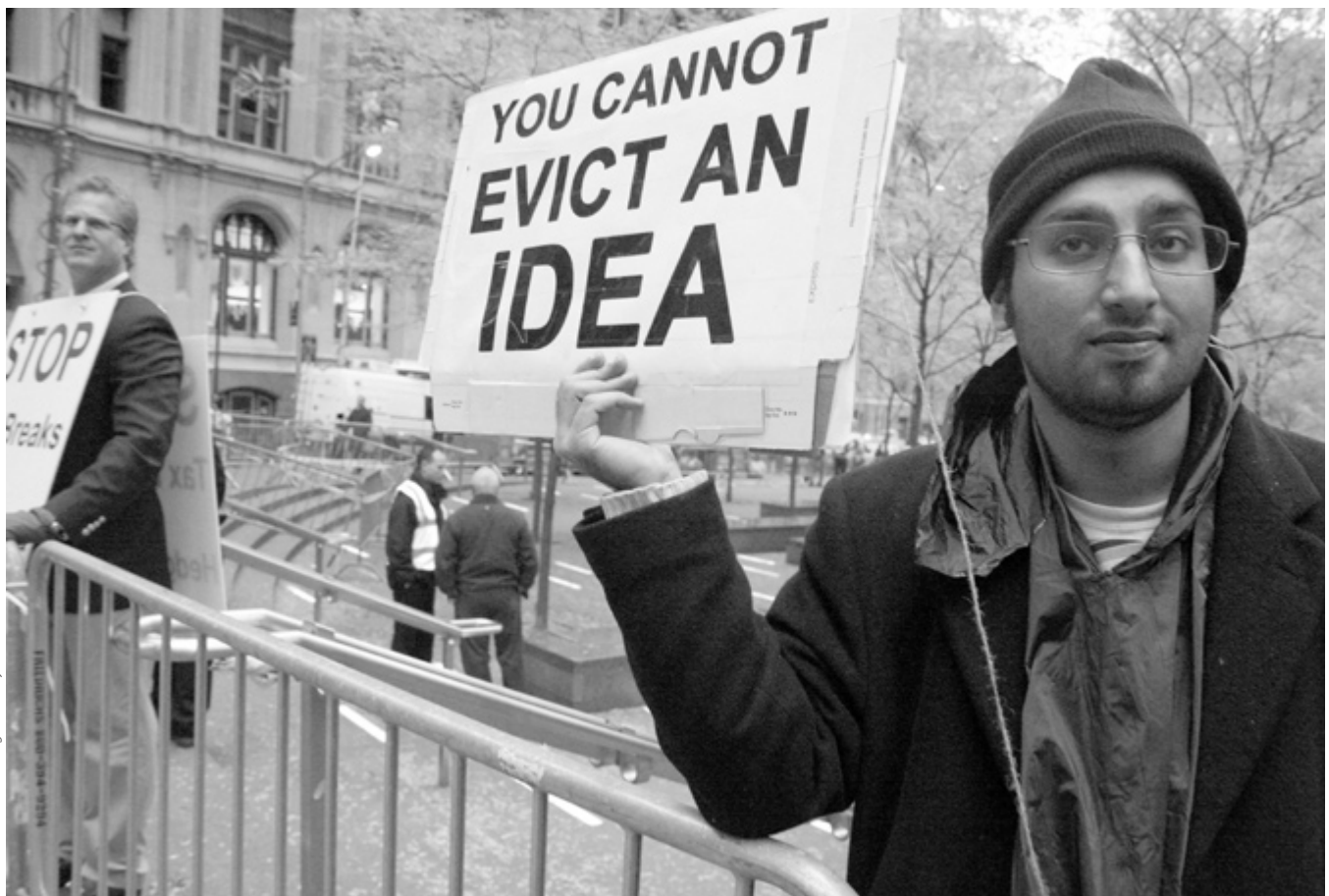
POSTSCRIPT: *A Call for Actions*

By Ron Shiffman and Jeffrey Hou

Ron Shiffman, FAICP, Hon. AIA, is director emeritus of the Pratt Center for Community Development and a professor at Pratt Institute's Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment. He served as a member of the New York City Planning Commission from 1990 to 1996, and worked with the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council and Senator Robert F. Kennedy's office to launch the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, one of the first community development corporations in the country. He is the recipient of ADPSR's 1998 Lewis Mumford Award in Development. Ron lectures extensively on sustainable development and anti-poverty, housing and community development strategies.
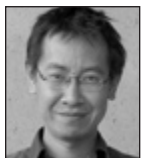
Jeffrey Hou, ASLA, is associate professor of landscape architecture at the University of Washington. Hou's research, teaching and practice focus on engaging marginalized communities and citizens through community design, design activism and cross-cultural learning. He is a recipient of 2011 CELA Award for Excellence in Service-Learning Education and the 2010 Great Places Book Award. Hou is the editor of *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (2010) and co-author of *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Learning from Urban Community Gardens in Seattle (2009).*

Iₙ ꜰᴀʟʟ 2011, as the Occupy protests spread across North America and other parts of the world, the movement called attention to several important societal shifts that have occurred in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. First, it brought to light that more than ever the hegemony of global financial/political institutions now dictates the economic and social life of individuals and communities and perpetuates social and economic inequality around the world. Second, as an outcome of the protests, the movement revealed the increasing curtailment of the public realm, a sphere that is fundamental to the freedom of expression and meant to bring accountability to our political systems.

As protest sites were barricaded and protestors harassed and attacked, our democracy came into question. The kind of oppression often associated with police states and totalitarian regimes now appears eerily in front of our eyes, if not felt physically on our limbs. The growing measures of hypersecurity against terrorism and unwanted elements over the decades in cities across

North America have now turned against the peaceful protestors and citizens. In the face of increasing regulation, privatization and concern for security, public space as a forum for political expressions and dialogues now seems like a far-flung idea from a bygone era.

Constant vigilance is needed to protect the democratic and inalienable rights expected by those of us in the U.S. Without those rights, we surrender control of our democratic way of life to those that can buy, control and regulate our use of space—and in the process, control our ability to educate, organize and exercise our right to free and informed speech. In essence, if we continue to allow the financially powerful and the corporate elite to take control, our democracy will erode into an oligarchy where the one percent controls the 99 percent, where disparities are unchallenged and freedoms eroded.

This is not a debate about capitalism, socialism or communism. It is a debate about democracy and a political system. It is also a debate and a struggle that architects, landscape architects, designers and planners must participate in and consider. In editing our new book, *Beyond Zuccotti Park,* we have listened to how professionals and scholars view public space—their theories, their fears and their aspirations—and have read about their ideas on how to maintain, preserve and enhance public access, control and ownership of these critically important spaces. However, academic debates and discussions can only go so far. We believe that we need to translate ideas into action.

November 17, 2011: Zuccotti Park after the forced clearance of OWS

The barricades against the Occupy protests signaled a wake-up call to professionals concerning their role in society and the urgent need for action. It reminds us of our ethical responsibility to not only protect public health, safety and welfare but also democracy and the rights of citizens and communities. The Occupy movement reminds us that change must begin with us as individuals, joining with our neighbors, colleagues and others who also cherish the idea of a free and accountable democracy.

It was with this in mind that Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) released a statement of support for the Occupy movement back in December 2011. As designers and planners that create places we asked: What can we do to protect and promote the public realm? How can we help bring about a more just and democratic society? The ADPSR statement should guide us as professionals as well as those who engage us as designers and planners. Every community should undertake a scan of public space in their community and determine if it is appropriate and adequate to meet their needs and if it is equitably distributed. Policies of privatization of public space should be discussed, and we should determine if privatization is a practice in our community and to what extent is it a positive or negative force. If it is positive, we must develop strategies to keep it that way, and if it is negative, we must find ways to change it. We need to be vigilant to ensure that both the availability of public space and the policies that govern its use in no way impede the right to assemble. Rules need to be assessed and promoted that allow us, and our neighbors, to engage in activities that lead to social inclusion. Remember that most of our cities are pluralistic and not homogeneous. Too many of our neighborhoods are the opposite.

Let us collectively find ways that break down the barriers in public space based on class, race, ethnicity and gender. Let us find ways to allow our differences—political, social or economic—to be debated in a civil and respectful manner where dissent and confrontation can sometimes rear their head. Let us collectively think about the function of public space as well as its design. Let us organize forums to discuss and debate these issues. Let us link these discussions to the issues indigenous to the area in which we live or work. Let us begin to occupy these spaces because they are public or

need to be public and because they allow us to express ideas and pursue ideas and policies that are important to us and our neighbors—ideas and policies that address inequities or help future generations live a healthy and sustainable life. Let us occupy these public places because our democracy depends on our willingness to engage. Let us make sure that places exist where ideas can nurtured, discussed, refined and animated.

Finally, let us also learn to occupy the voting booth, to develop a way to enable our concerns, our ideas and our energies to translate into political power so that we can begin the arduous tasks of redressing the disparities that we have allowed to emerge and protecting and refining our democracy. *Beyond Zuccotti Park* concludes with a call for action, asking design and planning professionals in particular not only to support the Occupy movement and its goal of economic and social democracy but also to act as engaged citizens through their participation in and leadership of their neighborhoods, communities and professional forums. Citizen-initiated movements—large, small, global and local—are essential for any society to self-correct its direction.

We share the ADPSR statement with you not to end this article but to open a new page for initiatives and actions.

P²

This article is adapted from *Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space,* a collaborative effort of City College of New York School of Architecture and Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, working together with New Village Press and its parent organization, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility. *Beyond Zuccotti Park* is part of an open civic inquiry on the part of these organizations. The project was seeded by a series of free public forums—Freedom of Assembly: Public Space Today—held at the Center for Architecture in New York City in response to the forced clearance of Occupy activities from Zuccotti Park and public plazas throughout the country. The first two recorded programs took place on December 17, 2011 and February 4, 2012.

ADPSR Statement of Support for the Occupy Movement
December 15, 2011

Since September 2011, the Occupy Movement has sprung up in cities and university campuses around the world, calling attention to the economic inequality and injustice under the current global financial system and institutions. In keeping with its mission of working for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice and the development of healthy communities, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) stands in support of the goal and cause of the Occupy Movement.

Specifically:

1. We support the right of citizens to peaceful protests and freedom of expression.

2. We support the principle of non-violent actions for social change.

3. We support the use of public space for political expressions and dialogues.

4. We stand in solidarity with communities and activist organizations around the world seeking democracy and economic, environmental and social justice.

5. We call architects, designers, landscape architects and planners to support the Occupy movement through individual and collective actions.

We believe that public space is fundamental to our democracy. Public space should serve not only as a place for social gathering and recreation, but also as a space for active political expressions and dialogues. Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights supports the right of every individual to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution also guarantees the right of people to peacefully assemble. With citizens engaged in peaceful protests being evicted from public space in cities around the United States and students and faculty being intimidated and attacked by campus police, we call for actions and measures to safeguard the function of public space for peaceful assembly and political expressions.

Public Housing and Private Property
Colombia and the United States, 1950-1980

By Amy C. Offner

D URING THE YEARS after World War II, rural migrants flooded Colombian cities, fleeing poverty and political violence in the countryside. In the capital city of Bogotá, the need to house millions of very poor people inspired novel experiments, including large-scale public housing construction. By the 1960s, Bogotá and other growing Latin American cities produced a distinctively privatized form of public housing that came to influence policy in other parts of the developing world as well as the United States. The new housing initiatives were in fact homeownership programs that failed to serve the very poor. They not only diverted resources from the poorest people in the U.S. and Latin America, but they contributed to the marginalization of public ownership as a social ideal. These new initiatives suggested that the state's only public responsibility in housing was to orchestrate the expansion of private property ownership, and therefore appealed to right-wing opponents of traditional public housing. Mid-twentieth-century housing programs illuminate the international diffusion of social policies and simultaneously expose the origins of neoliberal housing policies after 1980.

As Bogotá's population exploded, homeless people, Communist Party leaders and low- and middle-income renters turned to illegal strategies to house themselves. Land seizures and illegal subdivisions were in fact the

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most common routes to housing during the post-war period. In response, the government used legalization, property rights claims and housing policy to reclaim control of urban space. As part of this strategy, in 1961 the Colombian government secured international loans to build Ciudad Kennedy, the largest public housing project created in Latin America under the Alliance for Progress. Ciudad Kennedy was built on a swampy patch of land southwest of Bogotá. Originally conceived as an independent city to house 84,000 people, the project was ultimately absorbed by Bogotá's explosive growth and today it is the most populous of the city's twenty localities, with a population of nearly one million.

Public housing in Colombia was, by U.S. standards, hardly public at all: it was a private homeownership program backed by government loans. The approach was known as "aided self-help housing." The government provided mortgages, adjudicated property rights and supplied construction plans and supervision, but individual families built, owned and paid most of the costs associated with the housing. Under what were called "autoconstruction" agreements, families received fifteen-year mortgages with no down payments, the exterior shell of a house and the plans and materials to complete the homes on their own. The housing was located on cheap land far from the city center to minimize costs. Families lived in and worked on half-built houses for months while waiting for the city to install water, electricity and sewage systems.

Ciudad Kennedy brought together distinct Latin American and U.S. reform traditions. Within Colombia, the national housing authority that administered the program was the *Instituto de Crédito Territorial*,

or ICT. It was a product of an earlier period of liberal reform, having been created in 1939 to finance rural housing for *campesinos*, and its history in the countryside oriented it toward fostering small-scale, private-property ownership. The Colombian government also embraced private homeownership because it had a woefully inadequate tax base and lacked the power to raise revenues in the short run.

These tendencies of the Colombian state were encouraged by international advisors who, during the 1950s, added the element of autoconstruction to national policy. In 1951, the Organization of American States established its International Housing and Planning Center, known by the Spanish acronym CINVA, in Bogotá to train housing officials throughout the Americas. CINVA was the brainchild of Jacob L. Crane, who had come out of the U.S. Public Housing Administration. Crane had first encountered aided self-help housing in Puerto Rico, where the policy had originated as a way to implement the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. This New Deal law made federal money available to local housing authorities. While officials in the continental U.S. used the funds to build subsidized public apartment buildings, Puerto Rican policymakers decided to turn poor people into homeowners. The idea was to reduce the cost of houses to an absolute minimum. The state would provide a site, public services and supervision, and recipients would do the rest. Crane participated in Puerto Rico's self-help program, and in 1947 he began working with the State Department to promote similar projects worldwide.

In Bogotá during the 1950s, CINVA and U.S. advisors presented autoconstruction not only as an economic necessity, but a social good. They celebrated the idea of families building houses together through "cooperative (social) action" and "the democratic process." Community development and self-help became linked terms that suggested a natural relationship between two ostensibly distinct issues: on the one hand, mutual aid and democratic decision-making, and on the other, the mobilization of resources by poor communities in order to reduce the financial demands on national and international sponsors. Policymakers' concern with limiting state expenditures and willingness to make

onerous demands of poor people eliminated public construction and ownership from policy discussions.

In Colombia, self-help housing became the national public housing policy in 1958, when it was adopted by the new National Front government. By the time the Alliance for Progress was launched in 1961, plans for Ciudad Kennedy were already drawn up, and John F. Kennedy visited Colombia to lay the first brick. Kennedy declared that the field where he stood was "not just another housing site—it is a battlefield." According to Kennedy, the success or failure of Colombian public housing would be the measure of "the capacity of democratic government to advance the welfare of its people."

In fact, the Colombian government's inability to build publicly-owned housing prevented Ciudad Kennedy from serving very poor people. The minimum income requirements for ICT mortgage loans disqualified at least half of all Bogotanos, and Ciudad Kennedy therefore became a neighborhood for public employees looking to escape rental housing. These were hardly the most privileged people in Colombian society, but the narrow orientation of public policy toward their needs failed to solve the housing crisis for the poor.

Internationally, Ciudad Kennedy became the exemplar of Latin American public housing during the 1960s, a time when self-help was used throughout the region. Latin America in turn became a source of lessons for other parts of the world. Internationally, the best known proponent of aided self-help housing was John F. C. Turner, a British architect who had helped develop the policy in Peru during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Turner's career was extremely odd. As a young man he had admired the ideas of the nineteenth-century British socialist William Morris, a critic of industrial production who celebrated artisanship as the basis of a utopian society. Turner combined Morris's ideas with his own interest in anarchism to develop an argument for autoconstruction. In the mid-1960s, Turner attracted the attention of the World Bank, and together they promoted self-help housing throughout the developing world, arguing that autoconstruction freed poor people from oppressive state authority.

As Turner's career suggests, aided self-help created strange bedfellows. In the U.S. it took off during the 1960s precisely because its promotion of grassroots participation and its attacks on state action appealed to people with divergent political ideologies. By the time the War on Poverty began, veterans of Latin American programs were arguing that the U.S. had much to learn from the rest of the world. According to Harold Robinson of USAID, "Just as the Puerto Rican experience was able to be transferred to other countries, so their varied experience can be transferred back to Puerto Rico and this country." The Johnson administration responded to these calls, and in 1965, began funding aided self-help housing through six federal agencies. The first programs targeted rural areas. The Bureau of Indian Affairs promised to re-house forty percent of all Indians living on reservations. In California, the federal government launched autoconstruction programs among Mexican-American farmworkers who were leaving the migrant labor circuit.

The farmworker programs brought the U.S. government together with religious organizations that espoused radical social ideals. The first contract went to a non-profit called Self-Help Enterprises, Inc. Based in the San Joaquin Valley, Self-Help Enterprises was created by the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization committed to pacifism as well as racial and economic equality. The initiative also involved members of the Catholic Rural Life Conference, an organization that embraced a yeoman ideal and sought to preserve family farming through cooperatives, unions and mutual aid. Its members mistrusted large-scale government action, seeing it as inconsistent with Catholicism.

These Quakers and Catholics celebrated self-help housing for its participatory, cooperative process, which they described as an exercise in democracy. In truth, the War on Poverty's self-help programs permitted families very few choices about their housing: they could select among several floor plans, for instance, but they had no influence in decisions about financing or eligibility. Nonetheless, they did have more choices and collective responsibilities than public housing residents, and Self-Help Enterprises therefore presented itself as giving farmworkers a "voice" and helping them "organize." The suggestion that autoconstruction created genuine

power for poor people acquired some credibility locally because the leaders of the housing program supported the United Farm Workers, which was organizing at the same time in the very same communities.

By 1968 there were over one hundred rural self-help housing programs in thirty U.S. states. Simultaneously, the federal government had begun to sponsor projects in cities. These typically took the form of urban homesteading programs, where tenants rehabilitated run-down buildings and bought them at reduced prices. One of the country's best-known urban homesteading organizations, the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board in New York City, was co-founded by Don Terner, a veteran of Latin American self-help programs. In New York, urban homesteading not only gave tenants a path to property ownership, but it gave the municipal government a way to unload abandoned buildings during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s. Lacking the money to rehabilitate and manage public property, the City ceded the buildings to tenants.

These programs varied in important ways. While urban homesteading in New York fostered cooperative ownership among low-income residents, in other cities it became a strategy for individual homeownership by middle-class people. The rural programs ranged from honestly run initiatives in the San Joaquin Valley to programs administered by grower associations that had no interest in providing decent housing. What these programs shared was an inability to house all people no matter how poor. Even the best run programs needed to make sure that recipients could repay their mortgage loans, therefore excluding the poorest farmworkers. Some farmworker advocates insisted that the only way to make private homeownership truly affordable was to subsidize it exactly like public housing, with the government covering the entire cost of construction and much of the maintenance cost. That level of subsidy was never considered, however, and no one proposed actual public ownership.

Indeed, the other common feature of all these programs was their association of private-property ownership with ideals of democratic decision-making, community building, individual well-being and human freedom. Their proponents contrasted self-help

Bogotá, Colombia 2012

programs not only to dreadful housing provided by agribusiness or urban slumlords, but to miserable examples of public housing. Aided self-help thus harmonized with the New Right's attacks on public housing and the welfare state, and it proved to be the housing policy that survived and grew after 1980.

These programs illuminate the complex lineage of policies and ideas that have displaced public construction and ownership as ways of housing people. During the 1930s, Puerto Rican officials made U.S. public housing law into a tool to foster private homeownership through autoconstruction. Throughout Latin America, Puerto Rico's experiment appealed to governments that lacked the tax base necessary to directly build or manage residential property. For the leaders of Colombia's National Front, advisors from CINVA and the State Department and John Turner and the World Bank,

the social experience of autoconstruction simultaneously promised to foster identification with the state and democratic self-organization. By the mid-1960s, Latin America had produced a semi-privatized model of public housing that purported to be both cheap and democratic. That was one way of describing a program that pushed tremendous costs and responsibilities onto housing recipients, and which in Bogotá proved too expensive for poor people to afford. Despite these shortcomings, Latin America's example inspired the U.S. government to adopt aided self-help housing during the War on Poverty, establishing what were to become permanent programs operating on a national scale.

The history of these housing programs illuminates lines of mutual influence between Latin America and the U.S. and suggests that mid-century reform, in unexpected ways, helped produce neoliberal practices. P²

The Role of Planning in the Occupation of Palestine

By Julie M. Norman

ACTIVISTS IN PALESTINIAN solidarity networks are increasingly using international law to protest the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. They focus largely on visible grievances, such as armed incursions, the separation barrier and military checkpoints. Often overlooked by foreign observers, however, is the critical role played by urban planning in the occupation and in the violation of human rights. Planning laws and building codes allow for the systemic appropriation of Palestinian land, eviction of families and demolition of homes.

Since I first began fieldwork in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2005, I have seen countless olive trees razed, wells and water tanks destroyed and homes and schools demolished, all "legitimized" by controversial planning policies. Most Palestinians are well aware of these actions. It is critical that progressive planners, international activists, policymakers and scholars understand the laws and policies used by the Israeli government to justify them.

Land Confiscation

Despite activist claims that land confiscation and settlements are violations of international law, the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem estimates that 42 percent of Palestinian land is controlled by Israeli settlements.

Photo: Joe Mehling

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How is this justified? First, prior to 1979, Israel justified land confiscation and settlement development by claiming "security reasons." During this period, Israeli authorities argued that international law, in both Article 43 of the Hague Regulations and Articles 27 and 28 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, allows for the occupying power to take measures to ensure the safety of the public and the security of occupying forces. According to Israel, the settlements contributed to this security. Palestinians, however, successfully challenged the security pretext before the Israeli High Court in the 1979 Elon Moreh land case, which ruled that land expropriation was illegal if undertaken for civilian settlement rather than direct military purposes.

Settlement expansion did not cease with the Elon Moreh ruling. Instead, the legal justification shifted from the security rationale to asserting that private land was "state land" in accordance with Ottoman law. Israel justifies the application of Ottoman law in this case by claiming that it is the occupier maintaining the pre-existing laws of the territory, as mandated in both the Hague and Geneva Conventions. Though formulated for different purposes in a different political and economic era, Israeli authorities have drawn on this law to justify land confiscation.

The Ottoman Land Code of 1858, later incorporated into Jordanian legislation (when the West Bank was part of Jordan), was established to encourage the gradual privatization of land. This allowed for increasing revenue from property and agricultural taxes. In an effort to encourage cultivation, the law stipulated that land that was not cultivated for three consecutive years, or was not cultivated more than 50 percent, came back under the control of the Ottoman ruler

Photo: Julie Norman

Terraced olive trees in the West Bank. Over 500,000 olive trees have been uprooted since 2001.

(or later the Jordanian state). The Land Code was later amended in 1913 by a Turkish law that stated that the state could not seize land if it was formally registered to an individual by the Lands Registrar.

Israel has strategically leveraged both Ottoman and Jordanian laws since the start of the occupation. First, in 1968, Israel issued a military order (MO 291) freezing all land registration in the West Bank, so that 70 percent of West Bank land is not officially registered. Israel then applied the original Ottoman Land Code to these lands so that non-cultivated or undercultivated land could be seized and become "state land." Notwithstanding the fact that landowners should not have to answer to the state regarding their ac-

tivities, the application of the law in this way is particularly problematic in that occupation authorities often make it difficult or impossible for farmers to develop land, plant crops or construct sheds, stables, wells and other structures that would make cultivation possible. Indeed, the situation is a catch-22 in that Palestinians cannot register land under MO 291, yet they cannot legally cultivate land that is unregistered without facing demolition orders.

The legal rationale for land appropriation is different in East Jerusalem, which, since annexation in 1980, falls under the authority of the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israeli Ministry of the Interior. As an urban area, expropriations in East Jerusalem often involve

neighborhoods or houses rather than expanses of land, thus affecting less territory but larger populations. Approximately 6,000 acres of private Palestinian property have been expropriated for "public use" in East Jerusalem, making room for twelve "neighborhoods" considered settlements by human rights groups.

House Demolitions

Land expropriation has led to the demolition of many Palestinian-owned buildings under a cloak of legality. According to the organization known as Bimkom (Planners for Human Rights), from 2000 to 2010 at least 4,500 demolition orders were issued in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including houses,

While activists are quick to point out that property destruction is illegal under international law, the state uses what it claims are legal mechanisms and seemingly benign planning regulations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to justify demolitions.

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schools, agricultural structures and even sheds and tents. While activists are quick to point out that property destruction is illegal under international law, the state uses what it claims are legal mechanisms and seemingly benign planning regulations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to justify demolitions.

With the signing of the Oslo Interim Agreement in 1995, approximately 60 percent of the West Bank was designated as Area C, allowing for exclusive Israeli control, including the application of planning laws and policies. Home to approximately 150,000 Palestinians, Area C has seen increasing restrictions on Palestinian construction and development, while Israeli settlements in the same area have continued to expand. The majority of demolition orders in Area C are considered administrative demolitions, issued for building without a permit.

Since most states and municipalities require permits for construction, these demolition orders might seem to be a legitimate response to illegal building, however, upon closer investigation, it is clear that it is nearly impossible for Palestinians living in Area C to obtain permits. The confiscation of land surrounding Palestinian villages as "state land" means that building cannot legally expand beyond the central village boundaries. Moreover, building permits are rarely granted for building on recognized village land because the planning codes for those areas are still based on the Mandatory Regional Outline Plans developed by the British in the 1940s, which no longer can

accommodate current needs. In other cases, permits are not granted because Palestinians cannot prove ownership of their land. This fact actually prevents some Palestinians from applying for permits since they risk losing their land if they cannot then prove ownership. Finally, other permits are denied if the proposed structure is in a closed military zone (as in the Jordan Valley), near actual or planned roads or within a declared nature reserve or archaeological area.

Because of these policies, over 94 percent of permit applications in Area C were denied between 2000 and 2007, forcing Palestinians to build without permits, and thus making these structures liable for demolition. Permits are required not only for erecting new structures, but also for planting fruit trees and vegetables, installing wells or water pumps and repairing infrastructure, thus making orchards, water cisterns and other property liable for destruction as well. In the few cases where plans have been made for building in Area C, they have been developed solely by the Israeli Civil Administration without local consultation. This results in highly restricted plans limited to village centers that have no room for expansion and fail to consider the agricultural needs of the village. This was facilitated by a military order abolishing local and district planning committees. The centralization of planning not only removes local participation from the planning process, it also makes it nearly impossible to challenge or appeal planning decisions.

The legal rationale for home demolitions is different in East Jerusalem, but as in the West Bank, the issue of planning, and the justifications for home demolitions, are linked to land expropriation. In East Jerusalem, 35 percent of the Palestinian land annexed in 1980 by Israel has been used for the development of Jewish Israeli neighborhoods (considered settlements under international law), and an additional 30 percent has been declared "green zones," where building is not allowed. In the remaining areas, Palestinians are forced to build illegally either because permits are rarely granted due to the inability to prove ownership, or more commonly, due to a lack of proper surveys. According to B'Tselem, most existing Palestinian neighborhoods are not included in municipal plans, and construction is allowed in only 11 percent of East Jerusalem. Thus, although Palestinian neighborhoods are densely populated, any attempts to acquire permits to expand are generally denied, once again forcing Palestinians to build illegally.

In some cases, building permits are denied when the applicant cannot guarantee adequate parking, road access, electricity, water, sewage or other infrastructure. Yet the same municipal authorities limit the development of such infrastructure in Palestinian neighborhoods by not providing

LEFT
A home demolition in the Palestinian neighborhood of At-Tur in East Jerusalem.

RIGHT
An Israeli settlement in the Palestinian neighborhood of Wadi Hilweh in East Jerusalem.

Photo: Julie Norman

services or not allowing permits for their construction. As noted by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), Palestinian residents in Jerusalem receive just 8 percent of municipal spending but contribute approximately 40 percent of the city's tax revenue. The lack of infrastructure in Palestinian areas is then cited as a rationale to deny building applications, forcing residents to build illegally.

Conclusion

Israel has used planning policy to exert control over the occupied Palestinian territories through strategic interpretations of international law, while also creating "facts on the ground." Israel selectively applies Ottoman, British and Jordanian planning laws in the West Bank. It is easy to overlook grievances over zoning regulations and municipal codes when in a protracted conflict situation, but these seemingly banal legal requirements ultimately sustain the occupation policies that most directly affect the daily lives of Palestinians. Planners and those concerned with basic human rights need to study and understand how planning regulations can play such a critical role in denying people their right to their property, home, and livelihood.   P²

The Separation Barrier in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Abu Dis.

Additional Resources

Bollens, Scott A. *On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast* (Albany: SUNY, 2000).

Hareuveni, Eyal. *By Hook and by Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank* (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, 2010).

Ir Amim. *Absentees Against Their Will: Property Expropriation in East Jerusalem under the Absentee Property Law* (Jerusalem: Ir Amim, July 2010).

Ophir, Adi, Michal Givoni and Sari Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2009).

Shalev, Nir and Alon Cohen-Lifshitz, *The Prohibited Zone: Israeli Planning Policy in the Palestinian Villages in Area C* (Jerusalem: Bimkom, 2008).

Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007).

Links

Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)
    www.arij.org

Planners for Planning Rights (Bimkom)
    http://eng.bimkom.org

The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem)
    www.btselem.org

Ir Amim: www.ir-amim.org.il/eng

Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHD): www.icahd.org

Realizing the Right to the City
From Declaration to Action?

By Jill Wigle and Lorena Zárate

On July 13, 2010, the Mayor of the Federal District of Mexico City, Marcelo Ebrard, signed the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City ("Mexico City" refers to the Federal District of the Mexico City Metropolitan Zone). It was the result of a prolonged mobilization process headed by the Urban Popular Movement (*Movimiento Urbano Popular*), working with the Habitat International Coalition Latin America Regional Office, the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (DESC), the Mexico City Human Rights Commission and over 5,000 citizens, all of whom participated in shaping the contents of the charter.

The Charter is based on the concept of a collective right to a more inclusive and just city through democratic participation in urban life and the value placed on the social function of property over profit- and market-oriented urban development. For

Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City logo:
"For Our Right to the City"

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More information can be found at www.hic-al.org (in Spanish) and www.hic-net.org (in English and French).

Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City logo: Tania Bautista

geographer David Harvey, the right to the city "depends upon the exercise of a *collective* power to reshape the *processes* of urbanization." As suggested by Harvey, the collective nature of the right to the city is what distinguishes it from the more individualized concept of human rights, and more importantly, stresses the need for social mobilization to change existing urbanization processes and outcomes.

While Mayor Ebrard has won widespread accolades for signing the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, its actual implementation as a collective democratic tool for reshaping the urbanization process remains more elusive. This underscores the need for ongoing social mobilization and vigilance to both enact and defend the right to the city. We first reported on the signing of the charter in 2010 (see "Mexico City Creates Charter for the Right to the City" in *Progressive Planning*, No. 184, Summer 2010); this article is an update on the more difficult process of implementing the charter.

The Right to the City: Antecedents and Contemporary Activism

As a concept, the right to the city can be traced back to the work of Henri Lefebvre, who first wrote about "*le droit á la ville*" amidst the student protests and social mobilizations that took place in Paris in 1968. For Lefebvre, the right to the city involves the right to appropriate urban space for social or collective uses, and the right of urban inhabitants to make decisions about the production of urban space.

Around the same time, the deteriorating quality of urban housing and living conditions in rapidly growing Latin American cities provided the impetus for related debates around social justice issues in urban areas. For example, the demands for urban reform in Brazil in the 1970s, backed by a national movement, were instrumental to the subsequent constitutional changes that now underpin Brazil's City Statute. The impacts of neoliberal urban policies and mega-projects linked to the promotion of "competitive cities" have reinvigorated these struggles for social and spatial justice in many Latin American cities, as elsewhere.

The right to the city has also been adopted by activists and social organizations in other parts of the Americas, such as the Right to the City Alliance in the United States. Formed in 2007, this coalition now includes member organizations in thirteen cities. The network of activists involved in the Right to the City Alliance engages Harvey's idea of the right to the city as both a "working slogan and political ideal" while organizing for urban and social change in multiple places. According to the alliance, as stated on its website, this project was "born out of the power of an idea of a new kind of urban politics that asserts that everyone, particularly the disenfranchised, not only has a right to the city, but as inhabitants, have a right to shape it, design it and operationalize an urban human rights agenda." This statement incorporates important elements from Lefebvre's conception of the right to the city.

These organizing efforts around the right to the city have also been facilitated by international events, such as the World Social Forum and the World Urban Forum. Through these events, thousands of people and many organizations have participated in the debates around and the articulation and dissemination of the World Charter for the Right to the City during the last decade. At the same time, local, regional and national initiatives related to the right to the city have also emerged. Some of the most noteworthy include the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, the City Statute in Brazil, the World Charter-Agenda on Human Rights in the City, the Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and the Ecuadorian Constitution.

Implementing the Right to the City

The right to the city concept is perhaps most extensively developed and institutionalized in Brazil with the incorporation of the City Statute in 2001, which resulted largely from the advocacy efforts of the National Urban Reform Forum. This was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Cities in 2003 to provide an institutional framework for overseeing urban reform on a national scale. According to scholar Edesio Fernandes, the City Statute explicitly recognizes the right to the city and introduces significant urban reforms and a "new legal order" that is now reflected in some 1,400 municipal plans.

The City Statute affirms the social function of property and provides municipalities with new planning instruments to manage urban development in a more democratic, sustainable and just manner. These planning instruments have played an important role in promoting the right to the city in Brazil, although these political commitments are now being tested—and exposed—in many cities where the staging of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics is already leading to housing evictions in *favelas* to make way for infrastructure and construction projects. According to the National Network of Popular Committees for the Cup (ANCOP), an estimated 30,000 people have already been displaced in Rio de Janeiro by construction projects. One community affected by these mega-events is Vila Autodromo. Using the pretext that the area presents a "threat to the security of the athletes," the authorities are trying to displace 1,000 families to permit the development of high-rent condominiums in the area. The community is actively contesting their displacement and defending their right to the city.

With more than 80 percent of their populations residing in cities, Brazil and Mexico are both highly urbanized countries. They also share the dubious distinction of having some of the highest levels of income inequality in Latin America. Unlike Brazil, the adoption and implementation of the right to the city in the Federal District of Mexico City is not yet enshrined in the national constitution, nor is it linked to national level urban reforms or facilitating institutions. No other city in Mexico has signed a right to the city

charter. Rather, the adoption of the right to the city in the Federal District distinguishes its urban agenda somewhat from that of Mexico's national government and its emphasis on financing homeownership for low- and middle-income sectors. While this policy has resulted in substantial gains for the financial and development sectors, it is producing vast tracts of car-dependent subdivisions underpinned by high household debt levels. Still, this is not to suggest that the right to the city is being unequivocally adopted in the Federal District. As in Brazil, the right to the city is often pushed aside in favor of new mega-projects that often disrupt, divide and fracture urban communities in the interests of market-led urban development.

To push forward the implementation of the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, social organizations are pursuing a number of different strategies. These strategies focus on: the incorporation of the charter into new and existing city laws, policies and planning initiatives; the promotion and dissemination of the charter among government workers, social organizations and citizens; the organization of local action committees to advance the charter's objectives in different areas of the city; and political commitments from elected representatives within the Federal District who are being asked to sign and implement the charter in their respective districts.

A number of initiatives supported by the Government of the Federal District are consistent with key com-

Rally in support of community protest against displacement, Vila Autodromo, Rio de Janiero, Brazil, June 2012

ponents of the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City. These include support for housing and community improvements in low-income areas, income support for seniors and single mothers and the funding of community kitchens serving affordable, nutritious food in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. What is notable about many of these urban initiatives, however, is that they leave unchallenged the urbanization processes underway in other parts of the city, which consolidate elite spaces or interests and contribute to social inequality and exclusion.

Walking the Talk?

In May 2012, almost two years after the signing of the charter, the first "Jane's Walk" was held in Mexico City. Named after the urbanist Jane Jacobs, the purpose of these walks, according to the website, is to help "put people in touch with their environment and with each other, by bridging social and geographic gaps and creating a space for cities to discover themselves." Founded in 2007 in Toronto to commemorate the legacy of Jane Jacobs, these neighborhood walks are organized by volunteers around a diverse array of urban themes by volunteers in many countries. By 2012, there were 600 walks in eighty-five cities in nineteen countries, including the inaugural Jane's Walk in the Federal District of Mexico City.

Jane Jacobs is perhaps best known for her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* but she was also an urban activist. In both New York City and later Toronto, she fought for the preservation of local neighborhoods against the expansion of so-called "urban renewal" projects, such as highways. These successful citizen-led struggles put an end to the Lower Manhattan Expressway in New York and the Spadina Expressway in Toronto.

It is therefore appropriate that the first Jane's Walk in Mexico City focused on the impact of the *Supervia Poniente* (Western Superhighway), a toll highway of approximately five kilometers in length. Construction on the *Supervía* started in August 2010, two months after the signing of the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City. Upon completion, the *Supervía* will connect other highway projects in the city, as well as

Inaugural Jane's Walk in Mexico City, May 2012, organized by Front against the Toll Superhighway

affluent residential and business enclaves in the south-west part of the city. Construction of the toll highway has been contracted out to a private consortium, and by the time it is completed, the project will affect both conservation areas and residential communities.

According to the Government of the Federal District, the *Supervía* forms "part of an integrated plan for highways and public transport whose goal is to construct a better connected city, with modern, secure and efficient highways and public transport." The government has defended the project, saying it will reduce air pollution, improve mobility and lessen commuting times.

The *Supervía* project is opposed by a group of citizens who have formed the Front Against the Toll Superhighway. In taking a stand against the *Supervía*, members of the front argue that the project was approved without an adequate environmental assessment, full disclosure about the project and adequate citizen consultation and consideration of transportation alternatives, including those that would be more supportive of public transit. Echoing the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, the local group for human rights also highlights how the project violates citizens' rights to participate in urban decision-making, the right to

housing and the right to a healthy environment.

Mexico City's inaugural Jane's Walk partially traced the path of the *Supervía*'s eventual construction through several neighborhoods, and briefly occupied a major roadway before ending up at Flesh & Concrete, an installation art exhibition in a vacant apartment building next to the *Supervía* route. According to the organizers of Flesh & Concrete, the *Supervía* is "just one of so many infrastructure mega-projects built the world over, as cities compete with one another over the length of their bridges, the height of their skyscrapers, the popularity of their biennials and the capacity of their fiber optics in a relentlessly repeated cycle of competitive modernization. It is an inexorable global process presented as being necessary for the survival and prosperity of the general population of each city, while in every instance serving the interests of specific political and financial actors."

For many, the case of the *Supervía* raises questions about the political will to fully implement the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, especially when the charter conflicts with development interests. This case and others are worth following as efforts to reshape the processes of urbanization and realize the right to the city in Mexico City continue. P²

Pulling Off a Small Conference—with Help from Friends

By Pierre Clavel

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2012, Chris Hayes, who was in the final year of a two-year Master of Regional Planning program at Cornell, began thinking of organizing a small "unofficial" Planners Network conference. He had been one of several Cornell students at the 2011 national conference in Memphis and after visiting with Ken Reardon, who had organized that conference, the following winter, Hayes learned that nothing was planned for 2012. And then, Hayes said, ". . . we joked around about doing a little guerilla conference at Cornell."

Hayes didn't take it seriously until he discovered that Cornell's student planner organization, the Organization of Cornell Planners, had to cancel its annual symposium and therefore had a small excess budget and a "hole" in the schedule. He contacted the eight other students who had gone to the Memphis conference and learned that they were quite taken with the Memphis format, which relied on lots of workshops and emphasized

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community contact over scholarly sessions. In early February, they decided to do a Cornell version.

Hayes had never run a conference. He was "a little worried . . . but school is where you do foolish things . . . people expect you to not do as well. You learn, so I figured, 'Why not?'"

But he went through a deliberate process. First he wrote "a very vague proposal"—a two-page document with a description of Planners Network, possible dates, co-sponsors, activities, themes and contacts from Cornell and the PN Website. It also outlined goals: "to introduce beginning planners to PN, keep essential issues alive, continue Cornell's legacy for hosting dialogue on equity issues . . . [and] provide networking with our planning school "neighbors" in Buffalo, Albany and Syracuse."

Hayes and the group who had attended the Memphis conference decided the best date for a conference was May 18-19. By February 15, he sent the proposal to the department chair, graduate faculty director and others who had attended the Memphis conference or were associated with Planners Network.

Faculty members warned him to "budget twice as much as you think that you're going to need. Make sure you aren't doing this alone, and have at least a few student volunteers." Faculty members also were helpful by suggesting potential speakers.

After discussions with faculty, Hayes invited all department Masters and Ph.D. students to a general brainstorming session on February 21. Fifteen to twenty students attended. By then, Reardon had said that he would come to a conference whether or not he was invited to speak, and the group was confident several of the other suggested speakers would attend. A core group of eight or nine students emerged and proposed a first working meeting a week later. Only "four or five" came to that one, but the group enthusiastically took on several tasks.

There had to be a great deal of follow-through, and all agreed to a second meeting to assess progress. But now came what could have been the biggest crisis leading up to the conference. No one came to the meeting. Hayes sat in the appointed room with his laptop and sent email reminders to the students who had agreed to come, but no one appeared.

Since he had not yet formally announced the conference, he could have cancelled it, but he held off. He went back to networking. He found that several of the absentees had simply not accomplished their tasks or dropped out for lack of time. But others had done what they had committed to and just missed the meeting. One had secured the participation of John Davis—the former director of housing in Burlington, Vermont, and now a central figure in the community land trust movement—who was likely to draw additional registrations. And new people "came on board after spring break." Hayes especially mentioned Rebecca Baran-Rees, who "pretty much planned this conference."

As the group negotiated with speakers, Hayes continued with an extensive to-do list:

- He had to develop a budget. He examined the student organization's previous expenditures and interviewed experienced faculty, after which, with "very broad guesswork," ended with a budget of approximately $4,000, including meals, entertainment, printing and speaker costs. With this budget he approached the student organization that held the annual symposium. It allocated $1,500 on March 9.

- The department promised $500 up front, but for other funds he had to go to other sources—and none wanted to be liable for over-runs. In the spring, however, many budgets would have the odd few hundred dollars unspent. Hayes collected small contributions from many sources, some only days before the conference.

- Hayes developed the website. When an early volunteer faded, Hayes took it upon himself and had the site up by March 8. "It took a couple days," Hayes said. There were still content questions, like whether to impose a registration fee. Hayes concluded that they did not have the capacity to administer the fee.

- Hayes put out the conference announcement. He was still hesitating in early April. One cause for concern, perhaps more than the failed pre-break meeting, was that John Davis, a critical addition in March, had to cancel. This was April 7. Hayes consulted a faculty member who asked bluntly: "Do you want to cancel?" But, with encouragement from other quarters, in particular with the quality of many speakers and workshops that were coming online, he went ahead.

Finally, on April 12, five weeks ahead of the scheduled conference date, the announcement went out as
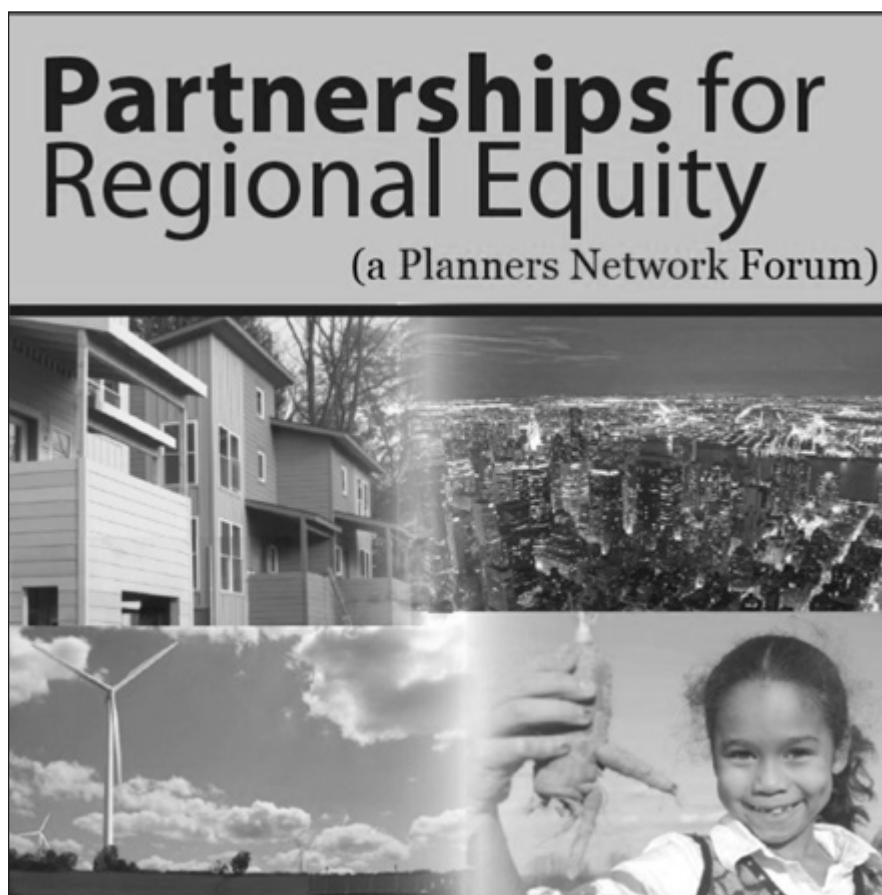
The poster that announced the conference, available with more conference details at http://plannersnetworkcornell.wordpress.com/

an email to Planners Network contacts, other schools' student groups and the PN and Cornell listservs. Although "save the date" emails had gone to many contacts, this was the first official announcement of the program. Topics included equitable development, food networks, shale gas extraction and community land trusts, with discussants coming from the Onondaga Nation group and a Montreal manufacturing initiative.

All workshops offered networking opportunities with students and others outside of Ithaca, and with community people within the city or nearby.

Participants judged the conference a great success. One hundred people attended, perhaps forty to fifty at any one time.

Hayes said:

> Of about 100 who attended, about 30 percent were Cornell students, 10 percent were professors or administrators from Cornell, 20 percent were professors or students visiting from other schools and the rest were a mix of citizens, local planners and elected officials and professionals from around the region. Out-of-towners tended to stay for all sessions, Cornell students for two or three sessions and locals came only for one panel and perhaps a pre-panel or post-panel chat.

Hayes had not foreseen what is considered normal on the final day of a conference: a drop in attendance. While two mobile workshops had to be cancelled, perhaps twenty-five persons showed up for the concluding plenary with an address by Planners Network original organizer Chester Hartman. Hartman, characteristically adapting to the now informal setting, recounted the history of how he had organized the network by writing to the mailing list of then inactive Planners for Equal Opportunity in 1975. It put the workshop specifics in context, a perfect capstone.

Looking back, Hayes was satisfied. He had made something happen. He had to finish his thesis in the summer, as had been his plan in any case. Cornell did not establish a formal chapter of Planners Network, but this conference certainly laid the groundwork.   P²

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LEFT

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