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**Urban Agriculture's Popularity on the Rise** Marcia Caton Campbell Turn on the evening news or open a newspaper and chances are you'll find stories on urban agriculture. *ABC World News Tonight* and *NBC Nightly News* recently ran stories on the subject. This upswing in popular media attention to urban agriculture reflects communities' increasing interest in producing healthy, affordable, and locally grown food.

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*Delighted neighborhood children in Milwaukee explore Alice's Garden with Program Manager Venice Williams of the Center for Resilient Cities.*



Center for Resilient Cities

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Individuals and nonprofits most often engage in urban agriculture projects, such as community gardens. Urban agriculture also includes institutional and demonstration gardens; rooftop gardens; edible landscaping; hobby and commercial bee, poultry, and animal keeping; urban and periurban farms; and hybrid farms, like Milwaukee's Growing Power ([www.growingpower.org](http://www.growingpower.org)), which combine food production, processing, distribution, marketing, and educational and training opportunities. Food is produced for personal consumption, educational purposes, donation to food pantries or food banks, and is sold at farmers markets and other outlets. Taken together, these activities form a spectrum—from pots of tomatoes and lettuce on apartment balconies to multiacre farming operations—that has the same appearance and intent as traditional agriculture.

Planning commissioners need to understand the dimensions of this activity and its regulation from land-use, environmental, and health perspectives. Urban agriculture offers a variety of health, social, economic, and environmental benefits to communities but, like any other land use, presents certain risks. Among the many benefits are:

- ▲ Increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, especially in low-income areas where access to affordable, healthful food is limited
- ▲ Opportunities for healthful nutrition education and physical activity



*Greensgrow Farms in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia grows hydroponic lettuce, originally for the restaurant trade.*

- ▲ Local job training and employment opportunities for low-income or hard-to-employ individuals
- ▲ Community building, involvement, and social interaction across ethnically and age-diverse communities of people
- ▲ Environmental education and stewardship
- ▲ Reduced public land-maintenance costs (of public lands used for urban agriculture)

**As planners help communities envision their future, urban agriculture should be identified as one means of obtaining long-range goals. . . . Planning commissioners can play a critical decision-making role in facilitating urban agriculture and removing barriers to its practice while balancing public and private interests of their communities.**

- ▲ Capitalizing on underused resources (e.g., rooftops, vacant land, utility rights-of-way)
- ▲ Increasing value of property in proximity to community gardens, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- ▲ The economic multiplier effect of attracting new food-related businesses (processing facilities, commercial kitchens, restaurants, farmers markets, and the like)
- ▲ Decreased stormwater runoff and air pollution
- ▲ Productive reuse of contaminated land (brownfields)

As with any other land use, urban agriculture presents risks. Among these are the environmental risks posed by previous land uses and land-use conflicts created by inappropriately sited or managed urban agriculture facilities. Risks and conflicts can be regulated and managed through traditional planning mechanisms such as comprehensive planning, zoning, site review, and the permitting process.

**Long-Range Community Visioning and Goal Setting.** As planners help communities envision their future, urban agriculture should be identified as one means of obtaining long-range goals. Departments of planning, community development, parks and recreation, housing, education, sanitation, forestry, and other public works may prove useful allies as their understanding of urban agriculture grows. A number of cities have articulated food charters—broad vision statements and guiding principles—as a precursor to local or regional food-systems plan making.

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## Planning for and Regulating Medical Marijuana



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Dwight H. Merriam, FAICP

**T**alking about marijuana (*Cannabis sativa* L., and its main psychoactive substance, THC) brings to mind the 1969 film *Easy Rider*'s memorable tune, "Don't Bogart That Joint, My Friend."

Marijuana's recreational and religious uses, however, date back to the third millennium BC. It became the drug of choice in the United States in the 1960s even though it was illegal under federal and many state laws.

Marijuana is also a highly effective palliative that lessens chronic pain, lowers the intraocular pressure of glaucoma, and reduces nausea and stimulates appetites in AIDS patients and those receiving chemotherapy.

Recognition of the medical use of marijuana has led 15 states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington) and the District of Columbia to legalize its cultivation, dispensing, or use.

What are the principal issues in planning for and regulating the cultivation, dispensing and use of medical marijuana? There is no fundamental right or suspect classification at stake, so your regulations only need a rational relationship to a permissible governmental objective.

### Start With the State Law

State enabling statutes authorize municipal medical marijuana licensing and regulation. The enabling statutes vary widely. Some are highly detailed, others woefully vague. Determine the extent of your right to regulate, remembering that you cannot go outside what the state allows. In Califor-

nia, you can have dispensaries in addition to collectives that cultivate and distribute marijuana; Colorado is silent on dispensaries and Hawaii prohibits them. If your state law could be improved, talk to your legislators and ask them to help.

### Draw the Line Between Licensing and Zoning

Zoning is about land use; licensing regulates the business and other non-land-impacting activities. Local medical marijuana programs sometimes blur the line. In Maine, for example, the state law limits cultivation by users or caregivers to just six plants, not more than three of which may be mature. That is not a zoning issue, and if local regulation is even needed—it may not be as the state law is probably self-executing—it should be by a general ordinance.

No state prohibits a distancing requirement, so if you want to avoid concentrations of such uses, you might require separation. That is a zoning matter.

### Adopt a Strong Purpose Section and Detailed Findings

Be thorough. Specify what the state law requires and allows, and describe what you wish to accomplish with the regulations. A notable study comes from Clare, Michigan. The city has some compelling findings reciting the studies and experience elsewhere of the blighting and secondary effects of marijuana operations. Secondary effects are what happen around uses, identified by the California Police Chiefs Association with medical

marijuana dispensaries to include everything from murder and robbery to noise and mold. You probably cannot replicate such studies, but you can cite them and thereby perhaps better defend your regulations.

### Define Everything You Can

What types of marijuana can be cultivated, kept, and sold—probably not hashish, right? What about derivatives and combined products—remember Alice B. Toklas's brownies? What is a collective? What is a dispensary? If you use separation requirements, what is a school, a park, a playground, a place where children gather . . . ?

### Identify Where They Can Be Located

Where can marijuana uses—collectives, dispensaries, and cultivation—be located? Decide whether it is appropriate for a home occupation. Consider exemptions for small quantities grown and used by individuals. Perhaps limit the allowed floor area devoted to cultivation so large grower operations are prevented.

### Distancing Requirements

Sometimes the state enabling law requires distance requirements. Regardless, you might adopt local requirements to avoid the concentration of uses and adverse impacts on sensitive areas. What distance? From what uses? How do you measure the distance? Consider listing available sites and mapping them.

### Cap the Number of Facilities

Boulder has more marijuana dispensaries than Starbucks and liquor stores combined. Los Angeles caps the number at 70 and allocates them to each of its 35 planning areas. Service levels range from one per 35,000 population (San Francisco), to 57,000 (Los Angeles), to Oakland (105,000).

### Prohibit Nonconforming Uses from Continuing

Many local regulations do not allow illegal, nonconforming medical marijuana uses to continue indefinitely. Some require an immediate shutdown, others allow some time extension. Los Angeles had 800 to 1,000 when it capped the number, but allowed 137 that opened after a late 2007 moratorium.

### Many Other Aspects Must Be Considered

Can you consume the marijuana on-site? Can children enter the facility? Do you need to require security to prevent crime? What about signage? Hours of operation? Size and location (inside or outside only)? Screening of growing area? Number of plants?

Some chronically ill and dying patients benefit greatly from cannabis and where it is legal, it is right to make it possible for them to get their medicine. A good state enabling law, local planning, and definitive regulation can provide for the necessary cultivation and fulfillment of this need without harming our communities.



# Bernalillo County, New Mexico

## Planning Commission



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**Karen Finucan Clarkson**

**B**ernalillo County encompasses the city of Albuquerque and the open plains of New Mexico. It mixes centuries of history with the pressures of urban growth as the beauty of the region draws new residents yearly.

The seven-member planning commission in this semirural county serves in a quasi-judicial capacity. “The planning commission looks at each request carefully, working out a lot of the details before passing its recommendation to the board of county commissioners,” says Nano Chavez, the county’s planning and land-use manager.

“The board of county commissioners relies on us to thoroughly review the issues, especially contentious ones,” says Linda Barbour, chair of the Bernalillo County Planning Commission. “We look at the application, review staff findings and recommendations, and take testimony; then we condense it down and send it to the [county] commissioners for their consideration.”

The planning commission is the decision-making authority on issues involving major subdivisions. Items such as zone changes and land-use plans are referred to the county board for final approval. The planning commission also serves as a board of adjustment, reviewing appeals from those taking issue with decisions by the zoning administrator.

Planning commissioners are appointed by the county commissioners. Three county commissioners get one appointment each; the other two—from the largest districts in the Bernalillo County—get two appointments. Planning commissioners may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

Commissioners meet twice a month—once in public session and once in a study session. “The study sessions, which the public may attend, are basically where the staff brings the planning commission up to speed and alerts them to issues they should be aware of,” says Chavez.

The Bernalillo County Planning Commission members are Linda Barbour, chair; George Castillo, vice chair; Bernie Sanchez; Toby Atencio; Mick McMahan; Joe Chavez; and Chris Melendrez.



Kirk Gittings

*(Left) Bernalillo County lies in the Rio Grande Valley and encompasses the Sandia Mountains and City of Albuquerque; (Above) The South Valley Economic Development Center building was developed by the Rio Grande Community Development Corporation and serves as an incubation program for many small businesses.*

Following the study session, the commission takes a site tour. “It makes it easier to understand what the applicant’s justifying or why neighbors are complaining. Sometimes what’s reflected on paper doesn’t match up with the site,” Chavez says.

“For new commissioners, the site visits are the best training,” says Barbour. “It helps us all visualize what’s going on. We are, however, careful not to talk about the individual cases—we don’t want to violate open meetings rules.”

During its public sessions, the commission spends the most time on special use permit requests, which can be contentious. “Part of my job is to help people work through the issues,” says Barbour. “Sometimes it’s just a lack of knowledge; people may not understand what the applicant wants to do.”

As chair, Barbour strives for consensus or, at a minimum, some level of agreement. “It works best when everyone is willing to give a little here and a little there,” she says. “When we can’t reach an equitable conclusion, I feel I have failed.”

Barbour, who estimates she puts in anywhere from 15 to 30 hours a month, appreciates the various backgrounds—banking, law, real estate, neighborhood advocacy—her fellow commissioners bring to the table. She particularly values the perspective of one commissioner who also serves on the City of Albuquerque Zoning Board of Appeals.

Barbour views planning commission service as an important public service. To those interested in volunteering, she suggests: “Never forget that you serve the community—that you have a responsibility to every single applicant. You’re dealing with their livelihood—how they live and earn a living—as well as the lives of those in our community.”

## Zoning, Environment Top Concerns in Bernalillo County

Given the number of special use permit requests that come before the Bernalillo County Planning Commission, it might be time for a change. “Our zoning ordinances are outdated and really need to be looked at,” says Linda Barbour, chair.

As the county has grown and evolved, conditions in many neighborhoods have changed. Much of the land in the county is zoned A-1 or A-2, which usually means a one- or two-acre minimum lot size. Smaller lots often require a special use permit.

Such is the case in the West Central/I-40 area, a community gateway with lot sizes of between five and 10 acres. Over the years, special use permits have created a haphazard land-use pattern that is neither consistent with long-term development goals nor aesthetically pleasing.

“We just received some funds and are hoping to do a plan along West Central, a main corridor that’s zoned A-1 and should be mixed use,” says Nano Chavez, the county’s planning and land use manager. “We’re hoping that this will eventually reduce the number of special use requests.”

Located in central New Mexico, Bernalillo County stretches from the East Mountain area, just north of the Sandia Mountains, to the Volcano Cliffs on the west mesa. At 1,166 square miles, which includes the City of Albuquerque, the county is the third smallest in the state. Of the roughly 640,000 people who call the county home, about 130,000 live in the county’s unincorporated area.

“We have the same set-up with mountains to the east that the Los Angeles Basin has,” says Barbour. “We do have smog. There are times when you really can’t be outside due to the air quality.”

As part of the effort to improve air quality, planning commissioner George Castillo serves on the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board. The planning commission, for its part, does consider air quality—in an attempt to safeguard public health—when reviewing special use permits. It occasionally will request modifications such as the use of vegetation, landscaping, and other erosion techniques to minimize dust pollution.

Given the semiarid conditions of the American Southwest, water is another concern in Bernalillo County. Its average annual rainfall is less than nine inches and only about 10 percent of that precipitation penetrates the soil surface and enters the aquifer.

“When it comes to major housing developments, water is a big issue,” says Barbour. Developers are required to demonstrate 70 years of water availability before receiving planning commission approval.

“Oftentimes people don’t fully understand how environmental issues affect development,” says Barbour. “That’s where education comes in and where we can make a difference. Our quality of life depends on it.”



# Avoid Hazards With Coordinated Planning

**W**e expect to live in a safe environment and we expect government to provide much of our safety. Whether it is residents, workers, or visitors, safety is a core concern.

Planning commissions have an especially vital role to play when it comes to protecting the community from flooding—the most common natural hazard in the United States. Commissioners can help community members visualize what happens if flood risk is not reduced. The commission guides the community to see the big picture, including mitigation plans and ordinances. Flooding in a town tends to drive away prospective businesses and residents and may even force existing residents and businesses to leave. Just consider the communities along the Gulf Coast hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Ike or flooded communities along the Mississippi River in 1993. If people walk away from their flooded properties, the community suffers a big loss, the neighborhood values decline, and local lenders are saddled with vacant damaged buildings.

This article helps commissioners understand two important tools for reducing risk. Many planning commissions have reviewed and approved their communities' floodplain management ordinances; however, those ordinances were patterned after the model ordinances that each state prepares and hands out with little thought given to changing the requirements of the models. The participation of planning commissions in mitigation plans gives them the opportunity to ensure that the floodplain management ordinance addresses local risk.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning are programs of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designed to reduce the effects of hazards on communities. Until recently the two programs operated separately, and connections were ad hoc. Coordination was sporadic. However, changes in mitigation planning requirements make it possible for a mitigation plan to improve floodplain management.

Richard Roths, AICP



## National Flood Insurance Program

The NFIP reduces losses due to flooding by requiring communities that wish to participate in the program to enforce ordinances or resolutions that meet minimum construction requirements to reduce the risk of flooding.

Standard regulations that communities adopt include:

- ▲ Reviewing the location of structures to determine whether they lie in or out of a floodplain
- ▲ Elevation requirements for residential or nonresidential structures in the floodplain
- ▲ Regulating fill in the floodplain
- ▲ Permit conditions for structures located in the floodplain that are substantially damaged or modified to such an extent that the value of the addition equals or exceeds 50 percent of the value of the existing structure—in this case, structures must be brought into compliance with current regulations

The payoff sought by the federal government is a reduction in disaster assistance and flood control costs.

Most communities adopt minimum state requirements of the model floodplain ordinances that meet federal and state laws; they do not take the next step of analyzing the flood risks within their communities and modifying floodplain management programs to make them more effective.

*Flooding is the leading natural hazard in the United States. In low-lying areas, the water does not need to rise especially high to create widespread damage.*



All photos by Richard Roths

## Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K) included a new FEMA-managed, but community-implemented, mitigation program. DMA2K requires communities to adopt an all-natural hazards mitigation plan to be eligible to receive post-disaster mitigation funds from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) or to receive funds from the new Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM). The two programs make millions of dollars available annually for reducing hazards, including flooding. To implement PDM and HMGP, FEMA included mitigation planning requirements in the Interim Final Rules for PDM. Today, most communities either have a mitigation plan or participate in a multijurisdictional mitigation plan. Locally adopted plans must be concurred with the state and be approved by FEMA. In addition to the normal processes for the comprehensive plan, a mitigation plan includes:

- ▲ Descriptions of all natural hazards that can affect the jurisdiction; profiles of affecting hazards and the locations they affect, the worst case possible, previous occurrences, and the probability that the hazard will occur in the future; and descriptions of the jurisdiction's hazard vulnerability
- ▲ Descriptions of mitigation goals to reduce or avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards; a strategy that identifies and analyzes a comprehensive range of specific mitigation actions and projects being considered to reduce the effects of each hazard, including an action plan that describes how the identified actions will be prioritized, implemented, and administered with a cost-benefit review of the proposed actions
- ▲ A process to incorporate the mitigation actions into other planning mechanisms

## Bridging the Gap

A 2007 revision of the DMA2K planning requirements added three new requirements for communities susceptible to flooding.

1. The plan must describe the vulnerability in terms of the types and numbers of repetitive loss properties located in the identified hazard areas.
2. The plan must describe the jurisdiction's participation in the NFIP.
3. The mitigation strategy must identify, analyze, and prioritize actions related to compliance with the NFIP.

These three requirements provide the link between the NFIP and mitigation planning.

## Repetitive Loss

Does the new or updated plan describe the vulnerability in terms of the types and number of repetitive loss properties located in the identified hazard areas?

Repetitive loss structures are buildings that were covered by a flood insurance policy and were damaged at least twice from a flood event during any 10-year period since 1978 with damage equaling at least \$1,000 for each event. Communities can receive the list of repetitive loss properties by contacting the FEMA regional office. Information on the list is subject to the Federal Privacy Act and can only be used by the community for planning purposes. Local communities cannot release the amount of individual damages or the name or location for individual claims. If the community includes a map showing the location of repetitive loss properties, the information cannot be specific enough for a reader to be able to identify the owners.

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**Using the Repetitive Loss List to Further Mitigation Efforts.** In addition to seeking funding to remove repetitive loss structures from harm's way or retrofitting the structures to reduce the hazard, a community can use the repetitive loss information to focus its mitigation efforts. By identifying locations on the repetitive loss list, the community can identify areas where damage may have occurred or that are susceptible to damage. This may include structures that do not meet the minimum claim requirements to be considered a repetitive loss property or where claims may not have been filed, but that are good candidates for mitigation. It may also include structures that have received federal assistance for flooding, but did not have a flood insurance policy at the time of damage. (Research has shown that individuals at great risk from flooding often have failed to purchase flood insurance despite the risk).

**Does the new or updated plan describe the jurisdiction's participation in the NFIP?** Communities are asked to describe their participation in the NFIP. The common answer is that "we have participated in the NFIP since . . . , and we need better maps." Very few communities use this opportunity to judge how they are doing in administering their program and what can be done to reduce the risk, which may include partnering with other mitigation efforts (e.g., mitigation grants and planning).

**Improving the Floodplain Management Program.** Communities can use the opportunity to discuss their participation in the NFIP to evaluate whether the program is reducing the flooding risk. This can be accomplished through an internal audit of the community floodplain management program. Information on a self-audit can be obtained from state floodplain management associations or can be requested from the state or FEMA as part of a Community Assistance Visit. Another possible way to audit how the floodplain management program is doing is to implement a version of the American Planning Association's Safe Growth Audit. (See the October 2009 issue of *Zoning Practice* (available at [www.planning.org/zoningpractice/2009/pdf/oct.pdf](http://www.planning.org/zoningpractice/2009/pdf/oct.pdf)).

When you are asked to describe your jurisdiction's participation in the NFIP, you should look at your participation with an eye toward whether your community is reducing the risk from flooding, or at least not making the risk worse. By including the evaluation in the mitigation plan and adding actions that will make the program stronger, you have added another tool to your effort to make your community a safer place to live and work. The more individuals who support the changes, the stronger the planning effort will be.

An audit of your community's floodplain management program might ask if your community:

- a. uses a floodplain management ordinance that meets the latest federal and state regulations
- b. has adequate staffing to enforce the NFIP regulations
- c. has trained staff to enforce the NFIP regulations and a training plan to stay up-to-date with any changes
- d. has staff that understands the connection between floodplain mapping, floodplain management, and the National Flood Insurance Program
- e. ensures that developers obtain Letters of Map Revision when there are changes in the floodway or floodplain
- f. requires elevations for all new construction in the floodplain
- g. inspects the floodplain periodically to ensure that no illegal development or filling is occurring



These could be first steps to providing a safer community for the residents to work and live in and a safer place for businesses to locate.

### Compliance with the NFIP

Most people think of compliance as the enforcement of regulations, but that is only part of it. Compliance can be an all-encompassing term when you look at what needs to be done, how it should be done, and how you actually do it. Compliance for floodplain management can also include:

- ▲ adopting new floodplain management regulations and updating or upgrading existing ones to provide a greater level of protection
- ▲ training staff or upgrading the training
- ▲ determining whether staffing is adequate
- ▲ determining whether residents and property owners understand the risk of living, working, or owning buildings in a floodplain
- ▲ educating local officials and the public about flood risk and how to avoid it
- ▲ determining whether maps need to be revised due to changes in development, including determining whether FEMA was notified about past changes and whether developers are submitting data for map revisions due to changes they have made in the floodplain
- ▲ determining whether stormwater management regulations need to be amended or added to the code of ordinances
- ▲ joining the Community Rating System, a program that your community can use to make your floodplain management program stronger, focus your flood mitigation efforts, and gain points toward reducing the cost of flood insurance for the residents of your community. (By having a program that is more restrictive than the NFIP regulations, communities can earn a reduction in the cost of flood insurance from five to 45 percent depending on the strength of the program)
- ▲ actually making the changes listed above, not just considering them





*Public engagement in the planning process for mitigation and floodplain management is a critical form of education about the issue as well as the most effective way to set the community's goals and standards for hazard mitigation.*



*It is not only the direct damage to property and the disruption to lives that is so devastating about floods, it is also that damaged property can discourage reinvestment and new development that every community needs.*

When communities adopt a mitigation plan or any other type of plan, they need to move past considering actions and ensure implementation. How? You need to identify and recruit a champion—someone respected by the community and its elected and appointed officials who is convinced that the proposed actions will make the community a safer place to live and work.

Now it is up to you. Mitigating flooding is not beyond your control. Make flood reduction your community's priority. Nobody wins when you fail to act.

*The author thanks Lawrence Frank for his assistance with this article.*

## Improve Floodplain Management Through Mitigation Planning

1. Does your floodplain ordinance address the community's risks? Is the minimum lowest floor elevation adequate, or have local floods exceeded the base flood elevation? Should you add to the minimum elevation? Is it enough to map floodplains that drain more than a square mile, or does your community need to adopt a stormwater management ordinance? Does your ordinance keep areas along channels as open space to provide adequate area to convey flooding and protect the natural environment and structures?
2. Does your staff understand the requirements of the NFIP and what needs to be done to enforce the requirements? FEMA, the NFIP State Coordinator's Office, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, and affiliated state chapters provide training.
3. Is there adequate staff to enforce your floodplain regulations? Be realistic about whether your staff is capable of this responsibility. You can request the state or FEMA to conduct a Community Assistance Visit. If they detect no major problems, you probably have adequate staff. If there are major problems, you may need help. Improving your staff's capabilities may help your community qualify as a Community Rating System community.
4. Do community leaders and residents understand flood hazards protection? Do they understand the actions needed to protect the community? Hold educational programs and insert flyers with water bills or community newsletters. Include this in school curricula. Flood and disaster experts can speak to the community.
5. Do residents know floodplain requirements? Use neighborhood meetings and flyers to explain rules that prohibit dumping grass clippings or extra dirt in the floodplain, building fences perpendicular to the floodway, and putting structures in the floodway. Make sure they know they must obtain permits for work in the floodplain.
6. Do areas now flood that never flooded before? When development occurred in the floodplain, did your community require developers to submit data to FEMA? Have impervious surfaces increased and caused additional drainage into waterways? It may be time to work with the state, FEMA, and other local agencies to revise flood maps.
7. The NFIP does not take care of all flooding. More than 20 percent of claims occur outside the regulated floodplain, yet most of the people outside of the floodplain don't buy insurance. Floodplain mapping is based on areas that drain a square mile or more in urban areas and 10 square miles or more in rural areas. This leaves large areas that don't have any regulation of potential flooding sources. Not all communities have adopted stormwater management regulations for these areas. If your community is one, consider adopting these regulations. If your stormwater management regulations aren't working properly, make changes.
8. Do lenders and property casualty insurance agents understand the National Flood Insurance Program? Arrange to have professional training workshops. (Required continuing education credits are usually available.)
9. Do the residents of your community understand the need for flood insurance? Use outreach education activities such as mailers, websites with links, and free publications.
10. Joining FEMA's CRS a compliance program can help improve compliance. CRS communities are held to a higher standard than other communities in the NFIP, but they are also rewarded for their actions when they earn enough credits to reduce flood insurance rates for their residents.

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**Plan Making Actions.** Jurisdictions of all sizes—from Asheville, North Carolina, to Yuma, Arizona, have recognized and legitimized urban agriculture as a land-use or community development strategy and included it in comprehensive, strategic, functional, and subarea plans. Urban agriculture (and community and regional food system planning more generally) is a component of city sustainability plans and regional plans. Plan making that includes urban agriculture is supported by community food assessments, comprehensive urban agriculture studies, and existing resource surveys.

**Standards, Policies, and Incentives.** Urban agriculture practice can be regulated and facilitated through zoning ordinances, nonzoning regulations (animal control ordinances), and land-use and land-disposition policies. Other policies and programs bearing on urban agriculture include abandoned-property management programs, brownfields cleanup programs, and local procurement policies.

**Influencing Development Project Outcomes.** Site development and design guidelines can be modified to incorporate urban agricultural land uses, including community gardens, urban orchards, and other public amenities. In some cases, cities are adopting separate development standards related to urban agriculture rather than amending existing standards.

**Influencing Public Investment Decisions.** The multiple benefits of urban agriculture prove their value in tough economic times. Local governments are encouraged to support municipal community garden programs, public demonstration farms, municipal composting programs, farmers markets, and urban agricultural job training programs. Small investments can pay surprising dividends.

Planning commissioners can play a critical decision-making role in facilitating urban agriculture and removing barriers to its practice while balancing public and private interests of their communities. They can promote an understanding of a newly emerging practice that helps grow healthy, sustainable places.

## Design Review

**A**s communities seek to define and promote their unique character, many have chosen design review as a tool to guide new development and preserve existing building stock. Communities approach design review in different ways using an array of tools.

### APAPanningBooks.com

#### Defensible Design Review

CD-ROM Training Package (APA and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2003)

#### Design Guidelines for Small Towns and Rural Areas

CD-ROM Training Package (APA/American Institute of Certified Planners, 2006)

#### Design Review

Mark Hinshaw  
PAS Report 454, 1995

#### Design Review

PAS Essential Info Packet #17, 2009

#### Design Review for Officials

CD-ROM Training Package (APA and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2010)

#### Design Standards That Shape Urban Form

CD-ROM Training Package (APA/American Institute of Certified Planners, 2007)

#### Mastering Density

CD-ROM Training Package (APA/American Institute of Certified Planners, 2008)

#### Maintaining Neighborhood Character

CD-ROM Training Package (APA and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2007)

### APA Publications

#### Findings of Fact

Alan Weinstein  
*The Commissioner*, Spring 2005

#### Site Plan Review: A Primer for Planning Commissioners

Les Pollock, FAICP, and Stuart Meck, FAICP  
*The Commissioner*, Summer 2004

#### Legal Issues with Site Plan Review

Stephen Sizemore, AICP  
*The Commissioner*, Summer 2004

#### Making Motions and Creating a Record

Eric Damian Kelly, FAICP  
*The Commissioner*, Winter 2008

#### Organizing for Better Design

John Hendrick  
*The Commissioner*, Summer 2009

#### Why Do Site Plan Review?

Les Pollock, FAICP  
*Zoning Practice*, November 2007



## Tuesdays at APA Lecture Series

### Tuesdays at APA—Chicago

#### Recycling in Chicago: Past, Present, and Future

May 17, 2011

Speaker: Carl Zimring, Roosevelt University

#### Implementing Sustainable Cities in a Harsh Environment: Some Lessons Learned from Masdar

June 21, 2011

Speakers: Meg Cederroth, AICP, Parsons Brinckerhoff, and Christopher Drew, Adrian Smith+Gordon Gill Architecture

#### NOAA's Digital Coast Products for Great Lakes Planners

July 19, 2011

Speakers: Heather Elmer, Ohio Department of Natural Resources; Heather Stirratt, NOAA National Ocean Service, Great Lakes Region; Chris Haynes, NOAA Coastal Services Center; Jim Schwab, AICP, American Planning Association

#### The Role of Planning in Stabilizing Distressed Properties

August 30, 2011

Speakers: Daniel Shapiro and Jessica Schramm, Thompson Coburn LLP

### Tuesdays at APA—DC

#### Re-Planning Crystal City As a 21st Century Urban Village

April 26, 2011

Speakers: Terry Holzheimer, FAICP, and Alex Iams, Arlington Economic Development

For those unable to attend in person, podcasts of most programs are added to the APA website approximately one week after the live event.

To read more about previous and upcoming programs, go to  
[www.planning.org/tuesdaysatapa](http://www.planning.org/tuesdaysatapa)



## *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places*

Kimberly Hodgson, Marcia Caton Campbell,  
and Martin Bailkey (PAS 563)

**T**his new report introduces readers to urban agriculture practice in North America today. The authors explore the relationship between public sector planning tools and techniques and the practice of urban agriculture. Case study research from nine U.S. and two Canadian cities shows how planners and local governments in high-land-cost and low-land-cost jurisdictions include urban agriculture as a strategy for creating healthy and resilient places. Ten lessons learned describe common approaches to planning for all types of urban agriculture. The detailed appendices illustrate how urban agriculture is addressed in municipal food charters, local comprehensive and sustainability plans, regional plans, zoning regulations, animal control ordinances, and other municipal policies across the United States and Canada. Available at [APAPanningBooks.com](http://APAPanningBooks.com).

## Balanced National Growth

**W**hile campaigning for president in 1960, John F. Kennedy was approached by governors of the Appalachian states to provide assistance to a historically poor region of the country. The governors convinced Kennedy of the need for a region-wide approach to economic development, transportation, and social services to eradicate the long-term poverty of underdevelopment.

Kennedy complied and in 1963 created the Appalachian Regional Commission; two years later Congress enacted legislation to buttress the commission and provide funding. They established a plan of 50 percent federal and 50 percent state funding.



Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration c.1930s

Regional planning is something of a rarity in the United States, but this regional commission held out hope for providing more balanced growth throughout the country. Over time, the commission focused its efforts on a highway system, health care facilities, vocational education, and sewage treatment. It also addressed clean water, timber development, and mining area restoration. West Virginia and Kentucky, in particular, had intensive coal mining, called strip mining.

The Appalachian Regional Commission has been successful in meeting many of its goals, but others suggest that it failed to establish true regional planning with too much emphasis given to highway building. Nonetheless, it remains an interesting attempt to address serious poverty and its attendant problems through regional cooperation.

For more information see *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (<http://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=28>).

**Marcia Caton Campbell** is the Milwaukee director of the Center for Resilient Cities ([www.resilientcities.org](http://www.resilientcities.org)), which works to create healthy, high-quality urban environments. She authored the article on pages 1 and 2.

**Karen Finucan Clarkson** is a public information consultant and journalist in Bethesda, Maryland. She wrote the article on pages 4 and 5.

**Dwight Merriam, FAICP**, is a planning attorney with Robinson & Cole, LLP, in Hartford, Connecticut. He is the author of *The Complete Guide to Zoning* and wrote the article on page 3.

**Rana Salzmänn** is the APA knowledge management associate. She wrote the resource finder on page 10.

**Richard Roths, AICP**, is principal planner for URS Corporation in Chicago and an instructor in hazard mitigation planning. He served on the APA delegation advising the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. He wrote the article on pages 6 through 10.

**Carolyn Torma**, the APA director of education and citizen engagement, wrote the history feature on this page.