THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION WINTER 2021

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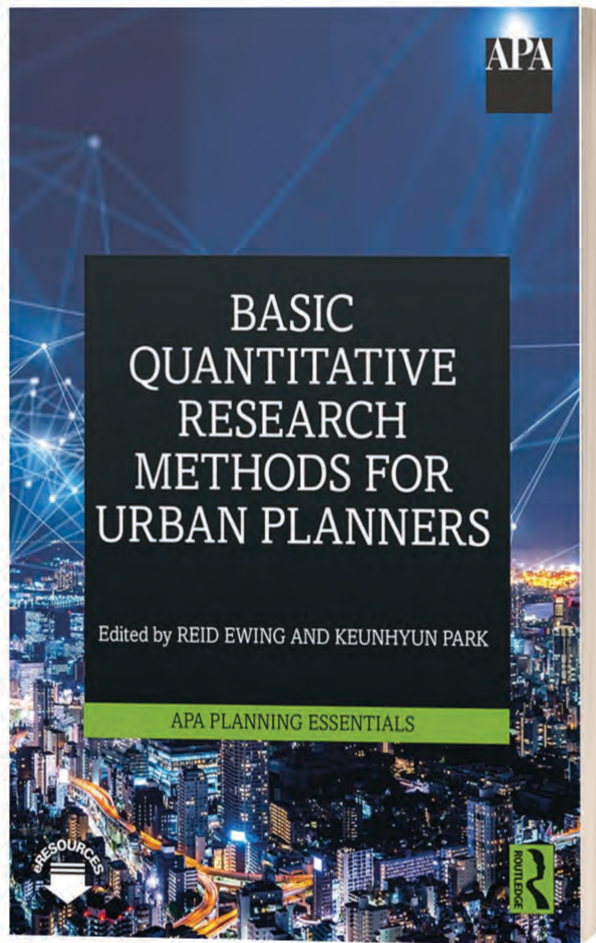

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Above: a coworking space prepped for social distancing.

COVER: ILLUSTRATION BY JASON SCHNEIDER. THIS PAGE: JULYPROKOPIV/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Contributors

Lou Jacobson

Election Day Wins, Planning Windfalls, page 6

A *Planning* contributor since 1994, this writer has journeyed the U.S. to cover flooding on the Susquehanna River, construction of North Carolina's "road to nowhere," efforts to protect the Salton Sea in the California desert, and many other stories. He hopes to write from far-flung locales again soon.

Megan Oliver, AICP

Pandemic-Proof Community Service, page 16

The pandemic is forcing us to relearn, retool, and rethink how we do everything. For urban designers, those skills could make it easier to put great ideas into action, this planner says. "It forces us to view life with fresh eyes. The pandemic has given planners the chance to reinvigorate our profession."

Tonika Lewis Johnson

The Price of Racial Inequity, page 48

This photographer and lifelong resident of Chicago's South Side neighborhood of Englewood uses art to uncover the individual and societal impacts of segregation, celebrate the nuances and richness of Black communities, and inspire change. See more of the *Folded Map* project and her other works at bit.ly/foldedmap.

PLANNING

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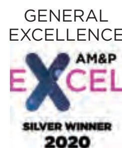

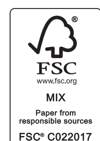

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FROM THE DESK OF THE APA PRESIDENT

New Opportunities for a Bright Future for Planning

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As I begin my two-year term as APA President, I want to extend my well wishes to you and thank you for your commitment to the profession. I've missed meeting you in person at traditional APA events, but as we continue to build our membership community virtually for a while longer, please allow me to introduce myself.

I was born and raised in Honolulu, attended public schools, and eventually came into planning via a poster I saw in an office window a few days before undergraduate commencement. It featured a simple black-and-white sketch of iconic Diamond Head, a coconut tree, and one question: "Do you care about Hawaii?"

I thought, *Yes, I do*, which prompted me to find out what that poster was about: It was the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawaii. This chance event marked the start of my studies toward a planning graduate degree and a 30-year (and counting) career as a public- and private-sector planner.

Recently, after five years as the director of the State of Hawaii Planning Office, I was appointed to the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission. I have been a member of APA, the Hawaii Chapter of APA, and Regional and Intergovernmental Planning division since I was a student. I've also held leadership positions in the Hawaii Chapter and served on the Chapter President's Council and APA Board of Directors. I have been an AICP member since 1994.

But enough about me. We have all endured a hard year marked by social, economic, and environmental impacts; community unrest and uncertainty; and an important election. But the largest impact was COVID-19, which turned global, national, and local economies upside down, impacted the health and well-being of millions, and made "shelter in place" and "working remotely" parts of our vocabulary.

APA was also challenged, but it provided an opportunity to pivot to weather uncertain times ahead and ensure the organization is positioned to thrive along the path to recovery and beyond. Through the process of rapid adjustment, APA adopted a new strategic blueprint. As it is implemented, you will see many of our shared goals being addressed: prioritizing equity, elevating the voice of planners and the profession, upskilling planners, and pursuing digital relevance.

> 'These long-term goals are how we will achieve ... a future in which planners are valued by all as ethical, forward-leaning, solution-oriented professionals, and leaders of constructive change.'
>
> —LEO R. ASUNCION JR.

These long-term goals are how we will achieve a future we can all be excited about—one in which critical community decision makers recognize, value, seek out, and rely on the unique professional knowledge, skills, and competencies of planners to help them anticipate, understand, and adapt to continuous and unpredictable change. A future in which planners are valued by all as ethical, forward-leaning, solution-oriented professionals, and leaders of constructive change.

I commit to collaborating with members across the country, in small towns and large cities, and with APA's components, staff, and external partners to ensure progress toward these ambitious goals throughout my term. We have strength in our unity, and this is an advantage we can be proud of and cultivate.

Looking to 2021, let's remember that with challenges come opportunities. We must capitalize on them to ensure we move into the future stronger than ever. I look forward to our collaborations, innovation, and shared leadership, and welcome your thoughts on our vision for the profession's future at getinvolved@planning.org!

Leo R. Asuncion Jr., AICP, is president of APA.

Denver voters approved a new sales tax in November to support efforts to address homelessness. According to the State of Homelessness 2020, more than 31,000 residents are unhoused throughout the metro area.
PEETER VIISIMAA/ISTOCK UNRELEASED

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INTERSECTIONS

WHERE PLANNING AND THE WORLD MEET

Policy | Climate | Et cetera | Viewpoint

POLICY

Election Day Wins, Planning Windfalls

Billions in voter-approved dollars will fund transit and housing efforts through the new year and beyond. By Louis Jacobson

LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE this year, Election Day 2020 was immeasurably impacted by COVID-19—and not just in the way ballots were cast. Voters made decisions on transportation, homelessness, broadband, and a variety of other issues and efforts made all the more pressing by the pandemic and its long economic shadow.

Here are some of the notable wins—and losses—that will impact planning projects across the country in the coming years.

Transit wins big

With the pandemic keeping many at home, public transit use, revenue, and funding dropped significantly this year. In April alone, fare revenue decreased by 86 percent compared to the same month last year. And while the CARES Act dedicated $25 billion to public transportation in late March, 92 percent of it had been doled out by September, with no additional federal aid allotted as of this writing.

But across the country, the election provided some much-needed relief for transit agencies. All but a few major measures on state and local ballots passed, collectively providing at least $38 billion in new funding for public transit.

Austin, Texas, voters put more money in bus and rail, while nearby San Antonio approved a measure that allows VIA Metropolitan Transit to continue to operate at capacity during the pandemic. Passage was aided by the fact that "it was merely extending a 1/8-cent sales tax that does not expire until 2025," says Rice University political scientist Mark P. Jones.

Similarly, voters in San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties in California approved the first dedicated source of funding for the Caltrain commuter rail, the region's own 1/8-cent sales tax. And up north in Seattle, a new sales tax that funds transit maintenance and capital improvements, low-income fare programs, and COVID-19 recovery efforts was passed.

In Missoula, Montana, voters approved a measure to allocate $3 million from a mill levy to expand and improve its Mountain Line bus service with additional weekend service, increased frequency, and steps toward an all-electric fleet.

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Fairfax County, Virginia, voters approved a $160 million bond for improvements to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority system.

One of the few failed transportation measures was in Portland, Oregon, where Measure 26-218 was defeated. It would have levied a payroll tax to fund roughly 150 projects in 17 underserved corridors. Some leading employers opposed the tax increase.

Mixed results for housing

With expiration of the federal eviction moratorium looming, housing-related measures saw a more mixed win-loss record.

While rent control scored a victory in Portland, Maine, the measure failed at the city level in Sacramento and the state level in California. There, "the proposition was portrayed as an assault on housing availability and demonstrated the continued power of apartment owners and anti-tax interests," who benefited from a funding advantage, says Marcia Godwin, a professor of public administration at the University of La Verne.

Efforts to expand low-income housing and address homelessness fared much better. In San Francisco, voters approved Prop K, which authorizes the city to develop or acquire 10,000 units of low-income rental housing. Voters separately approved another measure that lets the city issue up to $487.5 million in bonds to address homelessness, mental illness, and related issues.

In Denver, voters approved a sales tax hike to address homelessness. On the other side of the country, Charlotte, North Carolina, approved $50 million in bonds for low-income housing, while Raleigh backed an $80 million bond for affordable housing and Baltimore voters have allowed the city to borrow up to $12 million for affordable housing and the demolition of vacant properties. And in Detroit, where 28 percent of the housing stock is currently vacant, voters approved Proposal N, which allows the city to issue $160 million in bonds and spend an additional $90 million to demolish or mothball vacant housing.

Seattle passed a new sales tax that will fund its transit system's COVID-19 recovery, low-income rider programs, and other efforts.

Back on the West Coast, however, Alameda, California, rejected a measure that would have repealed the city's density limit and allowed for more construction of multifamily units in the area. And voters in San Diego gave less than the required two-thirds support to Measure A, which would have issued bonds to help house low-income residents or those with substance-abuse or mental-health concerns.

"The [measure] was a property tax increase at a time when many homeowners are nervous about their employment status and ability to keep making housing payments," explains Godwin.

Other wins and losses

Infrastructure was also on the ballot. In Austin, voters OK'd a $460 million bond to enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, while Charlotte approved more than $102 million for its pedestrian and bike infrastructure and to build or repair bridges and sidewalks. Voters there also approved more than $44 million for infrastructure improvements in distressed neighborhoods.

"As in other urban areas across the nation, these voter-supported measures reflect the combination of issues that accompany intense density dynamics with a governing philosophy that government can address core public concerns," says J. Michael Bitzer, a Catawba College political scientist.

And at the tail end of a year that saw much of life digitalized, voters in Denver and Chicago approved ballot measures to expand broadband access. The Denver measure negates a state law that would stop the city from developing a broadband network. The Chicago measure, which passed with an overwhelming margin, requires the city to provide internet access in all "community areas."

Jacobson is a senior correspondent at PolitiFact *and has contributed to* Planning *since 1994.*

SOUNDERBRUCE

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CLIMATE

Tribal Treaties Could Change the Environment

They've been ignored for generations, but Michigan's latest pipeline decision could signal a more just approach—and help halt climate change. By Alex Brown

LAST MONTH, Michigan officials announced plans to shut down a controversial oil pipeline that runs below the Great Lakes at the Straits of Mackinac. Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel, both Democrats, cited several reasons for the decision, including one that got the attention of tribal leaders in Michigan who have been fighting the pipeline for years.

In the shutdown order, Whitmer referenced an 1836 treaty in which tribal nations ceded over a third of the territory that would become Michigan in exchange for the right to hunt and fish on the land in perpetuity. An oil spill from the pipeline would destroy the state's ability to honor that right, Whitmer said.

Long ignored

Federal and state officials signed nearly 400 treaties with tribal nations in the 18th and 19th centuries. Threatened by genocidal violence, the tribes signed away much of their land. But they secured promises that they could continue to hunt, fish, and gather wild food on the territory they were giving up.

For the most part, the U.S. has ignored its obligations. Game wardens have targeted and arrested tribal members seeking to exercise their hunting and fishing rights. Governments and private interests have logged and developed on hunting grounds, blocked and polluted waterways with dams, and destroyed vast beds of wild rice.

But in recent years, some courts, political leaders, and regulators have decided it's time to start honoring those obligations. Some legal experts think asserting these rights could prevent—or even reverse—environmental degradation.

A strong legal claim

Bryan Newland, chair of the Bay Mills Indian Community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, says Whitmer's order was the first time he had seen political leaders cite treaty rights to support a decision instead of being forced to recognize those rights by a court.

"It is always a struggle to get state governments to recognize the existence of our treaties, our rights, and their responsibilities to not impair those rights," he says. "It's not enough to recognize our right to harvest. State governments have a responsibility to stop harming and degrading this fishery. This was a big step in tribal-state relations."

Attorney Bill Rastetter, who represents the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, another Michigan tribe, says tribal members invoking a treaty can make a stronger legal claim than non-Native citizens raising the same issue as an environmental complaint.

'[Honoring tribal treaties is] one way we start pulling ourselves out of the climate crisis. We start asserting rights that protect nature.'

— AMY CORDALIS, GENERAL COUNSEL AND MEMBER OF CALIFORNIA'S YUROK TRIBE

"With environmental claims, there is sometimes a balancing test that's applied between the potential harm and potential good," says Rastetter, who has been part of efforts opposing the pipeline in Michigan. "But when you're dealing with the diminishment of a right reserved by tribes, there ought not to be that balancing test."

Looking ahead

Still, tribes have mostly used treaty rights claims to play defense against new infringements by developers and polluters. Some tribal members say new treaty violations are surfacing faster than old ones are being corrected. And it would be a painstaking process to use treaty rights to make a dent in centuries' worth of practices conditioned to ignore those rights.

Some legal experts are also wary about making sweeping treaty assertions, for fear that coming up short could set a dangerous precedent.

But some Natives find optimism when they envision what the landscape could look like if their rights were finally honored.

"You would start seeing the planet regenerating itself," says Amy Cordalis, general counsel and member of California's Yurok Tribe. "It's one way we start pulling ourselves out of the climate crisis. We start asserting rights that protect nature."

Brown is a staff writer for Stateline. *This story was reprinted with permission from* Stateline *(pewtrusts.org/stateline), an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.*

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PLANNERS PLAYLIST

BEYOND THE BRIDGE

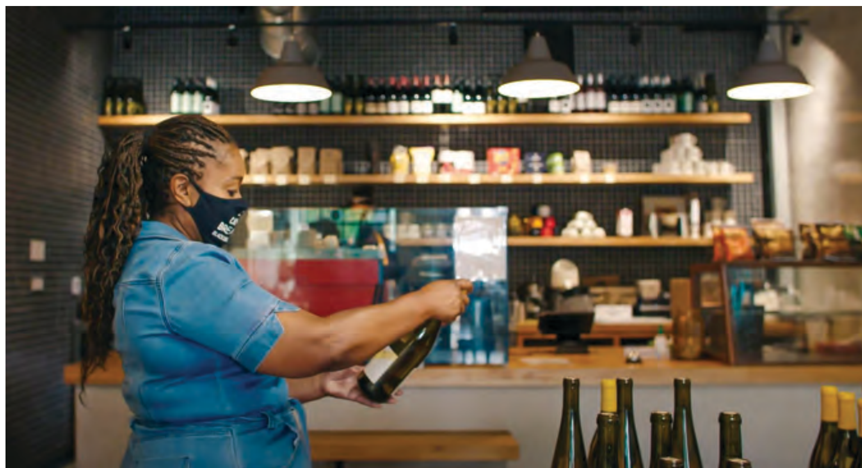
"Where did all the parrots in San Francisco come from?" "Why is BART so loud?" "What happens to my recycled peanut butter canister?" Listener queries are the driving force behind *Bay Curious*, the podcast hosted by Olivia Allen-Price. And while the questions may begin as simple curiosity, the answers are an adventurous peek into the history, culture, science, and people that define the Golden Gate City.

Brenna Donegan is APA's communications associate.

TOOLKIT

BETTER BIKING CITIES

A new digital toolkit from PeopleForBikes offers a variety of resources to help city leaders, local advocates, and other stakeholders improve bicycle networks and programs in their communities. Advocacy Academy offers 12 data-driven, educational videos, research reports, case studies, and best practice guides with lessons from the best biking cities, tips on implementation, and more. Go to academy.peopleforbikes.org to learn more.



NOW STREAMING

No Reservation Needed

LA's Alta Adams met COVID-19 restrictions with sliding scale prices for essential workers and a new coffee and wine shop, above.

THROUGH A special partnership with Resy, the online dining reservation site, LA-based media studio Crimes of Curiosity produced a series of short documentary films exploring how the city's small restaurants have been affected by—and adapted to—the COVID-19 crisis.

Each of the four films in *On the Line* follows a similar narrative: After first meeting the quirky and endearing personalities behind each business, the pandemic hits, public health orders are instituted, and we are confronted with the existential economic threat the shutdown represents to a small neighborhood business. But after the initial intros, the narrative gets more upbeat as we learn about the creative, inspiring ways these entrepreneurs learn to adjust, respond, and reshape their workflows and markets in real time.

While not downplaying the very real economic effects of this crisis, the stories are uplifting, both individually and as a group. Across the city, in very different neighborhoods, small businesses and neighbors are helping each other and extending a sense of generosity to support their employees, their communities, and the health-care and essential workers of the city. Motivated by both necessity and a desire to do more, small restaurants are nimbly reinventing their core business models. People are helping people, and humanity—despite many setbacks—is responding to fear, loss, and danger with love, art, caring, resilience, and, of course, some delicious food.

Watch all four films for free at bit.ly/resyontheline, where you can also find ways to support these businesses and others through the pandemic.

Ezra Haber Glenn, AICP, is Planning's regular film reviewer. He teaches at MIT's Department of Urban Studies & Planning and writes on cities and film at urbanfilm.org.

COURTESY CRIMES OF CURIOSITY

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Portland Defines the New Decade in Planning

WHEN FEDERAL TROOPS clashed with protestors in Portland this past summer, scenes of chaos and flames dominated the news cycle. Once the prototypical green city, political narratives often recast it as a lawless wasteland.

But as the hyperbole of election season fades, Portland should reemerge as an urbanist ideal. With planning that values public good over individual interests, the city sets an example all should follow as we head into a new decade informed by the pandemic and racial justice advocacy.

COURTESY BRUCE STEPHENSON

For decades, Portland has set the curve. In 1973, Oregon passed landmark legislation requiring the establishment of urban growth boundaries to limit suburban sprawl and preserve some of the planet's most productive farmland. Metro, the nation's only regionally elected governing board, was established to oversee the area's urban growth boundary.

The market embraced this system. Investments in greenspace networks and active transportation made the automobile an option, not a necessity, and Portland's downtown—once the "Graveyard of the West"—was transformed into a magnet for high-tech capital and anyone desiring an alternative lifestyle. Vehicle miles traveled began dropping in the mid-1990s. In return, carbon emissions plummeted, commuter bike rates topped the nation, and obesity levels ranked among the nation's lowest.

By 1993, Portland had adopted the nation's first carbon reduction plan—which went on to inspire the Obama administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC), created to help coordinate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development.

With planning that values public good over individual interests, Portland sets an example we all should follow.

—BRUCE STEPHENSON

The city has also been working on sustainability's Achilles heel. In 2016, then-Mayor Charles Hales declared a state of emergency to address homelessness and affordability. Zoning was densified ("Here Comes the Neighborhood," page 35), and voters approved a $258.4 million housing bond measure for affordable housing. Of those sales, $20 million dollars went to Right to Return, the country's first funded initiative to rectify displacement in Black communities.

Portland also pioneered tax increment financing to spur development in the Pearl District, a declining industrial area that has now been transformed into a walkable, transit-centered neighborhood. And while often branded as a "tony" neighborhood for hipsters and the wealthy, it is far from affluent. The median income is slightly below the city average, and 30 percent of residents live in subsidized housing.

Promoting the proximity of people from different classes and incomes has worked in Portland, but can planners transfer that model to more racially diverse cities? Black Lives Matter provides an answer there. As protest turns to policy, restructuring property rights to build pedestrian-scaled, sustainable communities is essential to systematic reform. By harnessing the synergy of social justice and smart planning, cities can build neighborhoods where affordable housing is mandatory, the pedestrian realm is sacrosanct, citizens have a role in governance, and the sidewalk ballet fosters the social capital that elevates community life.

Bruce Stephenson, PHD, *is a member of the Pearl District Neighborhood Planning & Transportation Committee and author of* Portland's Good Life: Sustainability and Hope in an American City *(Lexington Books), due out this spring.*

Viewpoint is Planning*'s op-ed column. The views expressed here are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the magazine or the American Planning Association. Please send column ideas to Lindsay R. Nieman,* Planning*'s associate editor, at lnieman@planning.org.*

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A mother and daughter walk in Vancouver, where city policies explicitly support parents and families in central densifying areas.

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JAPA TAKEAWAY

STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY-ORIENTED DENSIFICATION

Central cities aren't just for the childless. Parent-friendly policies can revitalize urban neighborhoods. *By Louis Thomas*

ALTHOUGH contemporary North American planning practice promotes the redensification of central cities, policies over the last several decades have not created the dense, heterogeneously diverse sidewalks that Jane Jacobs praised. This oversight is sustained in part by lingering biases that assume high density is unfavorable for raising children.

To examine that assumption, in a recent *Journal of the American Planning Association* article I studied Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada), where since 1989 policies have explicitly supported parents in central densifying areas.

Through interviews and focus groups with urban Vancouver parents from 39 families, I found that many consider amenity-rich, dense, diverse neighborhoods a parenting ideal. I also gleaned several insights into how planners can use parent-focused planning strategies to shift the urban revitalization narrative toward family-oriented densification.

Why Vancouver?

Vancouver is the North American policy pioneer for high-density, family-oriented urbanism. In 1978 the city developed guidelines for subsidized dense family housing. In 1989 it revised those into the *High Density Housing for Families With Children Guidelines* and expanded their scope to include market-rate buildings. They also required large developments to have at least 25 percent two-bedroom or larger units. A 10 percent three-bedroom or larger requirement was then added in 2016.

Furthermore, the city began using community amenity contributions (CACs) associated with density bonuses through rezoning, development cost levies (DCLs), and—more recently—density bonus zoning to obtain building and neighborhood amenities from developers. These policies net an average CAD$220 million annually in fees or in-kind for public amenities such as community centers, libraries, day care centers, parks, and pedestrian and cycling

infrastructure, as well as affordable housing. Between 1996 and 2016, the Downtown Peninsula saw a 171 percent increase of residents under 15 years of age—from 2,190 to 5,945—double the percentage increase for overall neighborhood residents.

The fifth-floor community space at the Social condominium building in Vancouver is a gathering spot for families. Parents can socialize and watch their kids as they play.

A high-density parenting ideal

Parents I interviewed, whom I divided into two main categories—committed urban parents and those that had been "won over" by urban childrearing—praised their central neighborhoods for their family-oriented design, density of amenities, and diversity. To present my findings, I use the story of the market-rate Social condominium—125 units over nine floors, of which 46 percent are two bedrooms or larger, exceeding the city-requirement—and weave in insights from other interviews and observations.

FAMILY-ORIENTED DESIGN. Social's outdoor common space is designed for both adult social gatherings and children's play. It is on the fifth floor and thereby completely protected from traffic, with safe yet attractive railings. The play structure does not dominate the space yet is clearly visible to parents from the main gathering area.

With a combination of density, family-oriented design, and minimal programming, building common spaces may become social infrastructure and foster a community of parents. In jest, parents at the Social refer to themselves as "the Socialites." It started when one mother organized a get-to-know-you barbecue and Halloween event using building funds. Now parents have informal gatherings that they satirically refer to as "Friday Night Church." Seemingly without fail, at least two families will be on the patio, often with drinks for the adults and food for everyone. Because of the family-oriented design, the children play while the adults socialize.

The parents use a building text chain for get-togethers and support. As neighbors, they can fulfill some parenting needs more easily than closer ties living farther away, including leaving a child with a neighbor to run an errand or school pickups. This community represents a small percentage of the building's 125 units: The density is an asset that allows parents to find other residents with whom they connect.

JAPA

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While parents in housing cooperatives frequently cited strong in-building communities, few parents in other market-rate buildings reported such connections. Andrew compared his 30-story condominium to the suburbs in terms of neighborliness: "I lived in North Van [with children], those are all single-family houses…you'd just pull in your garage, and like that's it. It's very hard to bump into people there too. But condos are not much better." Despite housing an estimated 50 children, Andrew's building's common space lacked the family-oriented design and programming found at the Social. This was the more common experience of parents in market-rate buildings.

DENSE NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES. Parents in every neighborhood frequently praised their walkable proximity to community centers, parks, plazas, and other amenities that were the direct results of Vancouver's policies. The Mount Pleasant Community Centre sits

TOP: PATRICK WEEKS. BOTTOM: LOUIS THOMAS

directly across from the Social. Opened in 2009, the center also houses a library, cafe, day care center, and 98 city-owned market-rate residential rental units in a 10-story tower above. Many parents talked about how living close to the library and community center was a godsend, especially on rainy days.

Parents praised the community centers' toddler-to-preteen programing. As with building outdoor common space, community centers work at the neighborhood level through the combination of density, design, and programming.

Many parents decided to live centrally for the ability to walk to work and most daily needs, suggesting that a desire to reduce commute times competes with a desire for a detached house. Although many families owned cars, they frequently said, "Some weeks we don't even take the car out—everything is within [walking distance]."

Similarly, parents praised the extensive protected cycling infrastructure for children's safety. With minimal investment—many lanes use temporary planters—cities can expand healthy and sustainable transportation options for families. For older children, a dense urban fabric with protected cycling infrastructure can relieve the chauffeur burden for parents.

DIVERSITY. Like Jane Jacobs's call for children's assimilation through diverse sidewalks, many spoke about the benefits of parenting in diverse neighborhoods. Hillary, a public schoolteacher raising two children in Chinatown, noted: "This is true diversity… There's poverty, there's wealth, there are people from all over the world here; lots of different ideas coexist. And to me, that's the kind of diversity that I like to live in and that I want to see my kids grow up in."

Anisha, a doctor in the West End and mother to two teenagers, said, "It's important for our kids … to have friendships with people who aren't necessarily from your economic strata."

Many parents desire dense, central, and diverse neighborhoods. More could be won over with good policy and design.

Articulations such as these suggest a progressive parent-focused framing toward inclusive neighborhoods.

Policy implications

Highlighting this dense family-oriented ideal can help planners counter privileged residents who contest infill and affordable housing under the pretense of preserving the character of their neighborhoods. In central areas experiencing densification, planners can enact policies that work toward equitable family-oriented buildings and neighborhoods and promote family-inclusive programming.

Essential for policy makers is public schoolteacher Hillary's desire for her children to grow up in a diverse environment. Without her subsidized cooperative housing, she would not be able to raise her family in a diverse neighborhood near downtown. Housing policies toward equitable neighborhoods are needed. These can be framed to garner support from professional class, committed urbanist parents who desire "true diversity."

Along with inclusionary zoning, policy makers can require or incentivize large buildings to have minimum percentages of two- and three-bedroom or larger units, distributed equitably among market and below-market units, and family-oriented common space. Here, design review becomes key. Many attractively designed common spaces in Vancouver did not support strong communities of parents as in the Social and cooperative housing developments. Policy must promote both family-oriented design and programming.

In strong markets, developer fees can fund social infrastructure such as libraries and community centers with a mandate to act as levelers. Fees can also fund affordable housing, parks, and protected cycling infrastructure. Vancouver uses three primary policy tools to achieve these amenities: CACs, DCLs, and density bonus zoning. CACs and DCLs are similar to exaction and impact fees in the U.S., and density bonuses are common incentives in inclusionary housing measures.

Final thoughts

The revitalized city need not be solely for the childless. Many parents desire dense, central, and diverse neighborhoods. More could be won over through good policy and design. Vancouver's community centers and other public amenities provide social infrastructure shared across classes living in dense family-oriented buildings.

However, like revitalization policies that assume childless new residents, policies supporting parents will unintentionally continue patterns of gentrification. Planners must consider the needs of diverse parents to avoid a race-, class-, and age-segregated city.

While Vancouver inadequately addresses the affordability crisis, the co-ops and workforce buildings described here, along with the family-oriented policies and designs, offer partial models for ways forward.

Thomas is a postdoctoral scholar in the Urbanism Lab at the University of Chicago and author of "Committed and 'Won Over' Parents in Vancouver's Dense Family-Oriented Urbanism" (November 2020), originally published in JAPA.

Volunteers paint the sidewalk—and physically distance—as part of Neighborhood Design Center's Designs for Distancing Project.

HOW-TO

PANDEMIC-PROOF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Leveraging the power of volunteering is vital to boosting local resilience. *By Megan Oliver,* AICP

VOLUNTEERING strengthens community capacity, helps raise funds, and generates project momentum and buy-in. It can also boost moods and morale while instilling hope in the face of challenges. But for much of the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a complicated barrier to volunteering—all while creating an even greater need for community support.

When planners volunteer, they demonstrate commitment, build community rapport, are exposed to new ideas, and help tackle the small-but-mighty actions that support their long-term goals. More importantly, by working with volunteers, planners can swiftly devise and execute creative solutions in response to complex and unfamiliar challenges.

In Baltimore, two organizations were able to safely continue their volunteer efforts throughout the pandemic. Design nonprofit Neighborhood Design Center invited volunteers to help install tactical urbanism interventions across the city as part of their "Design for Distancing" competition, while the urban service corps Civic Works dispatched 150 volunteers across the city to blaze a walking path, sort books for kids, and paint picnic tables, among other efforts.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, the Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation took a different approach by encouraging individuals interested in donating their time to volunteer on their own.

Together, these organizations and efforts offer some best practices for hosting safe, comfortable volunteer opportunities, even while physically distanced.

1. RESPECT THE CURRENT SITUATION. People are actively and cautiously choosing how to spend their time right now, so any volunteer event needs to acknowledge and address very legitimate concerns regarding the pandemic.

2. COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS. Set the tone by demonstrating that you're taking appropriate precautions—and do so early, clearly, and often.

3. MAKE IT MEANINGFUL. Entice participants by emphasizing the significance of volunteer efforts and connecting current initiatives to longer-term objectives. Outcomes matter more than actions right now, so focus on mission-driven, impactful tasks. At the end, celebrate volunteers and their contributions by showcasing their collective achievements. Civic Works follows up each event by sharing the impressive numbers measuring volunteer impact.

4. CONTROL THE EXPERIENCE. Check temperatures as volunteers arrive and collect their information for contact tracing. Require masks and limit the size of groups by creating time slots, dispersing volunteer sites, capping the number of volunteers, and requiring registration in advance. Encourage remote check-in the day before. When Civic Works couldn't gather volunteers in person, they sent mandatory waivers via email the week beforehand, along with an inspiring volunteer orientation video to stir excitement.

MEGAN OLIVER

5. DIVIDE AND CONQUER. Consider opportunities for individuals. This past summer, Fairmount Park Conservancy launched a solo volunteer program that would support their larger organizational goals of cleaning parks. They provided participants with free clean-up kits, including instructions, supplies, and safety tips.

6. ENFORCE SAFETY PROCEDURES. Ensure that your policies and safety standards comply with regulations. Having a specific enforcement plan will make it easier to ensure compliance. Remember, it's okay to dismiss volunteers who won't respect the rules.

7. CRAFT A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE. Perhaps meeting in person isn't feasible for some or all of your participants. If so, consider offering virtual opportunities, or take a hybrid approach. Tie virtual experiences into tangible planning objectives. Keep volunteers engaged and connected to their impact, which can be more difficult to observe remotely.

8. BE ADAPTABLE. There is no one-size-suits-all solution. Any strategy should be flexible enough to adapt as needed. Your strategy should vary depending on the community where you're working.

Think of this as an opportunity to evolve. Sometimes, unexpected constraints that demand creative solutions can lead to wonderful innovations and operational improvements. Keep an open mind, try new tactics, and recreate what works well.

Oliver is a design and planning consultant, an urbanist, and a happiness enthusiast currently researching strategies for creating happier spaces and places through community design. Learn more at hellohappy.design.

LEGAL LESSONS

A CASE FOR BETTER STREET DESIGN

The pandemic has inspired changes that put pedestrians first. Planners may have a legal case to make them permanent. *By Sara Bronin, AIA, Esq.*

EVEN WITH COVID-19 reducing vehicular traffic temporarily, 2020 is looking eerily similar to 2019—the deadliest year for pedestrians and cyclists in 30 years. Scientists who study road violence have had a hard time isolating the cause of this resurgence. High speed limits, traffic laws that favor drivers and are unevenly enforced, low gas prices, and increased driver distraction all play a role. But none of these would be as dangerous if our streets were better-designed.

Data shows that our streets have become increasingly dangerous places, and disproportionately represented among those killed by road violence are the poor, people of color, and people living in urban areas. But it doesn't have to be that way.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given us glimpses of better street design, if only temporarily. To make these changes permanent, local and state governments must carefully reexamine the legal standards that dictate street design. In leading the way, planners can play an important role in creating a more walkable, sustainable, and equitable public realm.

> The most common street design standards prioritize fast vehicle movement over everything else.

Status quo

Street design is dictated by laws at the federal, state, and local levels. To the frustration of many planners, the most common street design standards prioritize fast vehicle movement over everything else, resulting in lanes that are too wide, sidewalks that are too narrow, and signalization that smooths and speeds car travel.

Foremost among these standards, and adopted by the vast majority of jurisdictions, is the "Green Book," formally titled *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (also known as AASHTO). According to the Green Book, the key indicator of a successful street is its vehicular level of service—that is, the rate at which cars travel without being forced to queue at lights or slow their speeds.

In addition to the Green Book, fire codes typically affect width of streets. In most jurisdictions, fire codes—including the International Fire Code in use in 42 states—require apparatus access roads to have 20 feet of unobstructed clear path, excluding parking. The result is wider-than-necessary roads, which result in higher travel speeds, more pavement, and lengthier times for pedestrian crossings.

When government agencies adopt these standards, they adopt them wholesale, without deviation. Planners have long been frustrated in what they perceive as a lack of ability to deviate from these outdated, car-centric street

design standards. Yet perhaps we have a small window of opportunity to challenge the hold they have in our laws.

People first

The last six months may be the most innovative periods for street design in a century. Many state and local governments have authorized temporary street redesigns on an unprecedented scale and pace. These redesigns were undertaken to accommodate outdoor dining and outdoor retail, which public health experts have said are safer than indoor activities.

For example, in Connecticut, where I live, the governor issued an executive order allowing municipalities to fast-track lane and street closures and erect temporary barriers and authorizing the state department of transportation to do the same. The order overrode local zoning that prohibited—or required off-site parking that would interfere with—the outdoor activities. Streets were narrowed, reconfigured, and closed from Greenwich to Hartford, and everywhere in between, for the kind of outdoor living we should have been embracing all along. Changes were lauded by the business community and neighborhood civic associations alike. We've seen the same positive story take place all over the country.

Now that so many people have tasted what better-designed streets can offer, what's next? Planners should continue helping their constituents reconceive of the purpose of streets—emphasizing that streets are for people, not cars. They should also encourage their elected officials to consider alternative sets of standards, like those established by the National Association of City Transportation Officials, which can be adapted for urban, suburban, and rural settings alike.

Visitors enjoy Leavenworth, Washington's outdoor seating on a balmy day in August. Its Main Street has been closed to traffic during the pandemic.

BJORN BAKSTAD/ISTOCK EDITORIAL/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

> A recent case involving New York City pointed out local governments may be held liable for failing to calm and slow traffic.

Outdated legal standards

Some local jurisdictions have resisted jettisoning AASHTO standards because their attorneys mistakenly believe that following them is the only way to protect the municipality from liability for defective street design. They rest their interpretation on the legal doctrine of immunity. Our understanding of local immunity really matters because local governments are responsible for 77 percent of roads in this country. (Immunity is not an issue for state governments and their roads, because states are immune from suits unless they allow themselves to be sued.)

It is important that we correct outdated views. The truth is that local governments in most states will not be liable for negligence related to street design if a design decision is made subject to a broad policy or if the design was selected or created by professionals reasonably exercising their responsibilities as government employees. So if a local government adopts a policy to prioritize pedestrian safety over vehicle speed, the locality cannot be held liable for consequences of the design of streets constructed pursuant to this policy. In fact, as a recent case involving New York City pointed out, local governments may be held liable for failing to calm and slow traffic. Under this logic, AASHTO may be increasingly out of favor with courts.

Planners and urban design professionals owe it to our communities to use our technical knowledge to mediate between the iron grip of car-oriented street design standards to more flexible, people-oriented standards.

Bronin is the author of a forthcoming book on zoning, Key to the City. *Her website is sarabronin.com.*

Improving the Local Rules of the Game for Large-Scale Solar

APA research team partners with ICMA on a new solar-based program, Solar@Scale

artsterdam/gettyimages.com

Solar energy is a powerful tool in the fight against climate change, and solar industry jobs have tremendous potential to play a major role in post-pandemic economic recovery efforts and in an equitable transition to a clean energy future. Simply put, every community has access to sunlight, and the cost of photovoltaic (PV) systems has dropped dramatically since 2010.

Over the past 15 years, hundreds (if not thousands) of cities, towns, and counties across the U.S. have updated their plans and zoning codes—and streamlined permitting processes—to make it easier for property owners to install rooftop and small ground-mounted solar energy systems. And many others have led by example and installed small PV systems on public buildings and grounds.

For most communities, though, a new solar farm is a major commitment. They take up a lot of space, often from several dozen to several hundred acres. And they typically look quite different from surrounding land uses. With varying rules from community to community, it is difficult for planners to know when the differences are justifiable or merely a result of each community reinventing the wheel. Today's planners need new insights and guidance to improve solar-development outcomes.

Solar@Scale, a new program to help cities, counties, and special districts understand and realize the potential benefits of large-scale solar development, headed up by APA and International City/County Management Association (ICMA), aims to address these needs. With support from the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office, APA and the ICMA have convened a diverse set of planners and other public and private stakeholders to identify promising strategies for overcoming common local barriers to large-scale solar development in rural areas and on previously developed land, such as capped landfills and other brownfield sites.

In the coming months, APA will help translate these strategies into a guide to help planners and local officials take advantage of opportunities to site solar projects on public lands and to update plans, zoning regulations, development review procedures, and assistance programs to make context-sensitive large-scale solar development on private sites easier. By the summer of 2021, the Solar@Scale team will begin sharing this guidance through a series of workshops and training opportunities.

Collectively, this work will help planners elevate their voice in local conversations about the relationship of large-scale solar development to community goals and priorities. And it will help them advocate for solar projects that promote an equitable distribution of community benefits.

Have a question about Solar@Scale or want to share your experiences with planning and zoning for large-scale solar development? Contact **solar@planning.org**.

PLANNERS LIBRARY

A REFLECTION FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNERS

Revealing the artistry of planning practice. *By Harold Henderson*

Reflective Planning Practice: Theory, Cases, and Methods
By Richard Willson, FAICP *(California State Polytechnic University),* 2021, Routledge, 343 pp.; $160 cloth, $35.99 e-book

"PLANNING DOES NOT allow for a straightforward application of technique—it requires practical judgments about how to proceed, what knowledge to employ, and whose interests to serve," writes the author, introducing a series of extraordinarily frank and detailed accounts of how planning works in professional life.

The book highlights seven "planning episodes" which together take up more than half of the book: climate action at Cal Poly Pomona; resilience in Mamallapuram, India; inclusionary housing policies in Portland, Oregon; form-based code in Miami; parking management in Dana Point, California; fresh produce in Detroit; and a mixed-use project in Hawthorne, California.

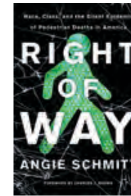
These episodes highlight reflection and rethinking, essential in a profession that rarely allows for "a straightforward application of technique."

At Cal Poly, a Climate Action Plan begun in 2008 sought to steer the university toward carbon neutrality. That goal was not met, for a variety of reasons, including the lack of continuing implementation support. Willson (who was in the thick of it) resists the temptation to write off the effort: new seeds have since sprung up. "Planners do not give up, even when it is clear that their efforts are insufficient."

Lisa K. Bates (Portland State University) worked with the Portland Plan (2012), the community-based coalition Anti-Displacement Portland, and many other interests. "Invention was at the core of this planning episode: moving racial justice from broad plan language to implementation commitments." Again, the outcome was at best ambiguous.

This book should provoke reflection and reassessment (as opposed to giving up and moving on) among both students and seasoned practitioners. Read more in Willson's *APA Blog* post: "Reflective Planning: Navigating Idealism and Realism": bit.ly/3qGJpCK.

Henderson is Planning's *regular book reviewer. Send new books and news of forthcoming publications to him at 1355 W. Springville Road, LaPorte, IN 46350; email librarytraveler@gmail.com.*



Right of Way: Race, Class, and the Silent Epidemic of Pedestrian Deaths in America
By Angie Schmitt; 2020; Island Press; 228 pages; $28 paper, $12.99 e-book

THE AUTHOR, FORMERLY with *Streetsblog*, seeks to stigmatize murder by automobile.

She would emulate the relatively successful campaign against drunk driving, and work to highlight the increasing numbers of pedestrians "killed while walking" by automobiles.

In 2018, she notes, pedestrian deaths nationwide rose to their highest level (6,283) since the mid-1990s. And they are not evenly distributed: in 2014, pedestrian deaths by automobile were twice as likely to occur in less prosperous neighborhoods (defined as those where median per capita income was under $21,000) than they were in more prosperous ones (where people earned more than $31,000 per capita).

Schmitt's opening scene puts the focus on planning for traffic alone: North 43rd Avenue on the northwest side of Phoenix, Arizona, with no crosswalks, no traffic light, "just six lanes of roaring, indifferent traffic."

Her concluding scene is Nashville, Tennessee, where groups like Walk Bike Nashville may be nudging the city toward at least a few pedestrian safety improvements.

It's not easy. In 2014, the group highlighted the 50 most dangerous corridors in Davidson County. After four years, "only four locations had seen any real pedestrian safety improvements."

Street Commerce: Creating Vibrant Urban Sidewalks

By Andres Sevtsuk (MIT); 2020; University of Pennsylvania Press; 240 pages; cloth $39.95

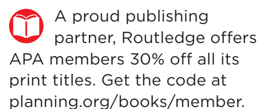
"THE CURRENT GENERATION of planning professionals has been trained to think that retail and service projects belong to the realm of the private sector." In this succinct but thorough book, Sevtsuk argues that planners need inclusionary retail policies, not just inclusionary housing policies, in order "to ensure that urban amenities are available for everyone's benefit" without having to drive for miles.

The author's close-up analysis of various retail situations leads to several conclusions: (1) There is no single prescription for improving street commerce, but almost all situations require conscious planning and strategy. (2) Public investment in street retail engenders more benefits than other infrastructure investments. (3) Cities of all sizes and situations "should invest in streets in historically marginalized neighborhoods, but also ensure that low-income communities of color can stay and benefit from these improvements."

And finally, such improvements shouldn't be held hostage by the market. "It is the job of municipal governments, planners, and community groups to work with, push back against, and negotiate with developers. … to incentivize street commerce that offers greater collective benefits than the car-oriented suburban mall has so far." This encouraging and well-argued book demands reading and rereading.

Cities of all sizes and situations 'should invest in streets in historically marginalized neighborhoods, but also ensure that low-income communities of color can stay and benefit from these improvements.'

—*STREET COMMERCE: CREATING VIBRANT URBAN SIDEWALKS*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PLANNING FOR A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

IN A TIME OF MASSIVE FLUX and disruption, it can be hard to keep up—and to know what to focus on. And just because new things keep coming, it doesn't mean that longstanding challenges—or promising opportunities—have gone away.

Right now and into the future, APA is studying the trends and disruptors that have the highest impact on the profession and our communities, but for which we are the least prepared. *Planning* magazine is focusing on those key drivers of change, too, with up-to-date information, thoughtful commentary, newly evolving best practices, and lessons learned so planners can thrive.

Meghan Stromberg
Editor in Chief

ILLUSTRATIONS *by* JASON SCHNEIDER

PREPARING TO THRIVE

The long-term trends and emerging issues facing the profession are many and changeable, but can be grouped into critical topic areas. *Planning* will cover them throughout the year, in print and online.

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With social distancing measures in place, a coworking space is ready for freelancers to return to this shared office.
JULYPROKOPIV/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Ghosts in the Office

By BRIAN BARTH

IN LATE AUGUST, Pinterest paid nearly $90 million to terminate the lease on a half-million-square-foot space it was planning to expand into in San Francisco. A few weeks later, Twitter announced it was looking to sublease 100,000 square feet of its San Francisco office space. The situation was similar in Seattle, where nine out of 10 office desks sat empty as summer turned to fall.

By October, office space available for sublease in New York City had risen 50 percent since the start of the pandemic, leading local real estate firms to fret over the future viability of the market. Manhattan's 400 million square feet of office space provides 10 percent of the city's tax revenue, making the viability of the municipal budget a question mark as well.

Then there are the nearby restaurants and shops that cater to office workers, and families whose livelihoods depend on them. Not to mention the already underfunded transportation systems predicated on rush-hour usage.

Leases for commercial office spaces typically run for five years or more, so with a COVID-19 vaccine likely around the corner, many hope things will be back to business-as-usual by the end of 2021. But the exodus is not just about the pandemic.

The COVID-19 crisis has merely accelerated a transformation of work life that has been decades in the making. The near-total digitalization of many office activities, coupled with the advent of 5G networks, have made fully remote work seem like a feasible option for many employers, and there's now an excuse—or permission, if you will—to finally make the leap.

"The technological capacity is available, but it's as if we've been stuck in a 20th-century habit of doing things," says Thomas Fisher, director of the Minnesota Design Center at the University of Minnesota. "The pandemic is showing us that we don't need to work that way anymore. It's going to fundamentally change the urban landscape as we accelerate into the digital economy."

The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated a transformation of work life that has been decades in the making: the near-total digitalization of many office activities.

Cities transformed…

Pandemic or not, Facebook has stated that it expects half of its employees to work remotely by the end of the decade. A survey of Microsoft employees found that seven in 10 desire to continue working from home after the pandemic ends.

In a nationwide survey of employers, 94 percent reported that working from home had not decreased productivity; 27 percent said productivity had improved, 73 percent envisioned at least one in four employees working remotely indefinitely, and nearly half of those expected 50 percent of their employees to keep working from home even when it's safe to return to the office.

What might this exodus mean for the future of cities? Fisher has been vigorously debating that with his planning colleagues and is currently working on a book that will explore the possibilities of this new world in detail. He's also leading a series of workshops on the topic at the Minnesota Design Center—remotely, of course.

In his crystal ball, he sees office work dividing into two buckets: head-down activities (work done alone) and head-up activities (collaboration). Offices of the future will be geared to accommodate the latter, while the former will mostly be accomplished remotely. He predicts office footprints will shrink, and the resulting shift in land-use and transportation patterns will create new opportunities to solve age-old urban problems.

Central business districts often lack housing, for instance, so it's possible that some of the empty office spaces will be renovated for residential use. That will require massive investments by building owners, which may only be possible with government incentives, as well as zoning changes—a long-term endeavor, in other words. But Fisher sees a short-term opportunity as well, which he's been encouraging municipal officials in the Twin Cities to consider. "We expect a rise in homelessness as eviction moratoriums end, so we're going to have this paradox of a lot of empty heated space and

a lot of people who are freezing outside. Why don't we figure out a solution?"

Fisher says the impacts of workplace digitalization will be paralleled and reinforced by the digitalization of entertainment, education, and shopping. The online purchase and delivery of basic goods will become more fully entrenched, with brick-and-mortar stores devoted mostly to so-called experiential retail. Combined, these pandemic-catalyzed trends will result in a lot of obsolete asphalt. So even if it takes a few more decades for autonomous cars to take over roadways, the ideas for repurposing parking areas that have circulated in recent years may be implemented sooner rather than later.

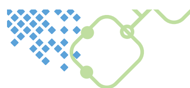
"A lot of parking requirements are based on the Christmas rush, but that may be an increasingly online phenomenon, in which case we probably have way, way more parking than we ever need," says Fisher, citing alternative land uses for the excess asphalt, from affordable housing to urban forests.

The more time people spend at home, he believes, the more they will advocate for a range of activities within walking distance, whether green space or entertainment options. The mixing of uses will start organically. "Corner coffee shops may morph into micro-coworking spaces with good coffee," he suggests. Fisher sees the need to rethink the very concept of zoning that has underlaid urban planning for the past century.

"What does land use mean anymore when people are living, working, shopping, learning, and producing things out of their homes? What is a residential district anymore, as opposed to an industrial district or a commercial district or an office district?" he asks. "We've allocated land into these zones that may not match how people are actually living and working in the future. We're going to need a more flexible and inclusive system that will allow people to adapt—that's the opportunity."

FURTHER IMPACTS:
DIGITALIZATION OF LIFE

Cities may see shrinking demand for physical office space and college campus space, and will need infrastructure upgrades to accommodate increased online traffic.



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... or just on pause?

Of course, no one can foretell how these changes will play out (Fisher is the first to acknowledge that his theories are more thought experiment than fact). But history has shown that pandemics inevitably bring about significant changes in land use and social fabric.

In the Middle Ages, the bubonic plague upended the feudal system as labor became scarce—half the workforce perished in much of Europe, after all—giving the remaining serfs newfound leverage over their lords and sparking a movement toward city-based commerce that eventually blossomed into the Industrial Age. The cholera epidemics of the 19th century accelerated the development of indoor plumbing and citywide sewer systems. The 1918 flu pandemic encouraged suburbanization, as people realized that social distancing was easier with a private vehicle and a single-family home with a big yard.

With COVID-19, the acceleration of digitalization in all facets of life is clear; what that means in terms of land use is anyone's guess. But it certainly raises a few existential questions.

Rogier van den Berg, director of urban development at the World Resources Institute's Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, agrees that the pandemic will reinforce and accelerate existing trends of digitalization, but he's not confident we'll see the massive shift to remote working—and all the related changes in land use—some urbanists predict. People may be loving their work-from-home freedom in the short term, but he questions whether it is sustainable in the long term. The technology may be there, but is the human species really cut out for a life in bedroom slippers?

Some pundits have gone so far as to suggest that the normalization of remote work will lead to the decline of large cities, as urbanites become untethered to their old offices and flee to less populous (read: less expensive) locales. A *Politico* article titled "The Death of the City" (tagline: "teleworking, not the coronavirus, is making urban living obsolete") claims, for example, that "For the first time since the earliest cities emerged in the Fertile Crescent some 6,000 years ago, concentrated urban centers no longer have a monopoly on the economic and cultural connections that make civilizations tick forward."

For van den Berg, that's a bit extreme. As an architecture student in the 1990s, he recalls

Architecture firm Gensler used a "digital twin" model to design an adaptable building in downtown Cincinnati with below- and above-ground parking levels, four office levels, and ground-floor retail. As the need for office space expands, the above-ground parking levels can be converted to that use.
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Photoshopping corporate executives into beach scenes with palm trees. At the dawn of the internet, "we thought everyone would soon be working remotely," he says. But the renderings never fully meshed with reality. "No matter what sort of freedoms technology provides, you can't beat the advantages of being face-to-face, that quick spinning around of ideas that makes city life so attractive." His point is that the densely built downtowns of metropolises, and the office workplaces that typically comprise them, provide a sort of human alchemy so valuable to society that decentralization will never overcome the inertia of agglomeration.

"Work is not only about efficiency; it's a social thing," says van den Berg. Not just for the high-paid creatives who we associate with open-office culture, but for the back-office bookkeepers and support staff. "There's a buzz in the mainstream media that cities are dead, but I totally believe in the power of cities—they've overcome so many complex issues in the past and have always found ways to reinvent themselves."

Rather than a revolution, he sees more of a subtle pendulum shift. Plans for giant new corporate campuses, à la Amazon's HQ2, may be paused for the foreseeable future. Corporate real estate managers may be more likely to invest in suburban areas and second- and third-tier cities where the return-on-investment threshold is lower. There may be a balancing out of the trend toward city center development, with renewal of the dispersed office parks that dominated corporate life prior to the '90s. But van den Berg doesn't see any of that killing the buzz of the big city.

After the economic crash in 2008, he recalls similar rhetoric around the demise of business districts. Office occupancy did indeed diminish for a time as firms folded or downsized. He ran a planning and consulting company in Rotterdam at the time and studied the conversion of office space to residential uses, which became fairly common in some European cities during the Great Recession. "It did those cities a lot of good," he says, but it didn't cause a drastic shift in the urban fabric. In fact, he admits that the vast majority of grand ideas that his firm

proposed post-recession never came to pass—largely, he says, because "people tend to be very entrenched in the path of least resistance. I don't want to be too old-and-wise here, but I've seen these cycles before. The pandemic is an important moment in time, but it's not going to redefine the city as we know it."

Or maybe it will, and we just have no idea how yet.

Flexibility and equity

Technology is changing the nature of workplaces, but Oliver Schaper, a design director at Gensler focused on how technology is changing urban environments, thinks it's also important to look at how the planning and design process is changing as a result of advancements in technology; this too has an impact on the built environment.

"Just as increased digitalization is changing the way we live, work, and move around, it is changing the way that planners and architects conceive of the built environment. In these parallel streams, one influences the other in a very complex way," Schaper says.

For instance, building information modeling, or BIM, can make it easier to design buildings that are able to adapt to changes in use.

Gensler recently worked on a parking garage project in Cincinnati that was deliberately designed to transition to office space or residential in the future, a notion that would have been unthinkable in low-tech times. BIM provides a complete "digital twin" of a building, says Schaper, which is not only used in the design and construction phases, but throughout a structure's operational life. Energy consumption, environmental metrics, and patterns of human activity in the space can all be tracked and analyzed to improve efficiency and promote desired outcomes—such as social distancing.

He says that in the not-too-distant future, entire neighborhoods and cities will also be planned—and tweaked—using digital twins, representing a point-of-no-return that must be approached with an eye toward equity.

"Increased digitization carries the promise of being able to make more informed decisions. But it also creates a dilemma. We increasingly have access to real-time data from sensors spread throughout buildings and cities—the question is, who owns the data? Who controls it? Who can work with it? These are things we need to be actively thinking about."

Questions of equity, whether in the deployment of smart-city technology or remote working and learning access, hang over our digital future like a haze. It's important to keep in mind, for instance, that the shift to digitalization of office jobs impacts everyone, not just businesses and white-collar workers. Any potential benefits of working and learning from home are nonexistent for the estimated 19 to 38 million Americans who lack access to a high-quality internet connection or whose jobs cannot be done remotely. If digitalization of work life does bring significant change to cities, it will be important to ensure that the benefits are shared and the downsides mitigated. Internet infrastructure, housing and transit options, and location and availability of services will remain crucial for everyone, but especially people who must commute to work and access services like health care and healthy food options in person.

Questions of equity, whether in the deployment of smart-city technology or remote working and learning access, hang over our digital future like a haze.

Our digital future is one we can scarcely imagine today. How can we plan for what we cannot see? Like Fisher, Schaper questions whether traditional planning strategies are sufficient and suggests a scenario planning approach, in which "the options increase the farther you go into the future," as opposed to "the classic approach where you think about a series of alternatives and then pick one plan to implement."

He doesn't know what's coming, but he's certain about one thing: "Flexibility is going to be paramount in the future."

Barth is a freelance journalist with a background in urban planning.

JASON SCHNEIDER

Fitting Together the Needs of an Aging Population

By MEGHAN STROMBERG

OUR SOCIETY IS GETTING OLDER, and we've known that for decades. So why has so little substantial, comprehensive work been done to address the intersection of planning and this dramatic demographic trend?

Planning talked to three experts in aging to answer the most pressing questions facing communities today. The interviews here have been edited for length and clarity.

Q&A

The experts' key takeaways

1. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS NOT DESIGNED with everyone in mind, forcing many to adjust. A subset of the population—adult men of average height with high physical and sensory abilities—are the model for design, and that is a problem. "We're shooting for an optimal fit between a person in their environment. When there's good fit, a person can be as independent as possible," says Esther Greenhouse, a built environment strategist and environmental gerontologist. "When there's poor fit, the person struggles to adapt and function, subjecting them to something called 'environmental press.' That's the built environment actually pushing them down to an artificially lower level of functioning. And it's preventable by informed design that respects variations by age, ability, and behaviors."

2. WHAT BENEFITS OLDER PEOPLE is often helpful for everyone. Rodney Harrell, a planner and AARP Public Policy Institute's Vice President of Family, Home and Community, recalls the time when this became very clear. As he was surveying transit users in one Midwestern city for an AARP study, he encountered sidewalks that were broken or nonexistent in some areas and poorly lit in others—forcing him to question his personal safety as he moved through town. "That's when it clicked for me," he says. "That was impacting me in my 30s, and it's also impacting the 70- and 80-year-old residents I'm talking to."

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3. PEOPLE OF ALL AGES should have opportunities and places to engage with one another. Intergenerational interventions "look at the ways generations interact, focusing on the benefits of engagement across generations," notes Matthew Kaplan, professor of Intergenerational Programs and Aging at Penn State University. From a planning point of view, Kaplan distinguishes between multigenerational planning in an environment (for more than one generation to be present in a place) and an intergenerational orientation, the goal of which is to "figure out ways to develop activities, programs, policies, and places for the generations to engage one another in different ways. That engagement could center on education, caregiving, healthy living, and recreation, as well as dialogue and action aimed at improving the shared community."

ESTHER GREENHOUSE

RODNEY HARRELL

MATTHEW KAPLAN

PLANNING: The fact that the U.S. population is aging isn't news.

HARRELL: No. We've been building communities in this country for four centuries now, and for that entire period of time, we've had one thing in common: that there were relatively few older adults in our communities. That's changing.

And by 2035, something will fundamentally change. That's the point at which the Census Bureau estimates that we will have more people over the age of 65 than under 18 for the first time in U.S. history. That's a watershed moment. Your community, no matter where you live, already has and will have in the future older adults, and we should think about them as we're planning everything: roads, parks, housing.

PLANNING: Are communities prepared for this demographic shift? If not, what's standing in the way?

GREENHOUSE: Are we making enough strides to address the growing older adult population? The answer is absolutely not, not even remotely.

There are quite a few variables that are barriers to creating environments that work for people across the life span and across the ability span. One is simply lack of awareness and understanding of the concept of environmental fit and press. It is known in academia in certain disciplines, but how many designers, planners, architects, city managers, mayors, or town supervisors have ever heard of it? So, if you don't know that the status quo is so disabling, and unnecessarily so, why would you even try to address this as an issue? This concept needs to be taught to professionals and incorporated in planning, design, and architecture programs.

Also, the way that we structure zoning ordinances and building codes in this country is an issue. If we had national standards for design that were responsive and enabling across the life span, we could go much further. In my professional opinion, we need policies to require a shift in design. I know that some professionals are not comfortable with that. But not addressing the needs of millions of aging Americans is a public health crisis. This is something that can be prevented—not 100 percent, but it certainly can be minimized because the status quo negatively impacts individuals' and their families' quality of life and personal wealth, as well as society's economics (and in particular, to which services municipalities need to devote resources).

PLANNING: What are some solutions?

HARRELL: There's a wide variety of solutions and I put them in a category of "good planning." It includes community engagement and the idea that all the different groups in the community must be at the table to have their voices heard. And then, the policies that we implement must reflect those inputs. It's up to you and your community to figure out the best ways to address them, but there's a whole basket of things we could be doing.

KAPLAN: I certainly think looking at needs across the life span is a good approach, and we can also zero in on certain points along the life course where there are particular vulnerabilities as well as assets.

An example I like is a small assisted-living facility in Japan. They came up with what I call the "milk and cookie" approach. Residents were feeling a little bit isolated, and unfortunately, irrelevant in others' lives, even as they would see young people every day as they walked around the facility on their way to school. They came up with a strategy to open the front door and place milk and cookies in the vestibule. Kids started noticing and stopping for the cookies, and before you know it, they start talking, hanging out together, getting to know each other. It's the opposite of a retirement community hidden away from everyone. It's a way to continue

PHOTOS COURTESY THE SUBJECTS

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engagement in the community, which we know is important for mental health.

PLANNING: **It's a charming example, but seems impossible at this very moment, as the COVID-19 pandemic surges.**

KAPLAN: That's been particularly challenging because we are so good at designing ways to bring people together in shared physical space. We've had to be really creative and work in a transdisciplinary way to do so while maintaining physical distance. High-tech strategies help, but that's not a panacea, because many older people may have issues with the hardware or software training.

In intergenerational visioning processes, we usually bring participants on walking tours and do activities like future festivals, but we can't do that right now. One recent success was a Penn State Extension project funded by an AARP community challenge grant in Susquehanna Depot, Pennsylvania, called One Community, Many Generations. We still managed to have residents come up with ideas for creating intergenerational enriched settings but used methods such as online surveys, Zoom meetings, and an online engagement activity using Google Jamboard. We still were able to identify a few items that older adults and young people agreed upon, namely the need for more benches and more attention to education.

PLANNING: **In addition to the pandemic, aging people are also affected by the racial inequalities and economic crises affecting us all. How have those disruptions affected your work?**

HARRELL: Everyone's trying to understand this time that we're in. But I would say that it hasn't brought anything new. Frankly, what it has done is shone a light upon some of the things that were already there, even if they were under the surface for some folks.

COVID has led to some of the economic conditions that we're facing. And I personally don't think that we would have seen as many protests over the summer if it wasn't for the context that we're in, where folks are feeling not only the pressures and negative outcomes of COVID but also a longstanding history of government policies that haven't addressed inequality. And then there was the visceral reaction to the viewing of the video of [George Floyd's] life being choked out over a nine-minute period. It is all coming together, and it's all just so much to be in this world right now.

And as of mid-November, 91,000 people have died in nursing homes alone. That has led a lot of folks to think about our choices as we age. Housing and transportation are the two biggest factors that prevent people from being able to age in place and have what they need to thrive. Let's think about the fact that less than two percent of housing in the country has the five features that support aging, according to a Harvard Joint Center study. We've got this vast majority of our housing stock that doesn't work for aging. People need more options—and not having options can be deadly.

GREENHOUSE: And then there are the economics. Prior to the COVID crisis, our society was counting on the largest wealth transfer in U.S. history from the baby boomers and Silent Generation to younger generations. Now, however, we've seen that between the Great Recession 10 years ago and the economic fallout of COVID, we're facing huge economic issues that will affect everyone in every generation. So that wealth transfer is in great jeopardy. And one way to address this is by changing our built environments from creating what I call "forced frailty" to making sure they are enabling people to be as independent as possible throughout their lives.

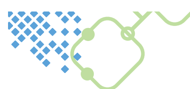
PLANNING: **Any final comments on what planners should be thinking about?**

HARRELL: It's important to remember that the older adult population isn't a monolith. There are people in different income levels, different parts of the community, different racial groups, ethnicities, and religions. All of these different factors go into understanding not just older adults but the wider population, and planners are in a unique position to take that holistic view of their communities. So it's such a great fit.

Stromberg is APA's Editor in Chief.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
DEMOGRAPHICS

Age is only one aspect of demographics. Shifts in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity will require communities to adapt, both physically and socially, to meet the needs of a diverse population.



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Communities around the country are rejecting single-family-only zoning to encourage more affordable options in all neighborhoods.

Here Comes the Neighborhood

By ROBERT LIBERTY

BEFORE LOS ANGELES AND NEW YORK adopted the first residential zoning regulations more than a century ago, rapidly growing cities in the U.S. were filled with an interesting mix of housing types beyond single-family detached homes: downstairs apartments, cottages, duplexes, tri- and four-plexes, townhomes, boarding houses, garden court apartments—what we now call "middle housing." But as cities embraced single-family detached residential (SFR) zoning, middle-density housing was zoned out in many places.

By 2019, it was illegal to build anything other than a detached single-family home on 75 percent of the residential land in many American cities, according to the *New York Times*. That means many neighborhoods and their better public schools have been off-limits to families of modest means who can't afford single-family homes, which has in turn reinforced racial, ethnic, and class segregation. It's also separated people from better jobs, shops, and services, leading to longer commutes and a need for personal vehicles—one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

But now, the tide is turning. From Oregon to Vermont, cities and states are rejecting two cornerstones of American land-use regulation: SFR zoning and minimum parking requirements. The following trio of reforms has emerged to take their place with the aim of creating more inclusive, equitable, and affordable neighborhoods by expanding housing choice. As we head into a new decade, planners should expect to see these changes gain moment in communities of all sizes.

Eliminating SFR-only zoning

In 2018, Minneapolis made headlines by amending its comprehensive plan to allow duplexes and triplexes on single-family lots, which translated into changes in its zoning ordinance just last year. It was the first place in the U.S. to make such a fundamental change across all of its single-family zones by reauthorizing these types of middle housing.

Oregon wasn't far behind. In 2019, the state passed a law that requires all cities with a population over 10,000 to allow duplexes on all lots in SFR zones. The law also requires cities

SIGHTLINE INSTITUTE MIDDLE HOMES PHOTO LIBRARY: SIGHTLINE.ORG

over 25,000 population to change their zoning to allow tri- and fourplexes, townhomes, and cottage clusters in areas zoned for single-family detached homes. This year, Portland went a step further and allowed six-plexes on single-family lots, provided that two units meet rental or ownership affordability standards.

In August, Nebraska required that cities with over 20,000 people prepare and implement housing affordability plans over the next few years. Failure to adopt them by the deadline triggers default housing regulations, authorizing the full range of middle housing. Even smaller cities like Lander, Wyoming, with a population around 7,500, are rethinking SFR zones.

Embracing ADUs

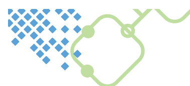
Accessory dwelling units, or ADUs (also known as granny flats, English basements, secondary suites, casitas, and ohana houses), are another way to increase housing diversity and affordability, but they've been banned from SFR zones for decades. In 2005, Vermont enacted a law that mandated the equal treatment of different housing types in local bylaws, including ADUs in SFR zones. Soon, other states followed.

California required local governments to authorize ADUs in SFR zones in 2016. The following year, New Hampshire passed legislation ensuring that, in the absence of local zoning authorization, state law directly allows one ADU as an accessory use to any single-family dwelling, as a matter of right, and no municipal permits or conditions can be imposed other than a building permit. Oregon's law, adopted the same year, mandates ADU authorization in most cities.

These early laws weren't perfect. ADU construction still faced roadblocks due to "poison pills," like requiring owner occupancy, minimum parking standards, or approval through discretionary conditional use permit processes—a process not imposed on single-family homes. California, Vermont, Oregon, and Washington have since amended their statutes to remove or severely limit poison pills, as have local governments like Seattle and Montgomery County, Maryland. In late 2019, for example, California passed five new bills that reduce barriers to ADU construction in SFR neighborhoods, including eliminating owner-occupancy requirements and certain impact fees. Local jurisdictions are even responsible for providing ADU grant and incentive programs. The results have been impressive: In 2016, Los Angeles issued 117 permits for ADUs; in 2019, it issued 4,606.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
HOUSING

Planners must also maintain focus on rising rates of homelessness; gentrification and displacement; rent-burdened households; and the rise of one-person households.



APA Learn

The Future of Zoning

Robert Liberty explores the zoning reforms, politics, and policies involved in the trend-setting effort to reduce regulatory barriers and increase housing affordability.

CM | 0.75

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Housing people over cars

Minimum on-site parking requirements create a significant barrier to multifamily housing. They not only drive up costs, but can make construction either infeasible or physically impossible, given the lot size or terrain. That's why more and more advocates and planners are questioning why housing for cars is mandated at the expense of housing for people. Parking expert Professor Donald Shoup, FAICP, of UCLA estimates that the U.S. has set aside two billion parking spaces for 250 million cars and light trucks, resulting in far more land dedicated to cars than housing.

An early leader was Sand Point, Idaho, which eliminated all parking requirements in 2009. In 2016, Hartford, Connecticut, became the first major city to eliminate all minimum parking requirements, and even imposed limits on the maximum amount of on-site parking allowed. Buffalo, New York, followed suit in 2017, and Edmonton, Alberta, did the same this past summer, becoming Canada's first city to do so. Other cities have reduced or eliminated parking requirements for new housing, particularly near transit stops, like in San Diego and Atlanta.

More local governments and states will adopt these zoning reforms in the coming years, as the affordability crisis and concerns about social justice persist. Time will tell how quickly and in what ways they will result in a more enriched mix of housing in former SFR areas.

In our highly polarized nation, we can also expect opposition from those who see reform as part of a "war on the suburbs." Planners, on the other hand, might take these charges as long overdue recognition of the important roles they, and zoning, play in the form and character of our cities, towns, and suburbs.

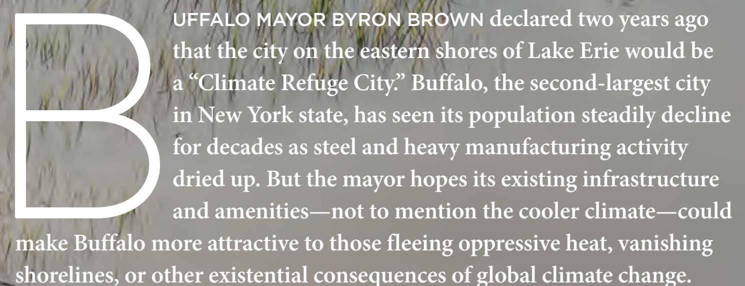
Liberty is a land-use attorney. He is currently associated with Cascadia Partners, an Oregon planning consulting firm, and serves as chair of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Commission.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Where Will Climate Migrants Go?

By DANIEL C. VOCK

A building submerged in flooding after Hurricane Laura swept through Carlyss, Louisiana, in August 2020.
MATTHEW BUSCH/THE *NEW YORK TIMES*



BUFFALO MAYOR BYRON BROWN declared two years ago that the city on the eastern shores of Lake Erie would be a "Climate Refuge City." Buffalo, the second-largest city in New York state, has seen its population steadily decline for decades as steel and heavy manufacturing activity dried up. But the mayor hopes its existing infrastructure and amenities—not to mention the cooler climate—could make Buffalo more attractive to those fleeing oppressive heat, vanishing shorelines, or other existential consequences of global climate change.

Nadine Marrero, AICP, Buffalo's director of planning and zoning, says Buffalo offers a lot for people looking for a more sustainable place to live.

"We can't ignore that Buffalo is located on a Great Lake, and the Great Lakes are probably the best protected fresh water source" in the country, she says. "We get a sunset over a Great Lake in Buffalo. It's pretty cool. Not a lot of cities that get that."

Potential residents might be attracted to its many parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, or its proximity to Canada. They might like

Firefighters work to put out a fire engulfing a hotel structure in St. Helena, California, in September 2020.

JIM WILSON/THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

visiting nearby ski resorts and enjoying a cold drink at one of its breweries. An airport and light-rail system make it easy to get around.

Most importantly, though, Marrero says, Buffalo is prepared to grow. The city totally revamped its zoning code three years ago in ways designed to encourage people to take advantage of the city's urban character. The changes make it easier to add density in residential areas and to increase flexibility for how to use industrial areas—especially the large, daylit factories that have long been abandoned. That's led to the revitalization of areas like the Larkin District, which is now home to law firms, banks, and apartments.

Buffalo already gained a few hundred residents from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017. City officials hope the so-called "City of Good Neighbors" will reverse its population decline in the next decade. Part of making that happen, Marrero says, is attracting people displaced by climate change. That could be a significant population.

"The evidence is in. People are moving and have already moved," says Prisca Weems, principal of design firm Future-Proof, who helped with recovery efforts after Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. "Quite a lot of people have met their thresholds and are concerned because the most recent events have not been their first."

But experts caution that geography alone won't turn communities into receiver cities. Making that transformation, they say, will require communities to think about their own sustainability and capacity and prepare their existing residents for changes to come.

Millions on the move

Nearly one million Americans were displaced by disasters in 2019. That number is only expected to grow annually. Last year provided plenty of reminders as to why. Record-setting forest fires scorched much of the West and turned California's sunny skies a ghastly orange hue. The Atlantic Ocean produced 30 named storms last year, a new high. Eleven made landfall in the U.S.

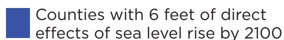
More than 13 million could be forced to relocate by the end of the century because of sea level rise, according to research conducted by Matthew Hauer, a sociology professor at Florida State University. His projections indicate that Florida would be hit hardest, losing 2.5 million residents. Eight

PROJECTED MIGRATION PATTERNS IN THE U.S. WITH SEA LEVEL RISE

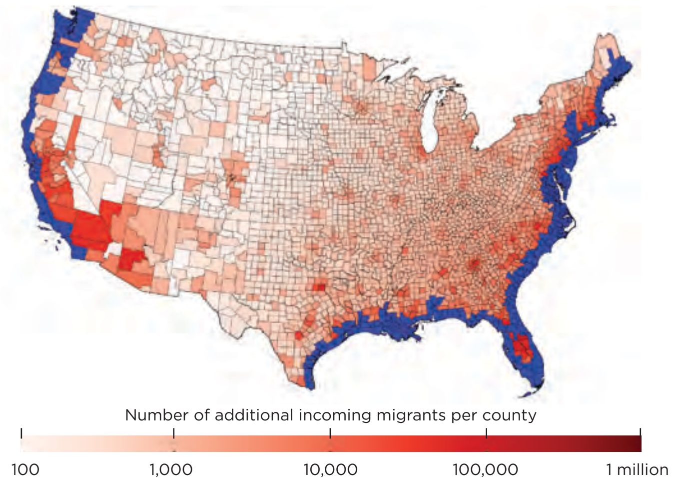
As the climate changes and sea levels rise, people living in coastal areas will adapt by moving away from the coasts. But the number and locations of impacted communities could stretch much farther inland, according to a new study funded by the National Science Foundation and Microsoft AI for Earth, among others. The resulting article used artificial intelligence to model migration patterns caused by a sea level rise of about six feet in 2100. It found both direct and indirect effects, and that some areas of the U.S. could be disproportionately affected, particularly as competition for jobs and housing intensifies.

WHERE PEOPLE MIGHT GO

By 2100, a six-foot sea level rise (SLR) could inundate areas along the coast, affecting 13 million residents. Most will relocate to adjacent counties, but some climate migrants could move farther inland toward large cities with more opportunities, affecting those places. The model distinguishes between traditional migration patterns and those caused by SLR.



DIRECT EFFECTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE



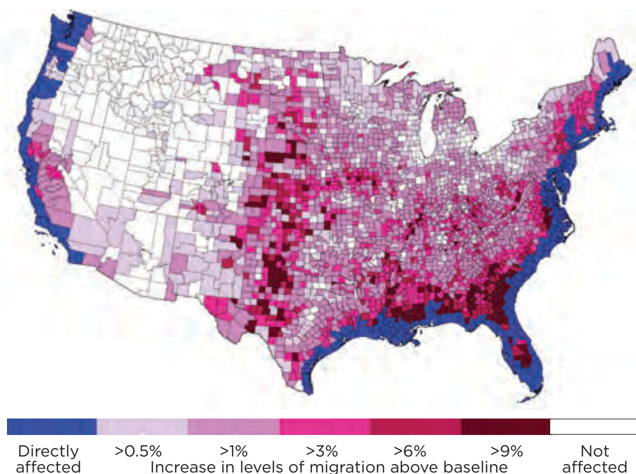
Number of additional incoming migrants per county

100 | 1,000 | 10,000 | 100,000 | 1 million

SOME AREAS WILL BE AFFECTED MORE THAN OTHERS

A county is indirectly affected when the number of incoming migrants in the sea level rise scenario is greater than the projected migration under the baseline scenario. Most indirect effects are seen in the East, but the Midwest also sees large indirect effects as places with relatively small populations swell to accommodate newcomers.

INDIRECT EFFECTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE



Directly affected | >0.5% | >1% | >3% | >6% | >9% | Not affected

Increase in levels of migration above baseline

SOURCE: "MODELING MIGRATION PATTERNS IN THE USA UNDER SEA LEVEL RISE," BIT.LY/37I7NLL

other states would lose people as well. Texas, on the other hand, stands to gain 1.5 million inhabitants.

But extreme heat is expected to increase, too. The Union of Concerned Scientists projects that the number of days per year where the heat index exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit will double by mid-century. (See "The Heat Is On," August/September: bit.ly/2Jam8rZ.) More than 60 percent of urban areas in the U.S. will experience an average of 30 or more days with a heat index above 105 degrees, the group says.

Aside from major hazards, the far-reaching effects of climate change are contributing to the everyday misery of millions more. Heavier rainfalls, more severe droughts, and more extreme cold spells could force people to make tough decisions about whether to leave home, Weems says. Many desert cities that are thriving economically right now may not be able to sustain their populations with dwindling water supplies.

Increasingly, too, the insurance industry is wary of covering disaster-prone areas. "There are going be moments where these decisions will be made for communities, as the insurance industry thinks so carefully about what kind of partner it can be with communities and what it actually can sustain," Weems says. "It can't blanket-cover risk anymore."

This means people will face more risk when deciding where to invest in a home, Weems adds. For people with moderate incomes, homeownership tends to be the most significant investment they make, and a form of wealth that can passed down. So many could decide that investing in a disaster-prone or unsustainable area isn't worth the risk.

Destinations vary

The big question is, where will people go?

Those looking to escape sea level rise may only need to move farther inland. In fact, projections show that in Florida, Orlando's central, landlocked metro area could see a population boom, while coastal areas around Miami would shrink. But anyone looking to escape the oppressive heat of desert cities like Phoenix may need to travel farther distances.

Scott Bernstein, founder of the Chicago-based Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), analyzed every county in the U.S. to see what kinds of risks they faced in the decade ending in 2018. He looked at excessive heat, droughts, extreme cold, tornadoes, hurricanes or coastal surge, and flooding along coasts or lake shores. Some of the safest spots were between the Appalachian Mountains and western Michigan. The interior West fared well too, especially places like New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and Idaho.

Bernstein cautions that just being inland or near fresh water does not automatically put an area out of harm's way. Many Midwestern cities must contend with frequent tornadoes, heavier precipitation, and climbing heat. The good news, he says, is that some of those conditions are easier to mitigate than, say, sea level rise.

But not all climate migrants will search far afield for new homes. A year after Katrina hit New Orleans, for example, only half its displaced residents came back to the city. But of those who left, two-thirds lived in other parts of Louisiana and Texas. The surge in population after the storms continues to strain transportation and housing resources in places like Houston and Baton Rouge.

The displacement also hit racial and socioeconomic groups differently. After Katrina, Black residents who left New Orleans were far more likely to be outside the metropolitan area a year later than their non-Black counterparts, according to research by Narayan Sastry of the University of Michigan and Jesse Gregory of the University of Wisconsin. One potential explanation is that Black residents lived in more flood-prone areas in New Orleans and were more likely to have their home or neighborhood damaged as a result. Young people, people born outside of Louisiana, and white residents without a high school diploma were also more likely to leave the area.

Similar patterns emerged in the Northeast after Hurricane Sandy struck in 2012, says Weems. People who were well-off financially were more likely to return to their previous homes and rebuild. But for lower-income residents, that prospect was less attractive. Many couldn't afford to rebuild in the same place, and some were bought out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to relocate. As a result, less affluent towns emptied, and remaining residents experienced isolation in their old communities, much like areas of Detroit or the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans that have seen population drops over the last century.

Receiver cities

Planners looking to attract climate migrants need to take a hard look at local history and data to determine whether the area could realistically handle an influx of people.

"Not every city that wants to be a receiving city and wants to grow is necessarily in a good place to do it," says Bernstein from CNT.

Dhiru Thadani, an architect and urbanist, is leading a project to help identify communities—especially small towns in the North—that could handle a surge in population caused by climate displacement. "Chicago will have Dallas's temperature in 40 years, if things go the way they're going now," he says. "It'll be unbearable to live in Dallas."

Thadani is concerned that broader regional plans to help guide population shifts don't exist. He's focusing on

Buffalo, New York, Mayor Byron Brown declared two years ago that the city would be a "Climate Refuge City," taking advantage of its location, infrastructure, and amenities.

MICHAEL SHRIVER/BUFFALOPHOTOBLOG.COM

small towns because he thinks they have untapped capacity.

"Towns already have the infrastructure. Most towns were already thriving at one point or another in their existence," he says. Often, that capacity is underused now, after a key industry left or another source of economic prosperity dried up. But they have the basic mix of public, private, and civic structures that are key ingredients in sustainable, urban development.

If planners and public officials can focus on making use of boarded-up shops and vacant office space, they can accommodate more population without adding greenfield developments, which are the kind contributing to climate change in the first place, Thadani explains.

Weems, from FutureProof, stresses that communities looking to attract new residents need to start engaging their current residents about what changes will be needed to accommodate newcomers.

"More than anything, one of the most important things planners can do is start to build the structure under which conversations—really meaningful conversations, explorative conversations—can happen," Weems says. "And [building] the level of trust to do that effectively needs to start before a community is forced into it."

Marrero, Buffalo's planning director, says that even though her city is interested in expanding its population, its top priority is the people who are already there. Buffalo has put a large emphasis on making sure it has an ample supply of affordable housing, she gives as an example, and officials don't want new growth to displace longtime residents.

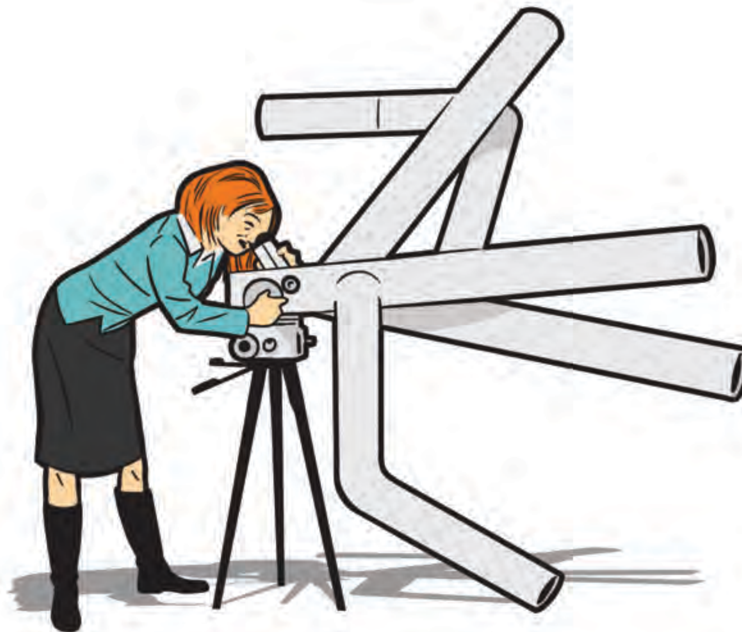
"We all want to make sure that we're becoming great cities for the residents that have been here, and not just for new residents," she says. "We think we have a great city, and we'd love for [new people] to join us, but we need to continue to improve our city for our residents."

FURTHER IMPACTS:

CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural hazards like floods, droughts, heat waves, landslides, fires, and severe storms could also drive climate-related migration, causing both direct and indirect impacts.

Vock is a public policy reporter based in Washington, D.C.



5 Places to Find Your Next Planning Gig

By BRENNA DONEGAN

PART-TIME AND FREELANCE jobs are not new to the planning world. But over the last decade, the growth of the alternative workforce has changed the way many planners—and employers—view work that doesn't fit the traditional 9 to 5. As the economic and employment uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change the way we work, planners are increasingly finding new kinds of consulting opportunities through "gigging."

"Uncertainty abounds in this time and the way we work will certainly need to change," says planner Steve Miller, AICP. "Gig work or part-time work or fractional or shared jobs may be a part of that in the future."

Gig work can take many forms: temporary jobs, internships, independent contracting, or working multiple projects for multiple organizations at once. Whether you're a retired planner looking to stay professionally engaged, a young professional looking for experience, a mid-career planner between long-term opportunities, or a stay-at-home parent looking for supplemental income, independent or collaborative gig work can be a viable way to make your professional life more flexible, build new hard and soft skills, and round out your resume.

Think this might be a good option for you? Here are five of the best places to find your next gig:

1 Governmental organizations

In 2019, 54 percent of the state and local governments surveyed hired temporary or contract employees, according to a survey from the Center for State and Local Government Excellence. Of those hires, four percent were to meet planning needs.

Projects from governmental organizations typically have fixed fees, with larger fees associated with larger projects. You can usually find these types of gigs through requests for proposals or qualifications (RFP/RFQ). Good central places to locate these opportunities are third-party websites like GovernmentBids.com and BidNet.com. APA's Career Center

(bit.ly/2VCIipo) and many APA chapter websites also offer job sections that include RFP/RFQ listings for both the private and public sector.

While it can be challenging for local governments to hire a project-based freelancer under their contracting limit, there has been a recent uptick in more traditional part-time work for individuals in larger government projects.

2 Professional consulting firms

Professional consulting firms and engineering or law firms are always on the lookout for planning expertise. Like governmental organizations, these firms will often put out RFPs for subcontractors on fixed-fee projects.

Word to the wise: Be prepared to collaborate. If you are working as part of a smaller planning firm or doing solo work, consider attending the pre-proposal meeting for a project you are interested in and introducing yourself to other attendees. You might be asked to join a larger team for a specific project.

3 Nonprofit organizations

The nonprofit sphere offers even more opportunities for gig work. In engineering, IDIQ (Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity) contracting often takes place through nonprofits because organizations want a wider variety of resources at their disposal.

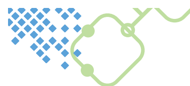
To take advantage of these projects, Miller recommends getting involved in studies and situations to present your skills and qualifications wherever possible. That could mean participating in conferences or industry events or getting involved with local boards, committees, and advisory groups.

"Serving on a volunteer advisory committee for a local neighborhood planning project will educate you on local issues, connect you with the planning staff and elected offices in your city, and provide you the opportunity to show off your expertise. It takes time and effort, but it may lead to similar paid work when your city does another neighborhood plan," Miller says.

As with larger governmental contracts, nonprofits may hire two or three teams or firms and distribute the work among them.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
SHARING ECONOMY

Communities and society as a whole must accommodate new services and service delivery models without sacrificing worker protections or undermining the community's vision for growth and change.



APA Learn

What the Gig? Private Practice Today

Want to find out more about gig work for planners? Be sure to check out Miller, Vargas, and Garvin's NPC20 @ Home session on APA Learn.

CM | 1.25

NONMEMBER PRICE: $30
MEMBER PRICE: $15

Planning.org/APALearn

4 Nontraditional clients

Gig work can be as flexible as you make it, so don't be afraid to think outside the box. You can upload your information on gig sites like Upwork or Fiverr, reach out to neighborhood organizations, or leverage nonprofessional contacts. (More than 50 percent of respondents to a live NPC @ Home survey said they find work through personal contacts and networks.)

Some people even gig for their own current employer. "I was working for a consulting firm about 10 years ago and we had a gig on the side that we did after hours. It was creating an online community engagement platform," says Miller. "And it was its own startup where we had to raise funds for it, and it blossomed into an ongoing company."

5 Create your own gig

After 20 years with her previous employer, Silvia Vargas, FAICP, LEED-AP, decided to set out on her own and create her own work. "I believed it would give me more control over my career path, allowing me to choose what I would do and do what I love best."

She founded her consulting firm in 2016 and says she cannot overstate how much of her business's success in the first year relied on gigs brought to her by her previous network. "It gave me a buffer, and I became more aware of the need to be diligent and deliberate in building connections and nurturing them," she says.

Thanks to connections formed during that time, Vargas eventually joined the planning practice of Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc., her current employer.

Elizabeth Garvin, Esq., AICP, also decided to pursue the work she loves best. Drawing from her background as a lawyer and a planner, Garvin launched Community ReCode to provide full-service code support to communities. Initially she had trouble finding the courage to reach out.

"I had to get over myself and go ask for work," says Garvin. Her advice? "Reach out to former clients, reach out to work friends, tell them what you're doing. Own what you're doing and get the word out there."

Donegan is APA's communications associate.

HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY

Prepare for Takeoff

By JO PEÑA

TALK OF "FLYING TAXIS" has been in the media a lot this year. Even CES, one of the biggest tech events in the world, called it *the* technology that's coming. You may be wondering what all the fuss is about—and what it has to do with planning practice. There's no way air taxis and "sky roads" are coming anytime soon, right?

Don't be so sure. According to NASA, advanced air mobility (AAM), or the use of automated transportation technology to transport people and cargo at lower altitudes in places not traditionally served by aviation, is likely to be a commercially viable transportation option by 2028. And the rapid development of this technology has significant implications for built environments across the rural-urban transect, particularly in land-use, right-of-way, and development patterns.

Unless municipalities are game for unplanned deployment across communities (think the disruption of short-term rentals or dockless micromobility multiple times over), planners and policy makers need to start preparing as soon as possible. Presently, public policy and community understanding lags behind the technology. But a few places, like Houston and Columbus, Ohio, have begun talking about likely impacts, and Los Angeles has drafted a policy framework.

Innovation is moving us closer to a reality where AAM is economically feasible and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), or drones, are widely adopted. With proactive action, planners can balance benefits with planning interventions to protect the health, safety, and well-being of communities.

Rapid acceleration

Recent technological advancements, led by private-sector innovation, have propelled AAM into an area of economic interest. In many of these models, transportation network companies own and maintain electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles (eVTOLs), which passengers schedule for rides—a stark contrast to today's private car ownership model.

AAM advancements are particularly lucrative because the technology provides a convenient alternative to longer commutes. According to Richard Stephens, senior aviation planner at NV5 company WHPacific Inc. and a coauthor of the recent PAS Report on drones, people are willing to pay

Hyundai Motor Company and partners unveiled a new autonomous personal air vehicle prototype last year, pictured here in a rendering.

to avoid congestion between residential areas, downtowns, and airports.

Over the last year, companies like Uber and Bell have unveiled prototypes of eVTOLs that can be used as air taxis, along with renderings for multimodal hubs (commonly referred to as vertiports) to accommodate those vehicles. (Joby Aviation acquired Uber Elevate in December, which will allow them to use Uber's app to offer air taxi rides when its aircraft enters service. Joby says that could happen as soon as 2023.) Meanwhile, regulatory agencies are researching the impacts of small-scale and widespread air mobility in urban and rural areas, including safety, nuisance, and equity considerations.

Advances in AAM are accompanied by developments with UAS (see "Air Support for Transportation Planning, November: bit.ly/3oniSJ5). Stephens estimates that initial services will focus on cargo delivery, such as Amazon's Prime Air and UPS's Flight Forward delivery drone fleets, which will likely be followed by piloted shuttles.

Multiple federal programs are supporting the adoption of these services. In 2019, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved the first package delivery program by UAS. In 2020, NASA sought companies with ready technology to test passenger- and cargo-carrying UAS to participate in a series of activities to test technological readiness in an urban environment. The program identified 17 partners to engage in developmental testing and prepare for possible flight activity in 2022.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
TRANSPORTATION

Ground-based drones also require policies and regulations that focus on safe, accessible, equitable, and environmentally sound options.

USING DRONES IN PLANNING PRACTICE

Learn the possibilities and first steps in PAS Report 597: bit.ly/3qYEUE2

Planning considerations

Advanced air mobility has numerous implications for the built environment and the work of planners, both known and unanticipated.

First, eVTOLs require specialized infrastructure that plug into current systems. Larger vertiports serve multiple eVTOLs with specialized infrastructure, such as battery charging and communications functions. In renderings, design firms propose these new spaces could serve multiple functions, including workspaces and multimodal hubs. Smaller-scale locations, or vertipads, are specialized locations that support a single eVTOL aircraft. These infrastructure needs will affect local land uses, design, transportation infrastructure (like first- and last-mile access), and utility systems. Further, surrounding structures will be impacted by "a new 3-D design

consideration for the way structures are interrelated," says Stephens. In other words, planners must consider how vertical environmental features, such as building heights, microclimates, and topography, interact with navigable airspace.

Even though the federal government regulates airspace and AAM safety standards, it will be up to communities to identify and shape how AAM infrastructure will fit with community assets. For example, will community members want to protect scenic areas by restricting flight paths and vertiport development in natural areas? Or will communities want to locate AAM infrastructure near arterial roads to support multimodal travel without increasing demand on local roadways?

Safety is a huge consideration, as is public perception, particularly when introducing smaller aircraft to residential areas. Nuisance concerns could be a barrier to widespread adoption of AAM, especially regarding rotor noise and visual "clutter" in historically untraveled airspace. Community members may also express concerns about data-collecting drones or passenger vehicles that can lift straight up, giving greater visual and physical access to private spaces, even in dense places.

Planners may also have concerns for aligning technological advancement with community visions and goals, including avoiding hubs in hazardous areas, alignment with economic development priorities like identified growth areas, and protecting community character by avoiding drastic changes to the built environment. Emerging equity concerns require innovative approaches. How can we minimize adverse impacts on communities that see disproportionate increases in air traffic? And how can we bring air mobility benefits to people who cannot afford the steep price tag in early adoption days?

"With proactive urban planning and policy, planners have the potential to guide the sustainable and equitable adoption of these innovations," says Adam Cohen, research associate at the Transportation Sustainability Research Center at the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

Fasten your seatbelts

While there is still some uncertainty about adoption timelines, changing cultural contexts point to a future where shared on-demand air mobility is a real possibility. What we do know for sure is that the future will look different than today.

One of the biggest hurdles of all will be public acceptance. Disconnects between public understanding and technological advancements can significantly influence how an emerging technology like UAS is adopted. It will be important to strike a balance between ensuring safety and supporting advancements. The best way to accomplish this is by increasing familiarity and interdisciplinary collaboration between air mobility experts, policy makers, and planners.

Planners can be better prepared to implement planning interventions that support their communities by staying abreast of technological advances and considering how these changes might impact travel and the built environment. Consider how tools like overlay zoning and incentives can be used to support infrastructure development and protect community interests, and then connect with subject matter experts to identify blind spots.

"The planning community is going to have to think outside of the box," says Cohen. Advancements in this field require interdisciplinary teams to work together and identify how air mobility can support urban and rural communities. By considering various possibilities, planners can better prepare for changes to infrastructure, land use, and public perception.

For more on the latest AAM and planning considerations, see the synopsis of a workshop from the 99th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, *Reimagining the Future of Transportation with Personal Flight: Preparing and Planning for Urban Air Mobility* (bit.ly/2VOHDl1).

Peña is APA's research associate.

A NEW POLICY ROAD MAP

In September, Los Angeles wrapped up a nine-month partnership with the World Economic Forum called "Principles of the Urban Sky" to develop a framework for the implementation of advanced air mobility (AAM), also referred to as urban air mobility (UAM). They outlined seven principles to guide the creation of a policy road map in LA and inform policy-making efforts worldwide: safety, sustainability, equity of access, low noise, multimodal connectivity, local workforce development, and purpose-driven data sharing. To learn more, go to bit.ly/39ujxnK.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Ahead of the Curb With Smart Zones

By MARY HAMMON

CURBS ARE RAPIDLY evolving, and dense urban areas are feeling the squeeze, particularly when it comes to deliveries. We've all seen a delivery van or on-demand service driver double-parked, pulled over in a bike or bus lane, or stopped in the street. They block traffic or can force cyclists, scooter riders, and pedestrians into oncoming traffic to get around them. It's an accident waiting to happen and difficult to enforce.

How can cities and planners keep all users safe while also fostering commerce and getting the best use out of their curb space? That question led Omaha, Nebraska, which already has some innovative parking programs in place, and five other cities to partner with curb management platform Coord on "smart zones."

Smart commercial loading zones, or "smart zones," are coordinated through an app that provides drivers for delivery and service providers like UPS and Uber Eats incentive to load in designated locations where it is safe, efficient, and legal—all while collecting data for the city.

The Omaha pilot, Coord's first, launched last September. Drivers use the Coord Driver app to reserve smart zones along their routes. The app is free, with no outlay costs for participating cities. It also makes it possible for cities to monetize the curb. While Omaha is not currently charging a fee for its smart zones, other pilot cities plan to start at $0.50 to $1.00 for a 15-minute loading trip, a share of which goes to Coord.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
SMART CITIES
More private-sector companies are getting involved in smart city projects, and planners need to learn and understand how to accommodate and integrate them into the planning process.

"We recommend cities have flexibility to move that price so they can impact supply and demand as they need," says Dawn Miller, Coord's vice president of policy and partnerships.

That's where the data collection comes in. Miller says a lot of the pilot cities lacked data about loading. Smart zones provide a regular stream of data on who is loading, for how long, and on what days and times. Cities can then create tools to manage the curb, whether it's right-sizing their loading space or incentivizing certain windows, which could open up the space for a variety of other uses.

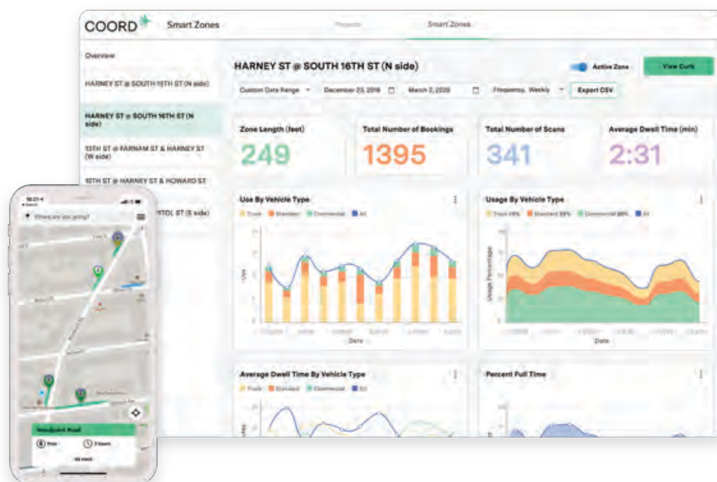
"We want to get a good data set built to see how the curb is changing from parking cars to moving goods and dynamic services like ride share and food delivery," says Kenneth Smith, Omaha's city parking and mobility manager.

Lessons learned

Omaha's pilot hasn't entirely been smooth sailing. With people staying home and working remotely because of COVID-19, downtown parking hasn't exactly been tight, so there's currently not a lot of incentive for drivers to use the app. As a result, they've collected less data than anticipated so far. But, says Miller, the project team has still learned several things to inform what might come next in Omaha and best practices for other cities, including its next pilot in Aspen, Colorado, which launched in November.

Miller sees smart city pilots like these as great ways for planners to experiment, gather data, adjust plans, and inform larger planning efforts. "It's also okay if things don't go perfectly," she says, because you learn a lot along the way.

Smith adds, "You have to step out and try new things to make decisions that will impact your community. If you don't try, you won't gain the experience."



The COORD smart zones dashboard allows cities to monitor in real time information on dwell times, occupancy, and compliance.

COURTESY COORD

Hammon is Planning's *associate editor.*

The Price of Racial Inequity

By TATIANA WALK-MORRIS

Fifteen miles separate Maurice's (left) home in the 6400 block of South Hermitage in the Chicago neighborhood of Englewood, and his "map twins," Jon and Paula, who live on the 6400 North block on the same street in the mostly white neighborhood of Edgewater. The strangers

met and visited each other's homes through the Folded Map project (bit.ly/39CuB28). They were astonished by the disparity between their neighborhoods while recognizing they valued the same neighborhood amenities. PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONIKA LEWIS JOHNSON

IN 2017, SOCIAL justice artist Tonika Lewis Johnson set out to document Chicago's racial segregation. Through video interviews, photographs, and a forthcoming documentary, her Folded Map project pairs "map twins," or people who live at corresponding addresses opposite one another on Chicago's North and South Sides, to zero in on the very real differences in access, opportunity, and quality of life.

Most people are aware of Chicago's divisions, she says. " But the issue is, we've normalized it."

Indeed, the city is widely reported to be one of the most segregated in the country. "Today's Chicago is the product of decades of policies that have had the effect of isolating communities of color," says Prosperity Now, a nonprofit organization dedicated to financial stability and prosperity. But Chicago isn't alone.

As calls for racial justice continue across the country, experts say planners and government officials must address segregation to tackle income inequality. Failure to do so not only unjustly burdens Black Americans and other communities of color; it also impedes state and local economic growth.

Generations of loss

The Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), an independent, nonprofit planning organization, set out in 2015 to study the city's racial divisions and identify a more equitable way forward. The resulting 2018 report, *The Cost of Segregation*, quantifies the widespread financial impacts on all neighborhoods, even the whitest and most affluent.

"Chicago's segregation is inextricably linked to racism," the report says, but "segregation is not only an issue in low-income communities or communities of color. Everyone pays a price, measured in lost income, lives, and education." If the city's economic and racial segregation were reduced to even the national median, MPC's research indicates, Black Chicagoans would gain $2,982 per person annually, and the city could save 229 lives (a roughly 30 percent decline in the area's homicide rate). And if the region as a whole took steps to desegregate Chicagoland residents, it would see an $8 billion increase in gross domestic product.

A 2018 report estimates that closing the earnings gap between whites and people of color could increase state and local tax revenues by at least $100 billion.

More than half a century after the Fair Housing Act outlawed policies like redlining, racial segregation continues to plague the U.S., even as it gallops toward an expected minority-majority in the next few decades. In a Brookings Institute analysis of 51 metro areas, the average segregation level on a scale of zero (completely integrated) to 100 (completely segregated) was 59.4, driven in large part by northern cities that were once destinations of the Great Migration. Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Milwaukee—which had the highest level of racial segregation, at 79.8—all top the list.

At the same time, income inequality has been increasing for decades. Black households made about $33,000 less than the white median household income in 2018, a gap that has increased by $9,200 since 1970. And many are concerned the coronavirus pandemic will only widen the gap. A September poll from NPR found some startling disparities: 72 percent of Latinx respondents, 60 percent of Black households, and 55 percent of Native Americans reported significant financial hardships due to COVID-19. Only 36 percent of white households said the same.

Studies show that these dual issues are deeply intertwined.

Zooming out to the country at large, people of color earn 63 percent of white Americans' earnings of the same age and gender, according to *The Business Case for Racial Equity*, a 2018 report from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Altarum. The Federal Reserve, which defines wealth as the difference between assets and liabilities, found in its 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances that white families typically have eight times the wealth of Black families, and five times the wealth of Latinx families. If these inequities continue to go unaddressed, milestones like sending children to college or buying homes could become even further out of reach for many people of color, says Sarah Treuhaft, vice president of research at

PolicyLink, a national research institute advocating for racial and economic equality.

Closing the income gap could boost the average annual income for people of color by $14,696, according to the National Equity Atlas, a nonprofit partner of PolicyLink that describes itself as "America's most detailed report card on racial and economic equity." And overall earnings could see an increase of $1 trillion, resulting in higher spending power and more financial security for communities of color, according to *The Business Case for Racial Equity*.

Failure to act costs the government, too. The report estimates that closing the earnings gap between whites and people of color could ultimately increase federal tax revenue by $450 billion and state and local tax revenues by at least $100 billion. And if that gap is closed relatively quickly, by 2050, the benefits magnify. The U.S. could see $2.6 trillion in additional consumer spending, plus a bigger boost in tax revenue: $1.4 trillion more for the federal government and $325 billion more at the state and local levels.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING
Job growth concentrated in large metros exacerbates income inequality and social divisions among and within those areas. Growing metros face longer commutes and rising housing unaffordability, while other metros see an outmigration of talented workers and greater fiscal strain.

Start with housing

The desperate need to address inequities in the U.S.—and the benefits of doing so—are clear. But how can it be done? As instrumental as housing policy was in creating segregation, it's also one of the chief ways to uproot it, experts say.

"Certain populations are more likely to be born into a household that's not just low income or in poverty, but in a neighborhood where 20, 30, [or] 40 percent or more of people around them also are living in poverty," says Ani Turner, codirector of sustainable health spending strategies at Altarum. "That creates a neighborhood that has less opportunities, fewer businesses to get job experience, sometimes struggling education, sometimes higher crime, less safety, less ability to be exercising, less access to healthy food. All these things interact, [but] it starts with housing and neighborhoods."

MPC also sees housing policy as a path to change. *Our Equitable Future*, the nonprofit regional planning group's two-part roadmap for advancing racial equity in Chicago, includes a variety of recommendations for housing reform. Lessening local control over affordable housing decisions, for instance, would "ensure that all communities contribute to the city's affordable housing needs."

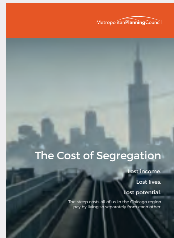
While overt segregation policies like racially restrictive covenants have been outlawed, planners today still encounter exclusionary policies like single-family-only zoning and large-lot zoning, which prohibit construction of multifamily housing. That can force out lower-income people and anyone who can't afford a home, perpetuating the status quo. Planners should highlight opportunities to modernize existing restrictive regulations, starting with zoning code updates, says Sara Bronin, lead organizer for Desegregate Connecticut and law professor at the University of Connecticut.

Providing affordable, multifamily housing options in high-opportunity areas is critical, research shows. According to *The Business Case for Racial Equity*, expanding housing vouchers and initiatives like HUD's Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing program have been shown to result in higher college attendance and higher earnings for participants down the line. But it's not a guarantee: The effectiveness of vouchers is often determined by the availability of housing in high-income areas, plus the willingness of landlords to accept them. Business groups must recognize that opposing these initiatives directly hinders the elimination of racial and economic gaps over the long term, and zoning regulations could integrate lower-income housing into high-end areas, Bronin says.

Similarly, it's not enough to simply increase housing opportunities in disenfranchised communities. While tax abatements for developments in historically redlined communities can spur development, they can also catalyze and subsidize gentrification, says Trevon Logan, professor of economics at The Ohio State University. Protecting affordable housing through government and nonprofit ownership or rent control initiatives is crucial to preventing displacement, he says. Governments can also give existing residents tax abatements and create more targeted tax incentives as a form of housing justice, Treuhaft of PolicyLink says.

Confronting policies that favor homeowners over renters can be a challenge, stemming

ENDING RACIAL SEGREGATION IS GOOD ECONOMIC POLICY



As of the last census, Chicago was one of the most Black-white segregated cities in the country. *The Cost of Segregation* (bit.ly/2JC8TAB), a recent study from the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council, quantifies the long-term price of these racial and economic divisions by looking at what's been lost—and what stands to be gained. By reducing its level of segregation to the national median (which is still a moderate level of segregation), Chicago could unlock a massive boost in income, wealth, and potential for Black residents—and the region as a whole.

The average income for Black residents would increase by **$2,982 per person each year**.

An additional **$4.4 billion in income** would be added to the region as a whole.

The regional gross domestic product would see **a boost of $8 billion**.

83,000 more people could earn bachelor's degrees, resulting in a **regional lifetime earnings gain of $90 billion**.

primarily from NIMBY notions that homeowners are contributors to the community and renters aren't. Treuhaft finds such assumptions racist, given that racial inequities have contributed to more white homeownership for generations. Per U.S. Census data, the non-Latinx white homeownership rate in the third quarter of 2020 was 75.8 percent, compared to Asian, Native, and Pacific Islanders at 61 percent and Black people at 46.4 percent.

Ultimately, closing that gap will be vital to addressing segregation, in Chicago and across the country. "Homeownership long has been central to Americans' ability to amass wealth and is a key strategy to reduce the racial wealth gap," MPC says. "Yet many families of color have long been excluded from the benefits of homeownership because of redlining, mortgage discrimination, predatory lending, and residential segregation."

Unity through transit

According to Pew Research Center, Black and Latinx people tend to live farther from their jobs due to segregation and displacement, are more likely to lack access to a personal vehicle, and depend on public transit the most. A 2016 Pew survey found that, in urban areas, 34 percent of Black residents use public transit on a daily or weekly basis, compared to 27 percent of Latinx and 14 percent of white residents.

The pandemic has only reinforced those patterns. "We've seen a remarkable 'white flight' from public transit," reports Transit, an app that provides bus arrival times and other transportation info in more than 200 cities. Their April study found that, among their U.S. users still taking transit to get where they need to go, less than 25 percent are white, while nearly 40 percent are Black.

"What we have to realize is that if the essential workers that need transit, many of them Black and brown folks, are dependent on transit, then we're all dependent on transit," says Tamika L. Butler, a planner and principal of Tamika L. Butler Consulting. "Folks of color, we've been holding up society on our backs for generations. And so if our lives are at stake, everyone's lives are at stake."

Efficient, affordable, safe transit has a critical impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities of color. But cities often fail to serve the riders who need it most.

"People of color face longer commute times than white people because of the country's long history of racial segregation," the National Equity Atlas reports. "As urban housing prices skyrocket, people of color are increasingly pushed out of urban areas and away from their employers. As most cities in the United States lack quality public transportation, people of color increasingly face longer commute times."

ANASTASIA SHAFRANOVA/ ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

In Columbus, Ohio, for example, cumbersome bus commutes can take as long as two hours, says Trevon Logan. And in Detroit, one of the largest majority Black cities in the country, ballot measures to expand the city's bus lines into the suburbs, where more diverse jobs tend to be located, routinely fail to pass. Meanwhile, downtown options like the People Mover, an elevated train loop, and the recently launched Q-Line, a streetcar that operates for about three miles of Woodward Avenue, are often criticized for serving suburban visitors over local residents' needs.

Where transit should create connections to opportunity, it often adds costs and barriers. Cities with longer commute times have lower levels of intergenerational mobility, or movement between occupations or social classes from one generation to another, which could stem from transportation constraints, Logan says.

If government agencies own the land where they're building affordable housing, that makes it easier to construct affordable transit near affordable housing developments, Treuhaft says. According to PolicyLink's All-Cities initiative, local or regional transit agencies could repurpose government-owned land or acquire privately owned land parcels for equitable transit-oriented development projects, but those acquisition efforts depend on the funding sources available.

Balance commerce with community

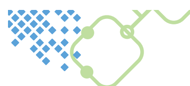
With so much to gain from addressing segregation, what's kept so many communities complacent for so long? At times, financial interests in the private sector protect the status quo and override government investment in initiatives that promote racial equality, Altrum's Ani Turner says. And, she adds, some stakeholders don't even believe racial barriers exist.

Ultimately, the market alone won't drive businesses to open in certain communities if residents' incomes don't support them, she says. But the economic argument can be strong motivation. Businesses can and should play a big part in addressing inequality, Turner says—it just makes economic sense over the long term.

Communities of color need businesses in their own neighborhoods that offer good jobs, services, and other resources—and they need a variety of them.

But as with housing, it can't just be about moving people to opportunity; communities of color need businesses in their own neighborhoods that offer good jobs, services, and other resources—and they need a variety of them, not just one major employer. In the 1970s, Sears pulled its headquarters from North Lawndale, a predominantly Black Chicago neighborhood. Nearly 50 years later, the unemployment rate was still almost 10 percentage points higher than the overall city's rate, according to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data.

To better integrate people across the socioeconomic spectrum, it's important to prioritize mixed-income development, not just high-end development, Altrum's Ani Turner says. Though high-end housing is lucrative for developers, zoning needs to integrate housing for low-income and middle-income development, too, she says. Creating mixed-income communities helps lower-income households take advantage of the resources their high-income counterparts have, like access to small businesses, parks, grocery stores, and other local amenities, she says.



APA Learn

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HOW TO HELP BRIDGE THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

By KAREN KAZMIERCZAK

Wondering how planners can address income inequity? Here are six ways to advance more equitable outcomes in your community:

1. EDUCATE YOURSELF on the history of racial discrimination and the outcomes of those policies on Black people and your community.

2. LISTEN TO BLACK RESIDENTS and community leaders. Reach out and develop or deepen existing relationships and be a facilitator who brings community members into conversations about their neighborhoods. Understand where you may lack cultural or community expertise and bring in members of the community to fill that gap.

3. CONNECT WITH PEOPLE who drive decisions on funding and community investment who may already be talking about or championing these ideas. Build a network of professionals and elected leaders who can work together to drive change.

4. USE PLANNING EXPERTISE to identify where and what type of investments will meet the desired outcome of narrowing the racial wealth gap. Help to drive reparative investments to the communities that need them; tools like mapping and other data analysis can be crucial to effective actions.

5. ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL EQUITY when and where you have influence. Identify current and future planning projects, developments, and decisions, and incorporate equity into the processes, analysis, and recommendations that you make.

6. INTEGRATE RACIAL EQUITY into all aspects of planning work for lasting and transformative impact. Focus on addressing racial equity in each intervention you undertake, including visioning and plan making.

Kazmierczak is APA's senior marketing manager.

But all economic development is not good economic development. Often, influential businesses and trade organizations tend to sway policies or regulatory implementations that conflict with the pursuit of racial equality, Turner says. One big example is the disproportionate amount of heavily polluting industries sited in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, all under the guise of economic development. According to a 2017 report from the NAACP and the Clean Air Task Force, Black Americans are 75 percent more likely to live in communities near hazardous land uses, leading to higher risk of chronic diseases and life-threatening illnesses like COVID-19.

As part of addressing segregation, planners need to play a role in seeking environmental justice in those communities, Treuhaft says.

The long haul

Planner Tamika Butler is hopeful that the current racial justice movement will bring substantive change, but she says a lot of posturing is coming from institutions who had the opportunity for it long before now. For planning to make advances, she warns, the profession must first recognize how it has caused harm to marginalized people and neighborhoods.

The demographic makeup of the industry is its own barrier, too. Data on the profession as a whole is difficult to find, but according to a 2018 APA survey, Black, Latinx, and Asian or Pacific Islander planners together comprised only 13 percent of the organization's members. If planning aims to address racial inequality, Treuhaft says, the profession must start by diversifying to better reflect the communities it serves.

"We have to acknowledge that this is going to take time," Butler says. "We didn't just start white supremacy yesterday."

Pushback will come, including from residents with racist attitudes, Treuhaft says. But others will be eager to push for change. Lewis Johnson, the social justice artist, points to Chicago: After she introduced her first set of map twins in 2017, the North Side residents teamed up with their South Side counterparts in Englewood to participate in a beautification project there.

As planners explore their own projects, Lewis Johnson recommends applying their technical knowledge to existing efforts already taking place—and embracing the fact that they can learn from residents. Some neighborhoods are so impacted by disinvestment that it actually inspires innovation, Lewis Johnson says.

"Residents who are not urban planners are just as much experts," she adds.

Walk-Morris is a Detroit-native, Chicago-based independent journalist.

Data-Driven Planning in Fort Worth

By MEGHAN STROMBERG

AT THE START of 2020, Fort Worth, Texas, made a bold shift toward data-driven decision making by restructuring its planning department. It paired comprehensive planning with the data analytics department, while centering its current planning function on implementing the city's vision. In short, one team is creating the scheme, and the other is "running the play."

Planning talked to Mark McAvoy, Fort Worth's director of Planning and Data Analytics, and DJ Harrell, director of the Development Services Department, to understand the reasoning behind this innovative approach. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

PLANNING: What inspired the shift?
MCAVOY: The city manager, David Cooke, wanted to build a closer, more integrated connection between our comprehensive plan, our capital improvement program, and our annual budgeting process to make those perpetually cyclical—and to make sure our capital investments support achieving our strategic goals.

HARRELL: We're now making more data-driven decisions about growth. We are one of the fastest growing cities in the country, so we have to be really smart about the way we continue to grow, and that is tied to the data capture.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
DATA USE
Planners must understand how data protection regulations affect their data use and the implementation of data mining capabilities.

Q&A

PLANNING: What kind of data are we talking about?
MCAVOY: That's a question we're still contemplating, but it's a collection of operational data, financial data, and customer input that all goes into this decision-making process that DJ alluded to.

One of the challenges is assessing what we have: who has access to it, what it's currently being used for, is it consistent, is it in a place where those who need it know where it is and can access it, are the systems are up to date? After that inventory process, what we'll do with it, to some degree, remains to be seen, but one of the principal goals is to give leaders the tools to make more data-driven decisions. And then from a more typical planning point of view, one of our challenges is relating some of our performance-related data and needs assessment data spatially.

PLANNING: DJ, how does this shift impact your team and day-to-day operations?
HARRELL: There is a close relationship between the two departments. Five of our 25 planners went to the planning and data analytics department to focus solely on comprehensive planning. My department is focusing on current planning and bringing to fruition some of the goals of the city's vision. We're doing the zoning and design review, context-driven decision making, creating multimodal efforts, walkable communities—all the things that a growing community should be looking at.

I see it this way: Mark's group draws up the scheme, and we run the play.

PLANNING: And are you collecting new data, too?
HARRELL: All the time. We're exploring the use of drones, not just for transportation efforts as we plan for a growing city that will continue to need transit in high-demand areas, but also for open space acquisition and planning and urban forestry.

We're trying to utilize all the technology available so we can intelligently and consciously manage growth as it occurs.

Stromberg is APA's Editor in Chief.

JASON SCHNEIDER

A Move to Local Food Systems

By CYNTHIA CURRIE
and MARY HAMMON

COVID-19 HAS LAID BARE, and in some cases exacerbated, many of the existing problems with food production and agriculture systems in the U.S. Ongoing trends of aging farmers, supply chain problems, climate change, and large-scale agriculture are putting food access, jobs and local economies, and the environment at risk.

To address these issues, some urban areas are gravitating toward more sustainable local and regional food systems. This shift can help local governments accomplish a multitude of goals, including resilience, economic development, job creation, food sovereignty, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and better water management.

Some food systems experts say improvements and a growing interest in urban agriculture technology such as vertical farms and hydroponics have the potential to help local communities in the U.S. move the needle further.

But to achieve these benefits, planners and urban and rural governments alike will need to build political will among decision makers and the public. They also must shift use of municipal resources and adopt policy and regulation changes that support and encourage local and regional food systems, including urban agriculture and community-supported agriculture and food business models.

"Local and regional food systems are critical aspects of healthy, resilient, and equitable communities. Planners have important roles to play as conveners and advocates for advancing policies that shift the food system toward this model," says Andrea Petzel, AICP, chair of APA's Food Systems Division.

FURTHER IMPACTS:
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

The ongoing trends of urban agriculture and food justice will continue to require shifts in municipal resource use, as well as adoption of community-supported agriculture models.

Soul Fire Farm is an Afro-Indigenous centered community farm committed to ending what food justice advocates call "food apartheid." Its food sovereignty programs reach more than 10,000 people a year and include training for farmers of color, urban home gardens, and produce delivery for food-insecure households.

BRIAN DAWSON/THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

FOOD DESERT TO FOOD JUSTICE *Grafton, New York*

THE TERM "FOOD DESERT" went mainstream in 2010 when the Obama administration launched its Healthy Food Financing Initiative to encourage retailers to operate supermarkets in low-income areas to increase access to fresh food. But food justice activists like Karen Washington, who sits on the board of the 80-acre community Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, New York, are increasingly using "food apartheid" instead. They say food deserts are not naturally occurring phenomenona, but rather the result of system-level policies like redlining and the lack of grocery stores or transportation options that make it hard for people in certain zip codes to access healthy food. The growing food justice movement seeks to address these underlying inequities by shifting the power and wealth in food production from major corporations back into the hands of local communities to benefit both small food organizations and the greater good.

IMMIGRANT BUSINESS INCUBATOR *Tuluwat, Washington*

AS COMMUNITIES LOOK for ways to strengthen local food systems and boost their economies, some are turning to food-based business incubators like community kitchens. According to the municipal action guide from the National League of Cities Food-Based Business Incubator Programs (bit.ly/3mSdRaL), these types of services typically include access to shared space and equipment, education, and business assistance to help remove barriers for first-time food entrepreneurs to get their businesses off the ground. Food business incubators can also help local governments and economic development organizations create more equitable access to entrepreneurship. That's the case with Spice Bridge, home to nonprofit Food Innovation Network's food business incubator program, which helps women of color and immigrants in South King County, Washington, start and grow thriving businesses.

Clockwise from above: Catering prep in Spice Bridge's commercial kitchen; authentic Argentinian empanadas and chimichurri; vendors put finishing touches on the food hall; popular menu item Urojo, a Zanzibari soup; outdoor seating overlooking surrounding mixed-use development, Tukwila Village, which includes a seasonal farmers market.

DENISE MILLER FOR GLOBAL TO LOCAL

VERTICAL FARM IN A BOX

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

BY 2050, EXPERTS predict the world's population will increase to 10 billion (from today's 7.6 billion); two-thirds of those people will live in cities. Since farmable land is a limited resource, food producers in the U.S. and abroad are turning to technology to sustainably boost yields to keep up with demand.

Innovations such as vertical and modular farms, such as those used by The Vegetable Co. in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and parent company Future Farms, and hydroponics (growing plants in a nutrient solution and water instead of soil) allow growers to squeeze acres of production out of spaces measured in square feet. These compact—and sometimes portable—growing spaces mean farmers can viably grow food closer to their urban consumers year-round. The controlled growing environments also have measurably lower environmental impacts, using precise amounts of water, UV light, and in some cases even solar power.

The Vegetable Co. in Kuala Lumpur grows vegetables vertically under LED lights in a 320-foot shipping container on the edge of a parking lot. They are one of a growing number of small farms around the world selling, and in their case delivering, directly to local consumers.

IAN TEH/
THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

Livestock operations are responsible for more than seven percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, according to the National Center for Environmental Health. CAFOs can produce more waste than some U.S. cities, and they store excess manure in lagoons or pits, where it breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen), which exacerbates methane production. The U.S. cattle industry is one of the primary producers of methane.

GEORGE STEINMETZ/THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

CLIMATE EFFECTS OF LARGE-SCALE FARMING *Tulia, Texas*

INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE is the dominant food production system in the U.S. Characterized by large-scale, intensive production of a few crops and animals, such operations use significant amounts of chemical fertilizers and produce meat in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). While they account for just 4.8 percent of farms in the U.S., they produce 58.3 percent of the nation's food.

Facing a growing population, the consolidation and scaling of food and agriculture systems in the U.S.—and around the world—initially made sense. But some experts say it has significant downsides. "Food systems are sort of the dark horse of climate change," Jason Hill, professor at the University of Minnesota, recently told the *New York Times*. Hill is the senior author of new research published in the journal *Science* that shows reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food is crucial in the fight against climate change.

The emissions come at multiple points before food even makes it to consumers: production, including use of fertilizers; food digestion by livestock; and food processing, packaging, and pre-retail transportation. Together those sources account for 58 percent of the total energy used by the U.S. food system, according to the State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Food systems and environmental advocates say smaller farming operations and increased distribution and marketing of unprocessed, locally produced food is a viable way to address these concerns.

WATER STREET

Henderson, Nevada

WITHOUT MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES, retail, or restaurants, Water Street once drew very little foot traffic. But in 2000, the Downtown Henderson Investment Strategy provided a new plan to bring vibrancy back to the downtown area. Even through the Great Recession, strong political support and extensive community engagement—more than 26,000 residents provided their input—kept the vision alive, resulting in today's Water Street: both a thriving business center and a beloved community gathering space. Learn more about this Great Place in America at planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2019/waterstreet.

Each year, Water Street is transformed into a free classic car museum for Henderson Hot Rod Days, complete with entertainment, food, and souvenir vendors.

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