

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2021

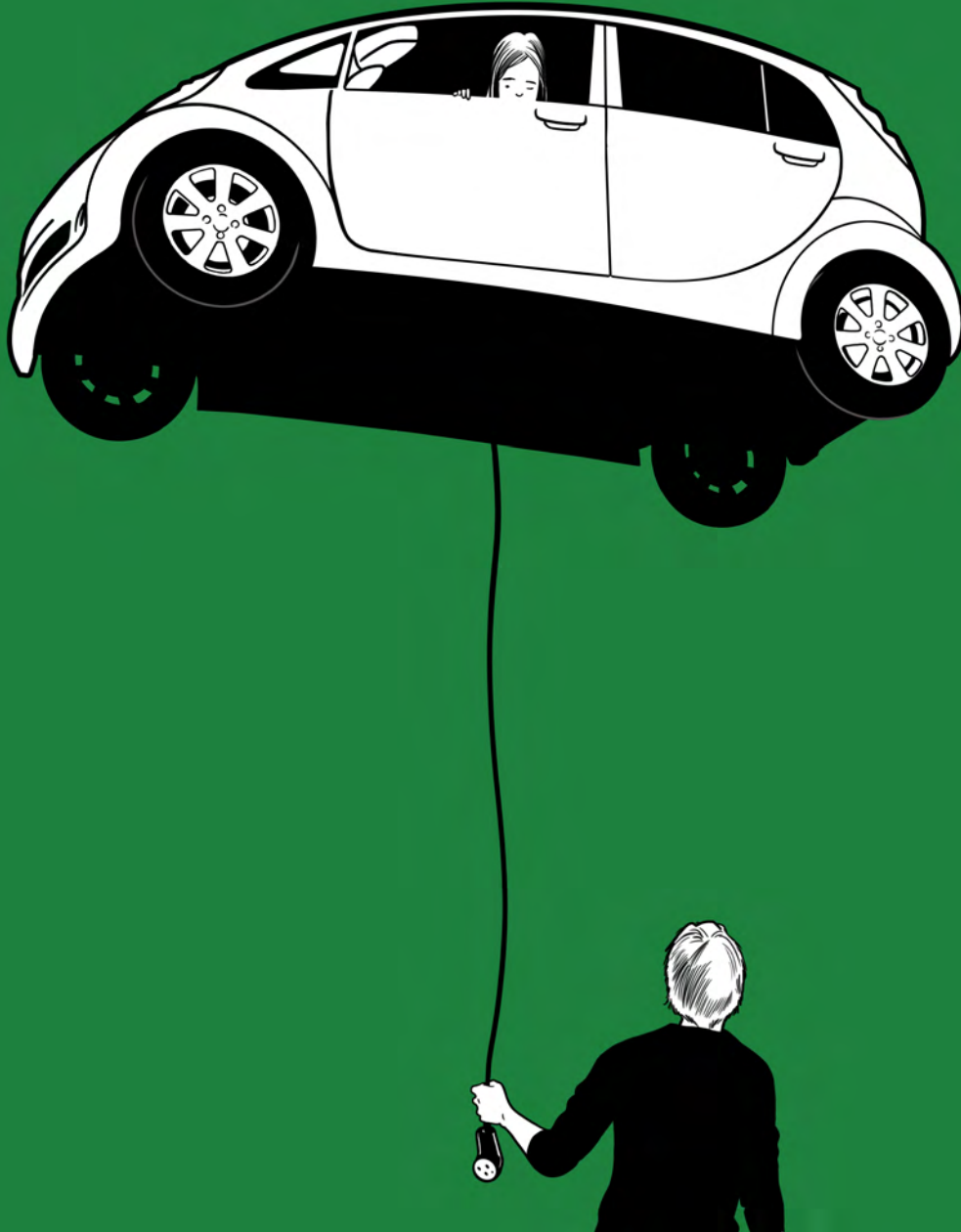
PLANNING

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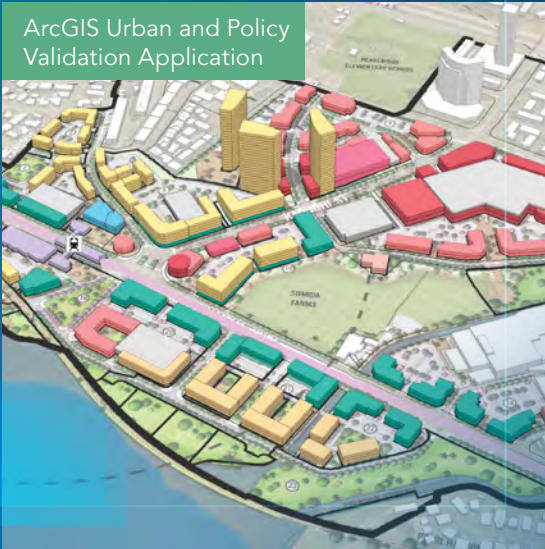
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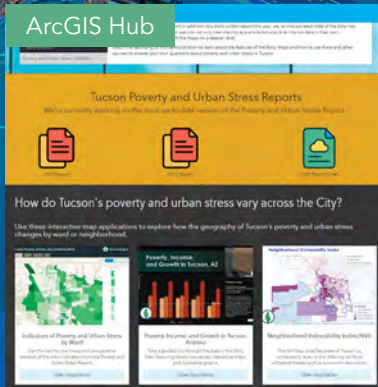
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Above: Urban agriculture in Chicago. Right: In San Bernardino, California, a hospital partner supports affordable housing.

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Alyia Gaskins

5 Ways to Partner with Hospitals on Housing, page 19

This public health strategist and urban planner has spent the past decade helping cities create healthier, more equitable communities. She believes it is critical for planners to seize this moment to bring more voices to the table in co-creating solutions to our most pressing challenges.



Rudy Espinoza

Support Street Vendors, page 34

In addition to his photography, this Los Angeleno works at Inclusive Action for the City, a nonprofit dedicated to uplifting low-income communities. "I love photographing street vendors because they play such a pivotal role in our local economies, create jobs, and are beautiful activators of our public spaces," he says.



Álvaro Huerta, PhD

Support Street Vendors, page 34

This planner and professor is uniquely qualified to write about the informal economy. Apart from his extensive research, his Mexican immigrant parents operated in the unregulated sphere, he worked summers as a teen day laborer, and he helped Latino gardeners organize in LA in the late 1990s.

PLANNING

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The American Planning Association will lead the way to equitable, thriving communities by creating unique insights, as well as innovative and practical approaches that enable the planning community to anticipate and successfully adapt to the needs of a rapidly changing world.

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FROM THE DESK OF AICP'S PRESIDENT

Leading by Example on the Road to Equity

PLANNERS UNDERSTAND and anticipate change. Although we could not have predicted a global pandemic or broad reawakening to racial injustice, we help communities adapt to demographic, social, and economic shifts. Thus, we are well-positioned to lead our communities through this period of recovery and transformation.

As I write this column, APA is coming off an incredible conference experience at NPC21, where we saw the themes of anticipating and adapting to change and righting past wrongs on issues of social equity woven throughout.

Just as communities and planners must adapt to an evolving world, so must the American Institute of Certified Planners. Six months into my tenure as AICP president, I am proud to share the ways AICP is changing to better meet the needs of today's planners and communities.

First, to ensure a diverse body of AICP-certified planners, we are removing barriers to certification and making the path to the credential fairer. That involves revisiting the AICP Certification Exam with an eye for equity, diversity, and inclusion based on our Fair Exam Goals, which state our commitment to ensuring the exam is as fair and bias-free as possible.

Prospective AICP members from underrepresented groups can also apply for financial assistance administered by APA Chapters and the AICP Certification Diversity Scholarships. Meanwhile, we are continuing to evaluate the certification process to make it more inclusive of the diversity of people and breadth of roles that make up the work we call "planning."

Secondly, to reflect how that work of planning is changing, AICP's professional



'Just as communities and planners must adapt to an evolving world, so must the American Institute of Certified Planners.'

—MITCHELL J. SILVER,
FAICP

development program is changing too. Beginning in January 2022, AICP Certification Maintenance will include two new topics (in addition to law and ethics) for AICP members. In recognition of the need for communities to deliberately counteract and heal decades of inequity and injustice in policies and practice, one of the new mandatory credits will be Equity.

Another will be a flexible topic-based credit to reflect emerging issues facing communities. This credit will launch by addressing the topic of Sustainability and Resilience, providing planners the knowledge you need to address issues like climate change mitigation

and adaptation, hazard resilience, and public health. These new credits will ensure that AICP members are prepared for the critical issues of our time. They also demonstrate our commitment to leadership in the profession.

Last but not least is the AICP Code of Ethics—another way AICP demonstrates leadership in the profession. When planners are faced with ethical questions, the AICP Code of Ethics has supported and inspired us in making the right decision. This year, we are updating the Code of Ethics with feedback from APA and AICP members. Those updates will include placing an even greater emphasis on equity, which will give AICP-certified planners the backing to make equitable decisions and recommendations for your projects and communities.

I am proud to be serving as AICP president as we move from conversation to action and begin to "walk the walk."

Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, is AICP president.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency prioritized youth engagement while working on the Bayview area's transportation plan. From left to right: Hunters Point Family staffer Tayilar Henderson and Girls2000 program participants Heaven Lee Wyatt, Shanel Lowe, and Faith Allen.

ARIEL WARD





INTERSECTIONS

WHERE PLANNING AND THE WORLD MEET

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THE PROFESSION

Trust and Transparency Drive Award-Winning Plans

Recipients of 2021's National Planning Awards prioritize equity to build and strengthen community relationships. By Brenna Donegan

WHILE PUBLIC TRUST in the federal government has remained at near-historic lows for years, it seems to be growing at the local level, according to Pew Research Center.

That positive relationship is a vital part of building more inclusive communities. It's also one planners are particularly suited to facilitate, as four projects recognized by this year's APA National Planning Awards are proving. From prioritizing marginalized groups in Virginia to providing targeted pandemic assistance in Nevada, these planning departments are putting residents in control of crucial decision making—and boosting local trust in the process.

Building new relationships

A long history of racist policies has left many of Richmond, Virginia's low-income residents of color distrustful of the planning process. The unanimously adopted *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth*, the recipient of this year's Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan, aims to turn that dynamic around.

In 2017, Richmond's Department of Planning & Development Review (PDR) began a comprehensive planning process to create a forward-looking, citywide master plan, but planners soon realized they were falling short of their engagement goals with Latinx, Black, and low-income residents. The department paused other efforts in order to create a targeted community engagement team, trained and paid by the city to translate technical planning jargon into more everyday language and make the process more accessible. The resulting engagement helped identify six "Big Moves" to guide planning efforts and budgeting over the next five years, including expanding housing opportunities, reforming zoning, and making park access more equitable.

By adjusting course midway through the process, the city reached community voices that had gone unheard for years.

"The *Richmond 300* planning process was centered around elevating marginalized and under-represented people—people like me," says a lifelong Richmond

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Get all the details on each of this year's APA National Planning Award winners.

EXPLORE

planning.org/awards/2021

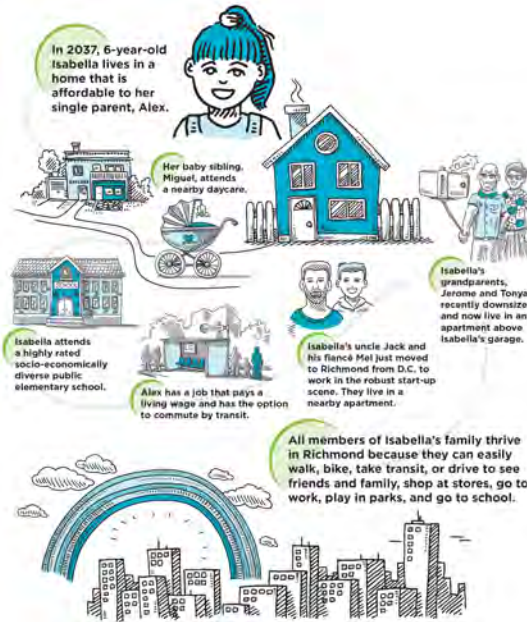
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resident who points to past master plans as contributors to generational displacement, destruction, and trauma. “I believe the adoption of this plan is the first step to undoing the legacy of redlining.”

On the other side of the country, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency won APA’s award for Advancing Diversity and Social Change in Honor of Paul Davidoff for a similar dedication to reaching underrepresented communities through the *Bayview Community Based Transportation Plan* (Bayview CBTP). To ensure that trusted community partners were not tokenized during the process, planners worked directly with staff from each organization at every step of public outreach. Their input led to recommendations like offering interpreters, full meals, and childcare at all



Richmond, Virginia, uses the above illustration to provide an accessible explanation of the new comprehensive plan’s goals.

stand-alone workshops. Innovative engagement techniques also included a Youth Transportation Summit, a documentary film developed by Bayview youth, and community recalibration of a GIS-based Equity Index tool.

Through these efforts, Bayview CBTP amplified the

community’s voice with policy recommendations that extend beyond transportation challenges to tackle everything from safety to workforce development, fare enforcement, and anti-displacement strategies. Local planners hope it’s only the start.

“The value of planning is people,” says project planner and engineer Ariel Ward. “It is building relationships with people. It is serving people. I think at the heart of any good planning effort should be people.”

Maintaining trust

Good planning doesn’t stop with establishing strong partnerships—those relationships need to be maintained through years of transparency and accountability. In Henderson, Nevada, winner of APA’s Resilience & Sustainability Award, long-standing community relationships were put to the test—and strengthened—during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the help of previous plans, including a 2016 National Planning Award winner for public outreach, the city was able to swiftly mobilize a response team to support residents in the early days of the pandemic and develop a regionwide recovery action plan, *Together, We Can: A Primer for Recovery*.

With COVID-safe, innovative approaches like a grassroots ambassador program, a mobile food pantry, and a dedicated hotline, planners united with residents, community leaders, and elected officials to share critical information and ensure resources were distributed quickly and equitably to the



Henderson, Nevada, partnered with local nonprofits during the pandemic to provide home grocery deliveries to elderly residents sheltering in place.

region's most vulnerable people and first responders.

Together, We Can outlines staggered action items that responded to the immediate crisis with an eye toward a sustainable economic recovery in the long-term. Henderson officials say they are proud of the city's track record of keeping COVID infection rates low and testing and vaccination rates high over the past year—and think that having built trust with the community was a key factor.

Leveraging positive relationships with community stakeholders was also key to redefining public space in Austin, Texas, through *Our Parks, Our Future*, the winner of this year's Planning Excellence Award.

Every 10 years, Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) creates a long-range plan to guide growth of the park system. And while the city already boasts a strong history of civic participation, the department

and planning firm WRT upped that this time around by prioritizing engagement with under-represented communities of color, non-English speakers, and residents with disabilities.

Building upon tried-and-true engagement techniques like community workshops, pop-up events, surveys, and focus groups, they also worked with a community advisory committee and a technical advisory group to elevate those voices and meet their needs.

With clear ties to other city-wide initiatives like the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan* and an ESRI StoryMap to keep residents up to date on implementation, *Our Parks, Our Future* aims to empower residents by helping them become park stewards—and demonstrates an overall commitment to environmental justice and equitable park access.

Brenna Donegan is APA's communications associate.



The Austin, Texas, planning team conducted this spatial analysis of area parks and recreational facilities to identify opportunities for increased investment.

THE PROFESSION MORE APA AWARD WINNERS

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E. Kontokosta, Vincent J.
Reina, Bartosz Bonczak

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HOUSING

States Tackle Voucher Discrimination

As the Biden administration calls for program expansion, renters, landlords, and local leaders face its flaws. By Kristian Hernández

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN wants to expand Section 8 housing assistance to more than 200,000 new families. The administration has proposed an additional \$5.4 billion in hopes that vouchers will help low-income people at risk of homelessness because of the pandemic.



The Housing Choice Voucher Program offers rental assistance to more than 2 million households, but under federal law, landlords can reject tenants enrolled in the program.

Nationwide, more than 2.2 million households receive federal subsidies through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Established in 1974 under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act, the program is meant to fill the gap between what families can afford to pay and local rent prices. But under federal law, landlords are free to reject tenants with vouchers.

An increasing number of states and cities are stepping in. More than a dozen have enacted so-called source-of-income laws that bar landlords from rejecting

prospective tenants because they plan to use housing aid to pay the rent, while more than a hundred localities have similar laws.

But not all are moving in the same direction. An ongoing battle in Texas illuminates the issues.

Housing discrimination

Property owners and tenants' rights advocates testified in May before the Texas House Urban Affairs Committee on a proposed repeal of a 2015 state law barring source-of-income ordinances.

Christina Rosales, deputy director at rental research and advocacy organization Texas Houser, says landlords often discriminate against voucher holders, who are mainly women of color, by setting rent above the fair market values set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or refusing to accept vouchers.

"Saying they don't accept vouchers is all a proxy for race," Rosales says. Data from HUD shows that in 2017, 48 percent of voucher holders were Black and 17 percent were Latino or Hispanic. Many advocates argue that landlords who reject voucher holders are discriminating based on race and ethnicity, illegal under federal fair housing laws.

Demetria McCain, president of the Dallas-based Inclusive Communities Project, says repealing the Texas legislation

is vital. "[The law] takes away the ability for local government to deal with fair housing issues and the housing crisis, which has only gotten worse during the pandemic," she says.

An outdated system?

The effort faces stiff resistance from the Texas Apartment Association, which played a crucial role in getting the state preemption law introduced and passed.

Ian Mattingly, director of the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas, says property owners often wait days or weeks for a housing authority inspector, costing them thousands every year because a unit is empty while it is being approved for occupancy. He describes himself as an affordable housing advocate—he helps manage 400 rental units reserved for voucher holders—but opposes forcing landlords to take Section 8 tenants.

"Advocates on the other side have a really simple message, it's about race because most people who have vouchers happen to be people of color. And it's a very compelling message, particularly at this moment. It's certainly one that resonates with me," he says.

"But it's important to note that this is a federal program that is 40 years old [and] that simply was built for a different market that doesn't exist anymore," Mattingly adds. "The best solutions are the ones that are grounded in reality—not in good feelings and ambitions."

Kristian Hernández is a staff writer for Stateline (pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline). This story was reprinted with permission from Stateline, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts.



Shining a light on large-scale solar projects

Solar power has never been more affordable or popular. APA and International City/County Management Association (ICMA) have partnered on Solar@Scale, a new U.S. Department of Energy-funded project to help cities, counties, and special districts understand and realize the potential benefits of large-scale solar development.

Solar@Scale will bring you the latest strategies and updates on planning and zoning for community- and utility-scale solar projects. Don't miss our upcoming guidebook and training opportunities. Sign up now at the link below!

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Register now for "Fostering Large-Scale Solar Development Through Local Government" on October 2, 2021, at ICMA's annual meeting. Find more info at <https://bit.ly/3yvVuPr>



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These podcasts take a hyperlocal look at some of our most pressing global issues.



Doorsteps

features host
Cody Price

from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency in conversation with a variety of nonprofits, experts, and residents on the same topic: Ohio's state of housing, from the rural to urban and everything in between.



Cities@Tufts Lectures, a limited series

from Tufts University and Shareable.net, spotlights community change through "cutting-edge thinkers and doers pushing the envelope for more just and sustainable cities."



Street Speaks, a new podcast from the

Coalition on Homelessness and its long-running publication the *Street Sheet*, aims to tackle poverty in San Francisco by talking to the experts: the people experiencing it.



NOW STREAMING

Save the Soil, Save the World

Kiss the Ground offers concrete ways to combat climate change through better soil management. Watch it now on Netflix.

DESPITE ITS HUMBLE position, the planet's thin layer of arable topsoil is essential to life. It's both incredibly important and complex, two themes explored in *Kiss the Ground*, a recent documentary about regenerative agriculture from directors Rebecca Harrell Tickell and Josh Tickell.

The main point, delivered with charm and a calm folksiness by Woody Harrelson, is simple: Soil is alive. Every handful of healthy dirt contains more microorganisms than there are humans on the planet. Importantly, all these magical little critters are hard at work around the clock, exchanging water and nutrients, breaking down organic matter, feeding plants, and sequestering carbon.

But when abused—through mechanized plowing and the application of chemical fertilizer and pesticides—the soil dies.

This process, known as desertification, has accelerated dramatically in recent years, just when we most need to be keeping our excess carbon in the ground.

The genius of this film and the science behind it lies in making the connection between healthy, sustainable farming and the potential to prevent (and even reverse) climate change. By redefining our role in the system as stewards of the soil, we can discover ways to work with nature, not against it.

Better yet, it shows a way forward through examples at all scales, including no-till farming techniques and even urban composting—each a beacon of hope that we can make actual on-the-ground progress.

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

VIEWPOINT

Universal Design Is Essential to Planning Education

OF THE STAGGERING one in four people who will experience a disability during their lifetimes, a large portion will have limited mobility. But less than one percent of all housing in the U.S. is readily accessible to people who use wheelchairs. That's proof that all the inclusionary zoning, progressive housing policies, and equitable planning strategies of the past half century have largely failed people with disabilities.

We're entering a new redesign and rebuild mode amid decades of seismic change. Universal design, or design usable by everyone to the greatest extent possible without adaptation or specialization, can be a vital planning tool in meeting those demands. It's one of the most sustainable, flexible, durable, and economical ways to create inclusive spaces—but it has yet to be fully embraced by the design community.

As the U.S. dedicates billions in funding to new infrastructure, these principles will be crucial in building a more inclusive and equitable approach. For planners and policymakers, incorporating universal design into formal and continuing education at the university and professional certification levels is the first step to making that happen.

Most urban designers are familiar with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Some government agencies even have a prequalification process to train planners, architects, and engineers to remove barriers to produce compliance. But ADA compliance alone doesn't achieve what universal design does; it's mired in bare minimums, measurements, and a lawsuit avoidance mentality. Too often, it results in last-minute "fixes" more aimed at checking off a list than improving quality of life for people of



'Incorporating this practice and its principles into formal education would empower planners to lead the charge in creating access for all with creativity and innovation, not ignorance and anxiety.'

—STEVE WRIGHT

all abilities. Good, lasting policy has never been crafted as an afterthought.

Universal design, on the other hand, holistically incorporates livable, comfortable, and durable standards into the design process from day one. It produces spaces that are welcoming to people of all ages and abilities, including those with mobility, hearing, visual, and cognitive disabilities. By promoting housing with basic access features, access to employment that provides economic freedom, and suitable means to move from one place to another, universal design ensures that people with disabilities are not excluded, segregated, or set up to fail by our built environment.

Incorporating this practice and its principles into formal education would empower planners to lead the charge in creating access for all with creativity and innovation, not ignorance and anxiety. Mid-career leaders in the field must be given hands-on learning that demonstrates the barriers that remain, as well as the ways that universal design can remove those barriers in an expedient and cost-effective way. Importantly, both groups should be taught by experts in accessibility, including people with mobility, visual, hearing, and cognitive disabilities.

Some of the strongest forces on earth—economics, policy, politics, and a pandemic—are changing the way we plan. By giving planners a formal foundation in universal design, we can ensure that the changes to come rise organically from the diverse needs of all end users.

Steve Wright is a design marketing storyteller with 40 years of experience in universal design. He lives in Miami with wife Heidi Johnson-Wright, who uses a wheelchair for mobility and is an Americans with Disabilities Act expert. Follow him on Twitter @stevewright64 and via his blog urbantravelandaccessibility.com.

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.

Marshall Mitchell transplants kale inside a hoop house at Urban Growers Collective in the South Chicago neighborhood. Allowing temporary or small structure buildings is crucial for efficient use of farming spaces.

2020/ARMANDO SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TCA





TOOLS FOR THE TRADE

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LEGAL LESSONS

ZONING SOLUTIONS TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY

As food insecurity and economic uncertainty persist, municipalities can help increase food access with a few tweaks to local land-use law. *By Gina Hervey*

SINCE THE PANDEMIC began, 10 percent of families with children under five have reported insufficient food access. And according to the USDA's most recent food access report, about 12 percent of the U.S. population lived in a food desert as of 2017.

Food security is a daily problem across the U.S.—particularly for low-income households and people of color—impacting their health, quality of life, and the communities around them.

Fortunately, increasing food security is a highly interdisciplinary endeavor, and local land-use laws can play a key role. Zoning ordinances can allow and incentivize a range of food sources in or near food deserts by using flexible food purveyor definitions and incentivizing pop-up eating facilities and food trucks.

But one of the most significant ways planners can advance food security for their communities is by promoting local food production. With that in mind, here are four zoning and

land-use strategies that planners can employ to improve food access and security within the communities they serve:

1. USE EXPLICIT AGRICULTURAL TERMS IN YOUR ZONING CODE TO PERMIT FOOD PRODUCTION.

Many zoning codes speak generally of gardening or urban agriculture. However, providing explicit and detailed definitions of terms, particularly for agriculture processes, helps clarify what is permitted.

This level of specificity can help potential urban farmers engage in food production and can encourage established farmers to take advantage of more farming-friendly zoning allowances. Ultimately, this increases fresh, local, and affordable food production and access.

The Austin, Texas, code of ordinances has a section specifically defining agricultural uses, including where processes like aquaponic, horticulture, and indoor crop production are permitted, and what is meant by

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each term. The national Healthy Food Project created a draft guide for municipalities to assist in articulating agricultural terminology for zoning codes.

2. ALLOW TEMPORARY AND SMALL STRUCTURE BUILDINGS FOR AGRICULTURE.

Allowing greenhouses, hoop houses, and other smaller structures intended for urban and semiurban farming and small animal husbandry is crucial for the efficient use of farming spaces. Without flexible provisions for such structures, landowners and their farming tenants or partners are unable to accommodate various, higher-yielding crops or maintain appropriate livestock on their urban land without risking code violations.

Philadelphia's zoning specifically allows agricultural structures of varying sizes depending on the lot size. It also waves all permitting requirements for temporary structures that will be up for 180 days or less. This removes obstacles for farmers who may want temporary greenhouses for winter crops or small hoop houses during frost season.

3. ALLOW THE ON-SITE SALE OF PRODUCE. On-site sale of produce significantly improves food access for consumers and helps food producers access markets without costly transportation and “middlemen” fees. While allowing farming in more zones is key, it is significantly more beneficial to also permit the sale and distribution of that farmed food on-site.

Kansas City's zoning code allows the direct sale or donation of “whole, uncut fresh food and/or horticultural products grown in home gardens,

community gardens, and land managed under a community supported agriculture model.” Clarifying zoning codes regarding food sales significantly

decreases uncertainty and concern among food producers about violating zoning laws and encourages more urban agriculture and food-secure communities.

4. SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE COALITIONS.

Taking the above steps enables community groups to succeed in their efforts to mitigate the negative health impacts of food deserts. But above

all else, effective amendments to zoning requires listening to the community.

Oakland, California, models this type of engagement through its thriving Food Policy Council, a 21-member body that effectively voices food-access concerns to city staff and elected officials. The council, which includes key nonprofit leaders, community members, and food-sector professionals, meets 10 times a year to discuss, advocate, or protest proposed legislation regarding food access and urban farming to ensure the needs of food-vulnerable community members remain at the forefront of the zoning and policy-setting process.

By better understanding a community's unique concerns regarding limits on their ability to grow, sell, and access fresh food, municipal planners can prioritize zoning reform according to those specific needs—and promote greater food equity nationwide.

While allowing farming in more zones is key, it is significantly more beneficial to also permit the sale and distribution of that farmed food on site.

Gina Hervey is a second-year law student at Pace Law School and research assistant in the Land Use Law Center. This article was reprinted with the permission of GreenLaw: Blog of the Pace Law School Environmental Programs.

JAPA TAKEAWAY

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Accessible public engagement tools are key to ensuring the built environment meets the needs of community members with dementia and other disabilities. *By Samantha Biglieri, PhD*

MORE THAN 50 million people worldwide are living with dementia—a number that is set to nearly double every 20 years, says Alzheimer’s Disease International.

People living with dementia (PLWD), like other individuals with disabilities, have the right to be included in the communities in which they live. Unfortunately, the stigma of dementia, often perpetuated by misconceptions of “capacity” or “losing oneself,” causes PLWD to be thought of as passive care recipients rather than citizens with voices to be heard, including in public participation in planning. The result is exclusionary built environments and community programming.

Despite the growing number of municipally led age- and dementia-friendly city policies put forward in recent years, calls for accessible engagement of PLWD have not been

heeded in planning research. In my recent article, “The Right to (Re)Shape the City: Examining the Accessibility of a Public Engagement Tool for People Living with Dementia” in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, I explore a fundamental unanswered question in planning process research: Are the public engagement tools used by planners accessible to all?

In studying barriers and facilitators to participation for PLWD during open houses, I identified several easy, low-cost accommodations practicing planners can make to better engage commonly excluded groups like PLWD.

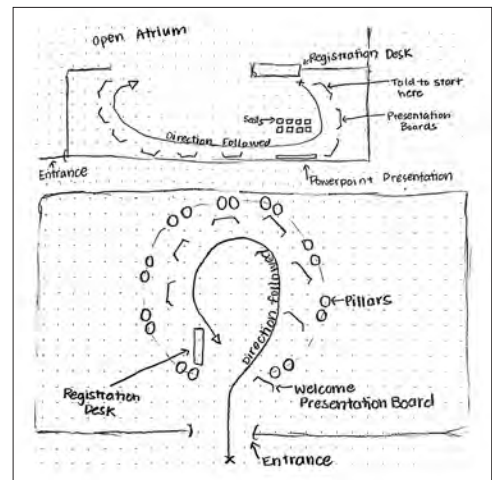
Breaking it down

According to the World Health Organization, dementia is an umbrella term describing progressive symptoms affecting short- and long- term memory and behavior that can affect

spatial navigation, judgment, and visual perception. Two-thirds of PLWD live in their own homes in the community, and their outdoor activity is likely to decrease and be limited to familiar areas as their condition advances (a.k.a. the “shrinking world” effect).

Research shows that PLWD experience built environments differently than older adults in terms of wayfinding, being overwhelmed by noise and activity, and having impaired depth perception and issues with judgment. This evidence also indicates that PLWD’s experiences during the planning process might be different.

I chose to focus on the open house format in my research because it is a commonly used public engagement tool and—as it turns out—is in many ways already well suited to the accessibility needs of PLWD through peripheral, circular layouts allowing participants to learn at their own pace and interact one-on-one with practitioners. However, the following easily implementable recommendations (organized into three categories) are applicable to a broader set of public engagement mechanisms within a planner’s toolbox, including design charrettes and town halls, among others.





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COMMUNICATION. First and foremost, the approach matters. While you likely have multiple demands on your time during an outreach event, it's important to give PLWD your full attention and to be aware of your body language (they prefer open stances). Be patient and respectful by allowing PLWD space and time to understand information at their own pace. Do not prompt them or otherwise make them feel rushed. After a period of silent reflection, if a person still seems to be having difficulty comprehending, ask whether they want something explained or volunteer a digestible piece of information about visual displays. Be sure to avoid jargon.

PHYSICAL/SENSORY ENVIRONMENT.

Room setups, visual aids, and sensory environments can significantly impact PLWD. Visually busy and noisy environments are uncomfortable and distracting, so try to seek spaces that lower the potential amount of noise (e.g., carpeted floors, non-cavernous spaces). Ensure the space is evenly and well lit (daylight is preferable), with no reflections on the ground.

Event sites should be easy to locate and navigate, with large-format signage with arrows and photographs of the places you are indicating. Within a room, create signs that direct participants to boards, seating areas, commenting areas, registration tables, and washrooms. Set up presentation boards in a peripheral circular formation, clearly indicate the order and where to start, and make it clear how they relate from one to the next.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. When it comes to information sharing, less is often more for PLWD. Too much

extraneous information can lead to confusion, disorientation, and disengagement. Thus, all handouts, feedback mechanisms, and presentations should be clearly and concisely written and, ideally, presented visually with short sentences, plain language, bullet points, large font, and labeled color graphics and photographs. It is also helpful to PLWD to restate the purpose of the event and the feedback desired in all materials. To remove the burden of having to memorize and recall abstract thoughts and concepts, which can be challenging for PLWD, provide options to capture participant feedback “in the moment,” such as real-time recording, sticky notes, or emoji stickers to comment directly on materials.

Achieving equitable participation

Planning with PLWD and those in the disability community is attainable—and necessary. By ensuring public engagement tools are accessible to everyone,

planners can support community members with disabilities like dementia in actualizing their innate citizenship rights. Equitable participation is a key step in the ongoing fight for accommodation, support, and equitable participation in community and civic life. By adopting these techniques, continu-

ing this type of research, and enabling PLWD to impact decision-making in communities, the planning profession can help dismantle the stigma associated with dementia.

JAPA

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Samantha Biglieri is an assistant professor in the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada, and is a practicing planner. She is the author of “The Right to (Re)Shape the City: Examining the Accessibility of a Public Engagement Tool for People Living with Dementia” (February 2021), originally published in JAPA.



A coalition convened by Dignity Health, now CommonSpirit, inspired a \$20 million grant that resulted in 180 new affordable housing units in San Bernardino, California.

HOW-TO

5 WAYS TO PARTNER WITH HOSPITALS ON HOUSING

Planners can engage and leverage the assets of these anchor institutions to build more equitable communities. *By Alyia Gaskins*

COMMUNITIES FACED unprecedented challenges in 2020, including housing insecurity, which impacted BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and people of color) communities hardest. As the U.S. enters recovery, planners can advance development and investment goals to make our communities more equitable. With city budgets stretched thin, leveraging community investment from anchor institutions like health systems will be crucial to meeting equitable affordable housing goals. Here's how to start.

1 FOCUS ON RACIAL JUSTICE AND BLACK COMMUNITIES. Hospital investments in housing expand economic and social mobility and improve resident health outcomes most when they focus on equity. Given the harm inflicted on Black

communities by the banking industry and housing policies like redlining, it is particularly important to zero in on how to redress these injustices through equitable development practices. Otherwise, investments risk exacerbating gentrification pressures and displacing lower-income residents.

2 LEVERAGE COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENTS (CHNAS). Nonprofit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA every three years, which can give planners a better understanding of local housing needs, including health hot spots and locations where populations are underserved by current housing options. This data can help planners make the case for where hospital investments might have the greatest impact on equitable development goals and community health needs.

3 CO-CREATE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITH RESIDENTS.

To more effectively identify investment opportunities, listen to people typically absent from the planning process. Meet community members where they are and ask how they would invest available resources. When communities clearly articulate their needs and priorities, planners and developers can translate them into investable projects.

4 ENGAGE HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS AS PARTNERS, CONVENERS, AND INVESTORS.

Planners can bring community plans and data to the table, helping to focus health institution investment and increase its scale and potential impact. Planners can also work with hospitals to convene and forge partnerships with other investors like banks, local employers, foundations, and individuals who might already be interested in investing in different types of affordable housing, such as family, workforce, or senior housing.

5 IDENTIFY AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AGENDA TO SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS.

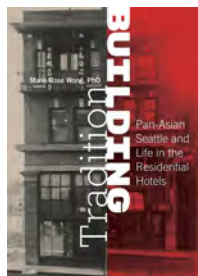
Changes in policies and practices, funding flows, platforms, narratives, and relationships are often needed to facilitate community investment. Planners can partner with health system leaders to identify opportunities to accelerate investment in the preservation and creation of affordable housing through advocacy and policy changes. Examples include inclusionary zoning policies, housing trust funds, and density incentives. Health institutions can also leverage their influence to bring in new resources for equitable development.

Alyia Gaskins is a senior program officer at the Melville Charitable Trust and the author of "Partnering with Health Systems on Affordable Housing Investments," the PAS Memo from which this article is adapted.

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LESSONS FROM AMERICA'S CHINATOWNS

The complex histories of these rich cultural districts offer present-day insights on affordable housing. *By Mary Hammon*



Building Tradition: Pan-Asian Seattle and Life in the Residential Hotels

By Marie Rose Wong (Seattle University), 2018, Chin Music Press, 320 pp., \$16.95 paper

AERICAN CHINATOWNS reflect “a complex and intertwined history of both the economic opportunities that brought thousands of Chinese people to the U.S. beginning in 1850 and a series of prejudicial regulations enacted at all levels of government,” says Dr. Marie Rose Wong, professor emerita at the Institute of Public Service at Seattle University.

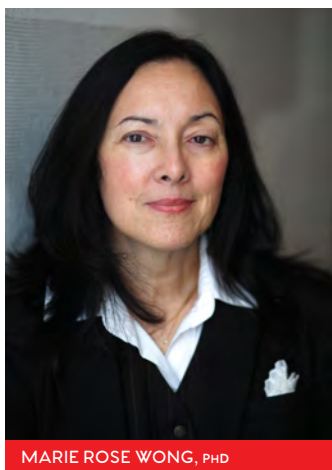
Her research on American Chinatowns reveals how anti-Chinese policies sought to limit immigration, prohibit naturalization, prevent land ownership, and control where immigrants could live. Her book *Building Tradition: Pan-Asian Seattle and Life in the Residential Hotels* also digs into the affordable housing solution that Seattle’s Chinatown residents embraced: single room occupancy (SRO) hotels.

Wong recently sat down with *Planning* to discuss the modern-day lessons of their history. The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

PLANNING: What role did SROs play in early American Chinatowns?

WONG: The arrival and settlement of immigrant and transient laborer communities occurred in tandem with SRO residential hotel construction as a unique American building type. Primarily constructed between 1880 and 1930, they provided an affordably priced housing alternative in U.S. city centers. They also offered some Asian-American managers a place to raise their families while earning a living.

Seattle’s Chinese-American community believed that the SRO building was a prototype that all American Chinatowns could emulate. By 1920, 10 SRO buildings in the heart of Seattle’s Chinatown were owned by Chinese-American licensed corporations, comprising 869 units of affordable housing.



PLANNING: What happened to all that affordable housing?

WONG: With the passage of the Ozark Hotel Ordinance in 1970, which called for building owners to update the residential building and fire codes for SROs, many were shuttered. At the final count,

the ordinance led to 5,072 rooms of downtown hotel housing being lost, with 3,000 of those units in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District alone.

PLANNING: What can planners learn from that history?

WONG: Seattle’s current affordable housing crisis is one that can, in great part, be traced to the city’s actions to update the codes for SROs in the early 1970s. While done with good inten-

tions for safety and building security, the multiple dwelling housing code was implemented too quickly and without adequate research on the long-term consequences. Nor did the program include safeguards, mitigation measures, or financial assistance to building owners. Without that help, SROs rapidly closed.

The high social cost to the city’s urban poor resulted in permanent displacement that was directly associated with quick building and land-use decisions—a problem that is unfortunately still being practiced by city officials and elected leaders. Seattle’s case is a reminder that the cultural character of every neighborhood must be integral in community redevelopment analysis and action plans.

Mary Hammon is Planning’s associate editor.

Q&A



Implementing City Sustainability: Overcoming Administrative Silos to Achieve Functional Collective Action

Rachel M. Krause (*University of Kansas*) and Christopher V. Hawkins (*University of Central Florida*), 2021, Temple University Press, 269 pp.; \$34.95 (digital or print), \$97.84 cloth

“WITHOUT SOMEONE KEEPING a spotlight on sustainability, there is a significant risk it will fall by the wayside.” That’s the authors’ conclusion from a wide-ranging survey of U.S. cities with over 20,000 people, augmented by detailed analyses of sustainability efforts in Fort Collins, Colorado; Kansas City, Missouri; Orlando, Florida; Providence, Rhode Island; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Oakland, California; El Paso, Texas; and Gainesville, Florida.

The survey found that “less than half of midsize to large cities in the United States have staff dedicated to their sustainability efforts.” The most popular sustainability-related activities reported include sidewalks, mixed-use development, open space preservation, and local farmers markets. The least popular were tax credits for LEED-certified commercial buildings, renewable-energy incentives, and encouraging reduced use of plastic bags.

The authors examine experiences with four different

governmental approaches to sustainability: lead agency consolidation (Fort Collins), lead agency coordination (Orlando and Kansas City), relationships and bargaining (Ann Arbor, Providence, and Oakland), and decentralized networks (Gainesville and El Paso). The difficulty everywhere seems to be that no one is quite sure which box to put sustainability in. “Between 2010 and 2015, the administrative location of the sustainability headquarters unit moved in 16 percent of U.S. cities but reveal no pattern or coalescence around a single best-practice type.”

Perhaps surprisingly, the authors do not endorse a single best approach to local sustainability. At a minimum, they prefer a “clear headquarters unit having sufficient influence to ... obtain cooperation from other city departments.” In their view, the key to success is “a designated and influential champion—whether an individual or entire unit.”

The least likely way to succeed? The attitude that “at some point we’ll work ourselves out of a job because sustainability will be a core part of every department’s mission.”

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

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ENERGY SYSTEMS

Charging Ahead

By DANIEL C. VOCK

VW
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MANUFACTURER

With 3.5 million electric cars expected in the U.S. in less than 10 years, charging infrastructure has to ramp up quickly.

BRYAN DERBALLA/
THE NEW YORK TIMES



WHEN SHANA BONSTIN FIRST BOUGHT AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE, A VOLKSWAGEN EGOLF, IN 2017, she didn't realize how few available chargers there actually were. Bonstin, the deputy director of community planning in Los Angeles, knew that many new developments in the city now included charging infrastructure. Plus, the city itself was installing electric vehicle (EV) chargers at city hall, so she should have been able to refuel her car while at work.

But it turned out that city hall did not initially have enough chargers for all the municipal employees who had EVs. The complexities of adding that much power and infrastructure in a historically significant building in downtown Los Angeles caused months of delays. Meanwhile, city employees made do by scheduling time on the few existing chargers on shared Excel spreadsheets.

The city eventually added 100 more EV chargers in 2019, making it easier for employees to get a spot. All around the city, in fact, chargers have become much more common, as the number of EVs on the streets continues to climb.

But the episode gave Bonstin a better appreciation for all the logistical issues that need to be taken care of if LA, the state of California, or even the whole country is to successfully replace carbon-spewing gas-powered vehicles with electric ones.

Planners around the country will soon be wrestling with those kinds of considerations and more—if they aren't already—as EVs become more common.

"A lot of municipalities have started to set the framework for electric vehicle chargers to be installed," says Amina Hassen, an associate for WXY Studio in New York, who has worked with both the state and city of New York to develop electric vehicle policies. "Four or five years ago, an electric vehicle charging station wasn't even defined in [building] codes."

"Where a lot of places will have to catch up is in the planning phases," she says.

To ensure all individuals can make the choice to switch to an electric vehicle, local governments will have to think about things like the places where people are already using electric vehicles, how placement of charging stations can be used to help economic development, and how to distribute infrastructure equitably, Hassen adds. More broadly, cities, regions, the federal government, and energy producers will also have to think about what kind of electrical power fuels the grid because increased power demand means increased emissions unless renewable energy is used.



FURTHER IMPACTS: ENERGY SYSTEMS

To facilitate the ongoing transition to renewable sources of energy, governments and communities will need to plan for widespread installation of solar and wind energy systems and infrastructure.

President Joe Biden is trying to speed along the transition by calling for all the federal government's vehicles, including U.S. Postal Service trucks, to be replaced with electric powered vehicles. The infrastructure plan also calls for building an extensive network of EV chargers and offering rebates to electric car buyers. (Biden's plan has been criticized for not matching renewable energy with electrical vehicles.)

Meanwhile, the auto industry appears to be moving in the same direction. General Motors, Ford Motor Company, and Volkswagen have all made bold promises about switching from gas and diesel power to electric-powered cars. Tesla, far and away the biggest manufacturer of EVs right now, doesn't even sell gas-powered vehicles.

The coming wave of EVs could change everything from simple parking space requirements for new developments to economic growth opportunities for disadvantaged neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, though, city leaders and planners will have a big role in determining how many vehicles will come to town and where they'll be able to be used.

Charging challenges

When it comes to the rollout of EVs, the most basic questions for cities will be over siting charging stations. The U.S. will need 9.6 million charging ports by 2030, the Edison Electric Institute, an industry group, predicted nearly three years ago. By comparison, the U.S. Department of Energy says there are currently 42,000 public charging station in the country, offering a combined total of 100,000 charging ports. (That does not include private chargers, like those used for bus fleets or home charging.)

Private companies and many homeowners

will continue installing stations on their own, but city officials will face pressures to install publicly available chargers and to ensure people who don't own their own homes can still find a place to charge their vehicles.

Different types of chargers work better in different settings. Homeowners, for example, can typically rely on Level 2 chargers in their garages. But a restaurant or retail store might want a fast charger so that customers can shop or dine in the half hour it takes their vehicles to charge.

Local governments can help speed the growth of charging networks by allowing, incentivizing, or even requiring property owners to make those improvements. Los Angeles recently passed a change to its building code requiring new apartment buildings and hotels to install chargers, and to install infrastructure that will make it easy to add additional chargers in the future. Atlanta in 2017 required new homes to be "EV-ready," with the conduit, wiring, and electrical capacity necessary to add chargers later.

Installing EV charging infrastructure is much easier for new developments than it is for existing buildings, of course. "For all the buildings to go back and then put in the wiring in a couple of decades is going to be super cost-prohibitive. It's better just to put it in now," says LA's Bonstin. It's also going to be a tough sell, she adds, which is why she and other city leaders are considering a menu of incentives and requirements.

One possible approach would be to readjust parking requirements for

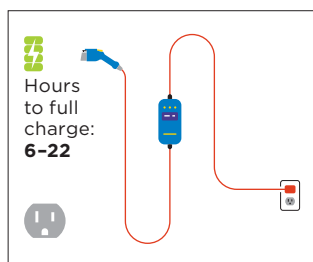
property owners who install chargers. Even adding a charger in a parking spot at a gas station can be tricky, Bonstin explains, because parking spots with EV chargers must be larger than regular spots. If a building already has the minimum number of spots, they don't have the space to add charging equipment.

Los Angeles planners are also working with their electric utility (which is owned by the city) to get a better idea of what incentives or disincentives are currently in place. So, deciding when a building needs chargers could determine who gets rebates from the power company. If the city requires chargers up front for a subdivision, for example, the developer would likely receive the rebates. But if the developer only has to make the property "EV-ready," the rebate would go to the homeowner who installs the charger down the line, Bonstin says.

Planners also have to wrestle with the extra infrastructure that may be required from new

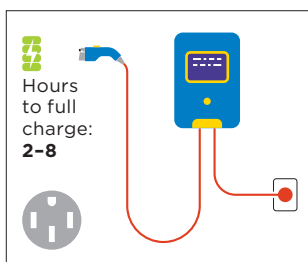
CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHARGER: SPEED AND POWER

There are three current standards for EV charging stations, each with different charging speeds and different electrical infrastructure needs. That's why it's important to match the charger with the intended use.



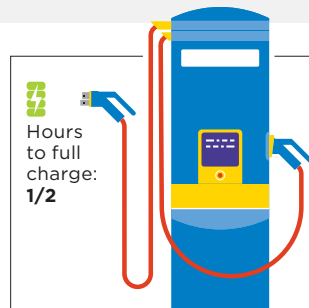
LEVEL 1 (120V):

Essentially universal chargers, these use a standard outlet like those in a home. They are the simplest to use and don't require the installation of new electrical wiring. But they are the slowest charger type, giving cars two to five miles of range for every hour they're plugged in.



LEVEL 2 (240V):

The most common public chargers, these use a higher voltage outlet. Most homes and commercial properties have 240V lines to the building, but installing a charger could require extra electric work on the premises. These chargers add 10 to 20 miles of range for every hour of charging.



DIRECT CURRENT/ FAST CHARGING (480+V):

By far the fastest—they recharge a car in 20-30 minutes—they also draw the most power. But not all EVs can use these and there are no universal standards for the charging ports, so one carmaker's chargers are often incompatible with other companies' cars.

chargers. If the electric load gets large enough, “suddenly, an applicant or a developer needs this huge transformer to fit somewhere in the parking structure” or somewhere else nearby, and they look ugly, Bonstin says. “These infrastructure components are solving one problem and creating another. So, then the question becomes: How do you store this in a more elegant way?”

Ensuring widespread access

Meanwhile, cities will also face challenges when installing public chargers on curbs or in municipal parking lots. Hassen, the urban planner from WXY Studio, says cities should make sure the technology they install is universally accessible.

That not only means that the plugs should be able to service vehicles made by different companies, but also that the method of payment is widely accessible as well, she says. Right now, paying for electricity for your car is far more complicated than paying for gas; most charging stations don’t take credit or debit cards. Instead, they require you to be a member of a certain network that have their own cards or apps that allow you to pay. The balkanized systems originally impeded London’s efforts to build out a robust web of charging stations, Hassen says, and that’s why places like New York City have required that their chargers work on several different networks.

Then there’s the issue of where to install public chargers. Right now, EV owners tend to be wealthy, because the vehicles are so expensive (a problem states like California and automakers hope will fade as mass production of electric vehicles and new innovations make the prices of new electric vehicles similar to those of gas-powered vehicles). But that doesn’t mean that chargers should be concentrated in wealthier areas, cautions Adam Lubinsky, PHD, AICP, WXY’s managing principal for planning.

He says cities should account for equity in their siting decisions. Lower-income neighborhoods often have lower air quality and would therefore benefit the most from replacing gas-powered vehicles with zero-emission ones. Those neighborhoods also often host institutions—such as hospitals, community colleges, and schools—that people drive to rather than

Leisure destinations offer good opportunities for top-off charging. And these stations outside Camden Yards in Baltimore blend well with the area’s character.

JAMES BRUNKER/ALAMY





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* is covering them all throughout 2021, in print and at planning.org/planning.

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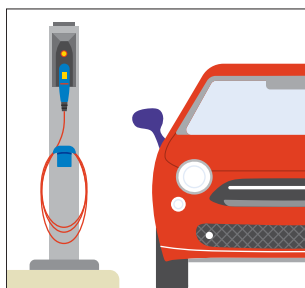
COMING UP:

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHARGER: LOCATION AND TYPE

The firm WXY created a guidebook for New York City's curbside EV charging efforts that includes a planning framework, identifies deployment zones, and digs into station placement and type.

TYPES OF CHARGING STATIONS



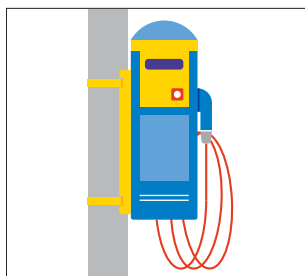
PEDESTAL

Freestanding charging stations with single or dual charge ports. Station footprints are typically similar to municipal parking meters, although pedestals range in height and bulk. There is a wide variety of commercially available models among electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) providers.



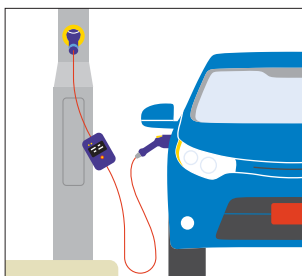
L2 TOWER

Taller than pedestals, these freestanding charging stations feature a built-in cord management system that keeps cords elevated. Modular elements such as lighting or wifi infrastructure can be paired with the tower. Costs can be high if trenching or other complex installation is required.



L2 POLE-MOUNTED

Chargers mounted on existing infrastructure such as a light pole, which makes the height of the unit adjustable. These chargers are slimmer than others, but typically only have one charge port. Installation costs are low if power to light pole is sufficient (or timed with streetlight upgrades).



USER-SUPPLIED CORD (PLUG & SOCKET)

A standard EV socket is mounted onto a freestanding pedestal or light pole and is appropriate for long dwell times. Users must supply their own cord. This charging option is popular in Europe, although not used in North America.

LOCATIONS BEST SUITED TO CHARGING STATIONS



MEDICAL CAMPUS

Medical campuses tend to have a largely car-dependent workforce, amplified by shift workers who have fewer and less frequent off-hours public transit options.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Post-secondary education draws employees and students from across the region. Campuses isolated from public transit have high proportions of auto commuters.



PUBLIC SECTOR

Municipal employees drive at higher rates than private sector employees and many work far from transit options, contributing to their car dependency.



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Neighborhood centers have a mix of commercial and residential uses. Drivers in neighborhood centers where residential construction lags commercial development are "garage orphans" and need charging where they park: on the street.



LEISURE DESTINATION

Parks, public pools, cultural institutions (museums and science centers), stadiums, and other major institutions are leisure destinations that offer a good opportunity for EVSE exposure and top-off charging. These destinations may also have EV fleet charging needs.

SOURCE: CURB ENTHUSIASM: DEPLOYMENT GUIDE FOR ON-STREET ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING, 2018. [BIT.LY/3i9ARML](https://bit.ly/3i9ARML)

take transit, he says. That adds to emissions in those neighborhoods.

Hassen notes that another equity consideration is putting public chargers on the street or in municipal lots. That would help renters and other people who don't have private chargers to make the switch to electric vehicles when they become more affordable. "If you have no place to charge [an electric vehicle], and there is no developed public access infrastructure, it's not really a viable option for you," she says.

Jairo Garcia, a sustainable cities expert who helped Atlanta develop its climate action plan, says cities and states should encourage suburbanites to use EVs when they commute into the urban core. They can do that by allowing EVs to use carpool lanes on interstate highways and by reserving convenient parking spaces downtown for them.

"Electric vehicles are more for the people outside the city, because here in the city, we don't drive. The people who live in the suburbs, they are going to be the ones who benefit the most from using electric vehicles," he says. Electric vehicles can easily handle those daily commutes, and suburbanites have "plenty of land" where they can put chargers, Garcia says.

Showing leadership

As Congress considers Biden's push for EVs, state and city governments are already enacting policies to speed the transition. Those range from high-profile promises, like that of California Gov. Gavin Newsom, to ban the sales of gas-powered vehicles in the state by 2035, to much lower-key moves that offer rebates or tax credits for residents who buy EVs.

California's heavy-handed approach may not be a good fit for the rest of the country, says Doug Kettles, the director of the Central Florida Clean Cities Coalition. But leadership can come in other ways. In Florida, for example, the state's power companies are working together to encourage more widespread adoption of EVs through a group called Drive Electric Florida, which some environmental groups support as well. That group helped produce a plan to help municipalities prepare for questions like where to put new chargers. And several state agencies are working to produce a master plan that will look at logistical concerns as well as policy ideas that could help Florida's switch to EVs.

Kettles says that governments will be leading the movement, even if only because of cost considerations. The upfront cost of EVs has been declining, and auto industry experts expect that new electric cars will soon be the same price as new gas-powered cars.

Significantly, the maintenance costs for EVs are lower than gas-powered vehicles. That means governments will soon have an obligation to buy them, Nettles says. "The total cost of ownership is going to be dramatically lower than a regular vehicle, and so the fiduciary responsibility of the businesses and the government is going to drive them to getting these vehicles," he says. "You're using taxpayer money or you're using stockholder money. You have to use it in the most efficient and effective way. That's coming, and when it does, it's going to come hard and fast."

Joel Levin, the executive director of Plug In America, a group that advocates for the adoption of EVs, says cities and states have another economic incentive to promote a switch to EVs, because many of them are

built locally. States like California, Nevada, and Tennessee all produce EVs. Georgia just reached an agreement to become a major source of the batteries that will go into those vehicles.

Plug In America has catalogued the many different approaches that states and cities have taken to promote EVs, but Levin stresses that governments need to model the behavior they want to see in others.

"You better have charging at city hall and at major city facilities. If you don't, you're going to look like a dinosaur pretty quickly," he says. Top officials with city-issued vehicles, like the mayor and city council members, should have EVs. "That models the story you're trying to tell. If the city council is all driving around in Suburbans, that doesn't really tell the story of people converting to EVs."

It's not enough just to buy EVs. City leaders need to bring people along by educating staff about the new vehicles (including test drives) and hosting public events to build excitement, Levin adds. "If your city is going to invest in a big fleet of EVs for the police department, you better make sure that people are bought into it, or else they're going to sit and gather dust."

In Los Angeles, Bonstin says the city and other local governments in the area are pushing the switch to EVs every way they can, including moving its own fleet to electric vehicles. LA already has 900 EVs and has worked with other cities to give it more leverage with automakers to produce more. Local transit agencies are planning to switch their vehicles to electric by the end of the decade, too.

The city now has 10,000 commercial EV charging stations, a milestone it reached in January, two years ahead of a goal set by Mayor Eric Garcetti, thanks in part to a rebate program from the city. City agencies have installed more than 1,300 chargers on their own, including more than 400 that are integrated with streetlights.

"A key tenet of our sustainability plan is that we lead with [the conversion]," Bonstin says, "and I think we did that."

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

Data Centers at the Edge

By JACQUES FLUET

WHEN WE HEAR the term “data center,” we might think of a sprawling warehouse space and countless rows of servers with flickering lights that demand heaps of energy and resources to run. It is an accurate depiction, but no longer 100 percent so. With the rollout of 5G services and network expansions nationwide, our vision of a data center is about to change dramatically.

5G is poised to usher in the Internet of Things (IoT) era by connecting a record number of devices, from our coffee makers to our cars to entire citywide systems. But current cloud computing infrastructure is nowhere near sufficient to shoulder the growing load of network traffic, let alone deliver the necessary speeds. Instead, a combination of more traditional infrastructure with a new generation of “edge” data centers will be needed to power our connected lives of tomorrow.

This incoming wave of infrastructure will have big implications for local governments and planners, particularly those interested in leveraging the new economic drivers they enable. The proximity of data centers to communities is key to attracting connected industries for applications like smart manufacturing, as well as to deliver high-quality advanced services like telehealth, remote learning, augmented and virtual reality, autonomous vehicles, drone delivery, and all the various smart city applications.

Despite this, relatively few local zoning codes define and regulate data centers, which have largely been located in industrial and office parks and complexes. Some lack the process to allow, or issue a permit for, data centers altogether. With that in mind, here is a quick primer on the biggest considerations for planners and ways to help set your community up for success.

Data centers 101

Traditional data centers are power and resource-hungry facilities with site sizes that can range from 10,000 square feet of space to more than a million. They need a lot of electricity and water to run and cool their facilities, as well as require access to multiple sources of reliable fiber-based broadband connectivity. Because of their need for resilience to ensure uninterrupted performance, data center owners prioritize locations with low levels of natural and human-made risks and ground vibration, as well as utility diversity for redundancy of systems.

At the “edge,” newer micro data centers are emerging as much smaller versions of traditional data centers, often prefabricated and designed to be unstaffed and remotely monitored. They can range in size from that of a large kitchen cabinet up to about 10,000 square feet and are often dispersed in clusters, with a higher volume in nontraditional locations closer to where end users are physically located.

This new type of data center is already popping up next to cellular towers, on light and utility poles, in office buildings, and in parking garages,



The Vapor IO Kinetic Edge modular data center site outside of Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium is about the size of a shipping container and can support up to 24 separate “tenants.”

COURTESY VAPOR.IO

primarily in major cities and metropolitan areas. This level of dispersal is happening with the goal of minimizing application latency (the time it takes for data to go from a user device to the data center, process the information requested, and return it), as well as to increase capacity for higher levels of network traffic.

Another dynamic in the evolution of edge data centers is the rise in collocated, or “colo,” data centers. These are like metaphorical office buildings, where multiple service and application providers are different tenants renting a portion of the space. Traditionally, most major tech companies owned and operated their own large data center facilities, but now colo centers are emerging as a cost-effective approach and useful model for accelerating the migration to the edge.

Because many of these new data centers are remotely monitored, physical security measures like access controls, fencing, cameras, and outdoor lighting are necessary. Also, some facilities can make significant noise, whether it be cooling fan systems or backup generators, which could be a nuisance close to a residential area.

From an economic standpoint, newer edge data centers will produce relatively few permanent jobs per square foot. However, they often generate more in property tax revenue than it costs for the local government to provide services. Many states are now vying to attract data centers through tax incentives. In April, Arizona’s governor announced new legislation that establishes incentives to foster growth in the sector that builds off recent economic successes.

Zoning, permitting, and regulation

As demand for data centers grows, planners will be charged with balancing their resources and siting requirements with the interests of their communities.

Places like Loudoun County, Virginia, took an early leap with proactive measures to address these challenges by defining and regulating data centers as a distinct use. With a forward-thinking approach to attracting this infrastructure years before other regions, it is now widely considered the data center capital of the world.

By making data centers a distinct use, cities ensure clear zoning requirements are



FURTHER IMPACTS: DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The fifth generation of mobile network technology will be the backbone of the Internet of Things, including connected and autonomous vehicles and other smart city infrastructure and services. To manage latency, 5G requires lots of small cell sites, and public rights-of-way are often the most strategic locations for these sites.

well defined for owners and builders, as well as for city staff and elected officials. Without clear zoning requirements, municipalities will be dependent on ad hoc use determinations or discretionary review processes, which can slow down application and review processes and lead to unpredictable decisions.

Local governments should be cognizant of all existing regulations that might present barriers to attracting data centers. For example, given their need for redundant systems, larger traditional data centers need multiple power sources, including diesel or gas generators as a last resort. This means they often need to deliver and store fuel locally on site, which can be problematic if local ordinances don’t permit it or provide the guidance and rules for doing so.

Then again, existing or new regulations can help protect other community assets. On the west side of Austin, Texas, a potential fuel leak or spill could have dire implications for the Lake Travis drainage basin and the local ecosystem. Thus, current regulations have made it next to impossible to build a data center facility there.

At a minimum, a use definition should address requirements for the different types of data centers. For example, are there any incentives or disincentives that could impact design, such as tax incentives for use of renewable energy or new battery technology? Additionally, because smaller edge micro data centers are usually unstaffed excepting occasional maintenance, it’s worth considering if these structures can be treated as an uninhabited, without specific requirements for things like bathrooms or a secondary entrance/exit, which can add to the complexity and cost to design-build.

On balance, the primary planning question from data center owners and builders when it comes to site selection will be if the location is zoned in a way that clearly permits (or restricts) placement. Those that provide clarity and incentives for data centers will be among the early municipalities to benefit from attracting this new, increasingly important element of our nation’s digital infrastructure.

Jacques Fluet is the data center technology program director at the Telecommunications Industry Association.



5 Tips to Safeguard Your Data (and Your Community)

By MARY HAMMON

IN THIS ERA OF REMOTE WORK, virtual public meetings, and increased online engagement, local governments' vulnerability to cyber attacks is more heightened than ever. Whether your city is large or small, cybersecurity and data protection should be key considerations—not just for data and systems, but also to maintain the privacy of the people you serve.

It can be easy to assume cybersecurity is the responsibility of your IT department. But in this digital age, accountability goes beyond IT, beyond even your organization, and extends throughout a community. After all, even one seemingly small breach has the potential to compromise an entire system.

These concerns are not just hypothetical. Baltimore and Atlanta were just two of several cities attacked with ransomware in the last two years. The cybersecurity firm Recorded Future tracked more than 100 attacks against administrative systems in schools and governments over the course of 2019. Meanwhile, the country of Bulgaria's tax department was hacked, leaving an entire nation's personal data up for grabs.

So how can you do your part to make sure this doesn't happen to your community? Nupur Gunjan has some advice. Trained as a planner, she is a government solutions specialist at Apple and a former public sector analyst at Cisco. Here are her five tips.

1 Know you are going to be a target.

Federal agencies, states, cities, and even small government units have always been attacked by bad actors, but with COVID-19 and the mass transition of local governments to work-from-home and online public engagement, attacks have skyrocketed. In summer 2020, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations reported that the number of complaints about cyber attacks to their Cyber Division was up 400 percent from what they were seeing before the pandemic.

It's best to expect from the outset that you will be a target of cyber attackers and plan accordingly, no matter how minor or remote the threat might seem. A now-familiar example: You can't just send a Zoom link out into the public and expect that everyone who gets their hands on it will behave themselves. Someone will hack it. (There is a reason "Zoom bombing" has become a household phrase.)

And this isn't limited to large cities or even government agencies. Smaller municipalities, planning firms, and nonprofits—especially if your work is in some way connected to the government—are also at risk.

2 Educate yourself and your team.

If you are a planner, manager, or supervisor, you and team members need to take the time to learn about phishing schemes, malware attacks, and other security threats to computers and systems. Otherwise, you or a colleague could easily be the person to click on something that leads to an organization- or citywide attack.

The program Talos from Cisco is just one of many resources to help you get up to speed on cybersecurity. Its researchers keep track of new malware attacks, cyber threats, and the ways people are hacking into and harming various agencies. It's also a great place to find resources and thought leadership about data security.

3 Make the IT department your friend.

Cybersecurity is your IT department's bread and butter, but communications may not be. They may lack a platform to advise the workforce about risk or may not know how to start direct discussions with individual departments. Don't be afraid to reach out to them. Make sure you pay attention to what they say. Having even a passing knowledge of the lingo will help with your understanding (and make you look smart).

Ask about security protocols, end-to-end encryption, and dual authentication. Ask if a secure connection to the server is available, and how to use it. Ask IT about the best security products and vendor recommendations—they can be a real partner in suggesting and vetting providers that work best for your needs at the right price. Your IT pros may even make you aware of an existing relationship with a vendor or a product that's already available to you.

4 Have a strategy.

Partner with your chief information or technology officer, the IT department manager, other department heads, and whomever else can assist in building a data security strategy. Ideally, that project team will develop a citywide strategy, but



FURTHER IMPACTS: GOVERNMENT TECH & CYBERSECURITY

Increased ransomware attacks are targeting city governments and other essential services. Meanwhile, local governments' growing use of digital platforms to carry out their work and interface with the public creates a need for cybersecurity solutions tailored to public sector needs.

LEARN MORE

Discover more about cybersecurity and other important tech concerns (like the expansion of the digital divide) by listening to the whole conversation with Nupur Gunjan in "What Planners and Public Sector Agencies Need to Know About Cybersecurity," an episode of the APA podcast.

LISTEN

bit.ly/3idz271

having a plan for your own department or agency is certainly a start. That way, if disaster happens, you are prepared to preserve business continuity.

The COVID-19 pandemic made this need abundantly clear. Many cities didn't have the mechanisms in place for remote working, online engagement, or other virtual tasks. As a result, employees of some organizations used patchworks of free or low-cost applications without the knowledge of—nor the authority from—their leadership. That kind of cobbled together approach can leave entire systems vulnerable.

Another strategic tip: Consider cyber insurance. It covers some kinds of attacks and can help you understand your risk exposure, which you can then incorporate into your strategy.

5 Build a coalition.

Cyber threats are not limited to the geography of your community. The same attacker targeting Los Angeles also can be terrorizing a small town in Wisconsin or Louisiana. Still, you should talk to communities like yours in the same area, understand their risks, and ask how they are mitigating them.

The next step? Form a coalition and talk to your state. That's what is happening in Colorado, where a smart-city alliance formed. Its members committed to working together as a coalition to find and share smart city solutions.

Some states have digital transformation plans, which could be another resource. Look at those plans and see what your team can adapt for its needs. The federal government also has put aside funding through the Modernizing Government Technology Act, which was enacted as part of the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. And there are startups, like UrbanLeap, that facilitate the sharing of this kind of information so cities can learn from each other.

Planners wear a lot of hats; protecting your data, systems, and citizenry is now a critical one. So remember: Know your risk, understand how to fight attacks, learn about what others are doing (and what tactics you can apply to your needs), and make sure you have good partners in this invaluable work.

Mary Hammon is Planning's associate editor.

A vendor sets up shop at a curb in Los Angeles, which hosts a vibrant informal economy largely driven by Latina/o and immigrant small-scale entrepreneurs.



How cities can boost the informal economy

SUPPORT STREET VENDORS

and prioritize economic equity.

By ÁLVARO HUERTA, PhD
Photographs by RUDY ESPINOZA



Food vendors are some of the most common informal workers in urban areas. Here, a woman sells street-side tacos.

LUCIANO LEON/STOCKIMO/ALAMY

“DOS TACOS DE ASADA, POR FAVOR.”

There's something special about waiting in line at a popular taco street vendor stand. Like being at Disneyland, it's a shared social experience with other eager customers. We sometimes get giddy when it's our turn to order: listening to the majestic sounds of carnitas being chopped, making special culinary requests. In a time in America where many residents are experiencing the economic pain of COVID-19, where else can we get delicious food at an affordable price?

But for street vendors, many of them immigrants, there is more work involved than simply preparing and selling food. As petty entrepreneurs, they order supplies for the day, get up early, prep the food, drive to their designated location—and, in some places, avoid the police.

These hardworking petty (or small-scale) entrepreneurs are an integral part of the informal economy, engaging in a wide range of unregulated activities that contribute to the vitality and social fabric of our neighborhoods, despite an often-fraught relationship with policies. High permitting costs, bureaucratic regulations, and hefty citation fees were a burden for street vendors long before the pandemic; now, the significant health and economic impacts have hit informal workers and petty entrepreneurs hard.

As communities work to prioritize economic equity and justice, how can planners and policy-makers reassess punitive approaches and look for ways to better support those who depend on the informal economy to survive?

A MILLIONS-STRONG WORKFORCE

While the term “informal economy” appears to be nebulous or fuzzy, it's generally defined by a few key elements: how income is incurred, taxes, and regulations—or the lack thereof.

In *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*, Manuel Castells, PhD, and Alejandro Portes, PhD, write, “The informal economy [is] a process of income-generation characterized by one central feature: it is unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated.” Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Bank

Nearly 60 percent of America's part-time workers earn a wage in the informal economy. That amounts to millions of people across the country, according to a Federal Reserve Bank study.





of Boston defines informal work as “temporary or occasional side jobs from which earnings are presumably not reported in full to the Internal Revenue Service.”

That can include small companies, workers, and petty entrepreneurs like street vendors, gardeners, day laborers, and domestic workers (or *domésticas*)—including my late mother, Carmen Mejía Huerta. Typically, we’re talking about individuals who get paid in cash or personal checks and lack access to work benefits many Americans take for granted, like unemployment benefits, workers compensation, social security, safety regulations, and much more.

While we have ample demographic, housing, and employment data for the formal economy, that is not the case for the informal economy. What we do know, however, suggests that it encompasses a majority of jobs across the globe: more than 60 percent, according to KCET, an LA-based Public Service Broadcasting station. Its 2019 reporting cites credible sources like the International Labour Organization.

In the U.S., the portion of the workforce engaged in the informal economy remains sizeable. A 2014 survey from the Federal Reserve Bank

of Boston found that around 43 percent of full-time workers and 59 percent of part-time workers earn a wage in the unregulated sphere, amounting to millions of people across the country.

SYMBIOTIC ECONOMIES

We can’t examine the informal and formal economies as silos; they are interrelated and interconnected. Street vendors, for example, must buy their products from the formal economy, where earnings then return via rent, groceries, and other spending.

And we’re not talking about a few cents and dollars here. The LA-based Economic Roundtable estimates that the annual average wage for an informal job is around \$12,000. In 2004, around 679,000 people were operating in the informal economy in LA County, resulting in around \$8.1 billion earned in one year alone.

The goods and services provided by the informal economy, like food service, labor, and domestic work, are also vital to the persistence and identities of our communities. Yet despite this crucial, symbiotic relationship, informal workers and petty entrepreneurs have seen little financial assistance during the pandemic, further exposing and exasperating existing racial and class inequities in America.

In the state of California, Latinas/os comprised about 40 percent of the population in 2019 and a significant portion of its low-wage and service workforce, including those operating in the informal economy. According to the state’s official COVID-19 website, “COVID-19 disproportionately affects California’s low income, Latino, Black, and Pacific Islander communities, as well as essential workers such as those in health care, grocery, and cleaning services.”

And while it’s true that the pandemic has impacted everyone, Latinas/os and Black and Indigenous people continue to contract and die from COVID-19 at higher rates than white Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PLANNING AND POLICIES

To better support the informal economy during the pandemic and beyond, policies should first differentiate non-harmful from harmful goods

and services. While the former can represent someone selling tacos on one corner, the latter can consist of someone selling drugs on another—vastly different types of activity within the informal economy.

Still, many municipal policies across the country treat them as equally punishable by law. Even in major cities like LA and New York City, where street vending is legal (as of 2019 in LA), vendors who operate in restricted areas or don't secure permits tend to be treated like criminals. A Latina street vendor named Elsa, for example, made headlines in 2019 after she was handcuffed and arrested for selling churros at a New York City subway stop without a license. Her experience is not uncommon.

Attempts to formalize the informal economy often create significant financial and legal barriers for operators. Santa Monica's Ordinance Number 2607, which was passed in April 2019, regulates street vending and establishes considerable penalties: fines of up to \$500, misdemeanor charges, and jail time of up to 6 months for violations. For many, the fine alone is insurmountable. Using The Economic Roundtable's estimate that a street vendor earns \$12,000 per year, or

\$230 per week, it could take more than two weeks of earnings for a Santa Monica vendor to pay the maximum fine.

Permits, meanwhile, are difficult to obtain and come at their own high cost: \$541 annually in LA, for example. Difficult-to-secure health, tax, and business permits are also required, and some cities, like San Fernando, California, also mandate criminal background checks and liability insurance.

"In order to sell food, a sidewalk vendor must obtain a health permit from the County Department of Public Health," which is outside the city's jurisdiction, says Doug Smith, a senior staff attorney of LA's public counsel. "Due to extremely high costs as well as complicated and ill-fitting permit requirements, most food vendors are still unable to obtain this county health permit, and thus unable to fully enter the formal economy."

To create more just cities, planners and policymakers can look to reverse or abandon enforcement-only measures that punish petty entrepreneurs. This includes taking into consideration that the informal economy is interrelated and interconnected to the formal economy.

While not comprehensive, the following



Local policies often create significant financial and legal barriers for street vendors through pricey permits and penalties like fines, misdemeanor charges, and even jail time.





recommendations are a good place to start changing our approach:

GIVE DIRECT AID TO WORKERS AND PETTY ENTREPRENEURS. While there have been a few rounds of stimulus checks at the federal level sent to individuals impacted by COVID-19, these desperately needed checks, along with business loans (like the Paycheck Protection Program), only go to those in the formal economy—those who filed taxes in previous years and own established businesses. By assigning individuals without legal status with an Employer Identification Number (EIN), the federal government can manage this system without massive fraud for those who depend on the informal economy to survive.

PROVIDE MICRO-LOANS. Internationally, many non-governmental organizations and for-profit groups have been successful for years in helping owners of very small businesses in need, particularly in underdeveloped and developing countries. By providing small loans at a zero percent interest rate with manageable regular payments due within a reasonable time period, NGOs, for-profit groups, and even government agencies in the U.S. could make a significant impact.

ADOPT THE PROMOTORA MODEL. The Promotora Model (also known as Promotor Model) consists of a grassroots practice to invest in community leaders and trusted individuals so they are trained to share vital information among community members, such as navigating the health care system and promoting good health. In the U.S., Latinas have particularly taken on a leading role in these grassroots efforts. Recently, LA County, under the leadership of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, expanded the promotora model as a response to the pandemic. Given the lack of trust Latina/o communities tend to have toward government due to neglect, racism, and marginalization, it's imperative that planners and policy makers rely on and cultivate the organic leadership found in these communities to share reliable information and resources.

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WALLED OFF

A decade after a tsunami devastated Japanese coastal villages, miles of nationally funded seawalls define the landscape. But as *machizukuri* planning principles catch on, residents are taking the lead on a more sustainable, grassroots recovery.

By MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

In many of Japan's coastal communities, miles of protective concrete infrastructure has replaced water views and access.
NICOLAS DATICHE/AFLO/ALAMY





JAPAN'S PERCH ATOP THE VOLATILE PACIFIC RING OF FIRE MEANS resilience is required—and the country has long invested in it. Despite a geographic footprint the size of California, Japan has poured more concrete than the entirety of the U.S. in its bid to stabilize landslides, marshal recalcitrant river systems, and confront an oft-errant sea.

But even with these precautions, disaster struck in 2011: an earthquake triggered a tsunami, which in turn triggered the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl when a seawall protecting the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Ōkuma failed. The triple catastrophes converged along Japan's northeastern coast in the Tōhoku region, with a nearly 280-mile stretch of peri-urban habitation hit hardest.

Overall, the domino effect left nearly 20,000 people dead or missing, displaced tens of thousands, destroyed more than 120,000 homes, and badly damaged about a million more.

Japan's response was immediate and unprecedented, with the largest reconstruction budget allocated after a domestic natural disaster in the country's history: over \$320 billion. The prime minister talked of recovery as a means of revitalizing a country confronting an aging citizenry, depopulation, and economic stagnation.

"We will reconstruct with the dream of building a great Tōhoku region and a great Japan," then prime minister Naoto Kan said in 2011. "We hope our new city planning will become a model for the world."

Now, a decade after the triple catastrophes, residents, disaster experts, and planners around the world are taking stock of Tōhoku's recovery and reconstruction. With the ocean banished behind yet another intimidating Maginot line of cement, life in Fukushima is edging toward normality, despite the legacy of its now infamous crippled power plant. There's even a sense of a construction boom.

But tens of thousands have yet to return home after being evacuated, quakes continue to tilt at the region, and many say Kan's vision of local-led planning has not been fully realized. Still, recovery there isn't without its success stories; they're just less visible than miles of nationally funded coastal infrastructure. Behind the concrete, some communities have resisted rebuilding what was lost in favor of new, more resilient development and land-use patterns.

Concrete solutions

To oversee the mammoth task of rebuilding after the earthquake and tsunami, Japan launched the Reconstruction Agency, set to operate until 2031. It was tasked with coordinating a menu of 40 recovery projects, with substantial funding tied to each one, involving various national ministries.

But the national government still aimed to protect local autonomy. Municipalities and their respective prefecture (or *todōfuken* government, a level between municipal and national) submitted reconstruction plans to the Reconstruction Agency for funding allocations.

"Before 2011, funding was totally controlled by the national government, but it was decided this time to create building programs that reflect local government needs," says Kanako Iuchi, a local and professor at Japan's Tōhoku University International Research Institute of Disaster Science. "So it was up to locals to come up with plans, then after submitting them, have them approved and await the funding. Policy was designed to be bottom up."

While this system helped coordinate and systematize reconstruction funding, the volume of projects and associated funding often overwhelmed municipal planning staff, extending approval wait times. Meanwhile, concrete infrastructure was encouraged and prioritized. While seawalls and levees failed at full-scale protection in 2011, they crucially allowed more time for evacuations, Tokyo planners argued.

As quickly as the debris could be cleared, so began construction of coastal defenses at 621 sites along 460-plus miles of coastal land. Today, the



levees are the landscape's most striking addition—despite questions over their efficacy and promotion of erosion.

"On reflection, the levee money could have gone toward planning and [non-governmental organizations]," Iuchi says, "but immediately after such a traumatic disaster, people understandably wanted to feel safe first." Now, though, many residents regret their reality, she says. "It's odd. Not to be able to smell the sea, to see it."

"The plans for the giant levees—just supposed to be guidelines—ended up like mandates," explains Robert Olshansky, FAICP, a University of Illinois professor of urban and regional planning with a long-time interest and expertise in Tōhoku's reconstruction. "Even after given choices, local municipalities are used to following the formula from the national government."

Some prefectural matters require consent by Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, including projects that cross

Near the concrete Futaba power station, seawalls and other cement infrastructure now dominate more than 150 miles of Japan's northern shore.

prefectural boundaries or impact national interests, like highways. But as a result of decentralization enforced in the late 1990s, about 75 percent of those matters are now decided by municipalities.

After the tsunami, local coffers were filled to carry out certain projects at their own discretion, but that budget remained dwarfed by national funding for seawalls and infrastructure. About 80 percent was covered by the national government, leaving communities with a minimal bill. Plus, such infrastructure offers are often tied to free housing, hospitals, schools, roads, and so on, Olshansky says, proving hard to turn down.

"It is a huge recovery budget, with a remarkable 40 percent of budget going to building infrastructure," says Iuchi. And there was little dithering over allocations of Japan's generous funding contrasted with approvals elsewhere, which can take time, as many U.S.-based planners know. "Compare the \$320 billion to the \$120 billion for Katrina that mostly went to relief"

THE TÔHOKU PROJECTS MAP

This collaborative tool aims to track all recovery efforts in the region, from community services to the biggest reconstruction efforts, to better promote collaboration, social resilience, and sustainability.

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Best-laid plans

As reconstruction ramped up, suggestions rolled in for more sustainable patterns of development: leveling hilltops for new communities, incorporating smart technology, and experimenting with what architects touted as “German-style ecogarden villages” (public housing and communities that rely on sustainable building techniques, energy saving provisions, and sensitive landscaping). These all marked a departure from Japan’s small towns and villages, which tend to follow a more car-centric, market-led approach, often resulting in crumbling concrete and exposed utility lines that obliterate traditional architecture and rural views.

“There was harmony historically, but car-centered communities destroyed all that,” Christian Dimmer, urban designer and assistant professor at Waseda University in Tokyo, said in 2011. “There is little or no public transport and only deeply ingrained car-centered patterns. My hopes for the rebuilding are for compact, walkable, energy-saving places that are good for communities and the aged as well.”

Good intentions abounded, Iuchi remembers, and the plans municipalities submitted were incredibly diverse. One common thread was to create more resilient communities through more effective land-use management. In practice, that meant leveling hilltops or forming artificial hills for higher, safer elevations.

But rebuilding out of harm’s way was never going to be enough—a belt-and-suspenders approach to future risk emerged. All municipalities in the affected areas were required to draft reconstruction plans following the Act on the Development of Tsunami-Resilient Communities, which aimed to build defenses strong enough to withstand even a once-in-a-thousand-years tsunami.

“And because such a lot went on concrete—about 40 percent just building—it’s seen as an infrastructure-based and engineering-focused recovery,” Iuchi says.

Local-led planning

Still, all recovery hopes aren’t dominated by cement, brick, and mortar, Iuchi points out.

“There were new forms of recovery platforms.

Traditional recovery is led by the government, both national and local. But this time, there was more room for NGO types, individuals, volunteers, and businesses,” says Iuchi, who focuses on policy impacts on communities and community rebuilding strategies in the Tōhoku region.

That’s included a type of community development, *machizukuri*, which constitutes a third wave in Japanese planning characterized by everyday, street-level activities spread through participatory processes. The practice combines building with a community-based process aimed at improving the environment.

Local governments have recently adopted *machizukuri* to create land-use policies and programs for stronger, safer reconstruction. Instead of relying on central planning, municipalities have negotiated and coordinated with national and prefecture governments and collaborated with numerous key participants, like NGOs, universities, the private sector, and—most importantly—residents.

While outsiders may see only the heavy hand of civil engineering projects, over 860 districts have made good use of these community rebuilding programs—one of the reasons the Tōhoku reconstruction is taking so long, Iuchi says.

“There are limits to what the community can do because of established hierarchies,” she says. “Land use could have been smarter, but because of silos in local and central governments, there were discrepancies.”

Communities that followed the pattern of involving academics and NGOs have been the most successful, or at least satisfactory, in post-disaster Tōhoku, Iuchi says. Success stories include two small fishing villages in the north of the region, Moune and Kurobe. “Community size can complicate the process, with bigger ones running into logistics problems,” Iuchi says. “These two villages, small and cohesive, made it easier to reach consensus. Coordination is very important, although it is undervalued everywhere.”

Even before the tsunami, Moune had a history of environmental consciousness by promoting solar panels and ensuring the preservation of coastal biodiversity. Now, the village serves as a hub for conservation efforts spearheaded by university researchers and activists.



Described by some as the region's reconstruction "front-runner," Onagawa recovery was driven by three priorities set by the community and local businesses: integrating two town centers, establishing a pedestrian corridor (above), and water access.



"Unique opportunities emerged over time; having everyone speak out, having techniques and tools and then coming out with consensus," she adds. "They learned it was important to speak to the government with a collective voice."

Because both villages are (and were) mere hamlets with about 50 houses apiece, fleet-footed resident associations were able to galvanize villagers. Eschewing bureaucracy, they also refused seawalls, preferring new homes built out of the path of tsunamis, plus well-planned escape routes.

The town of Kurobe (left) initially asked for a levee but chose to rebuild a workplace at sea level and move homes higher, above a repositioned road. In Moune (right), residents revised the government's initial relocation site and instead suggested an alternative design that allowed them "to live humble."

"The conventional thinking is that we have to choose either disaster preparedness or the environment," Katsuhide Yokoyama, a professor of environmental hydraulics at Tokyo Metropolitan University and a consultant to the two villages, told Japan's *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper in March 2011. "But we may be able to achieve both, as the two communities are intending to do."

Michael Fitzpatrick is a roving freelance journalist based mostly in Vienna and Tokyo.



EAST CROSS STREET

Ypsilanti, Michigan

LOCALLY OWNED SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS, bike lanes and widened sidewalks, plenty of shade trees, and even rain gardens have made East Cross Street *the* place to be in Ypsilanti. It wasn't always this way. Decline in the 1970s and '80s prompted the launch of a (successful) economic development plan, a historic district designation, and infrastructure improvements, including access to a countywide trail system. Learn more about this Great Place in America at planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2018/eastcross.

Attendees enjoy the Ton-Up Motorcycle and Music Festival in Ypsilanti's Depot Town. The street's events calendar also includes festivals celebrating beer, local history, and muscle cars.



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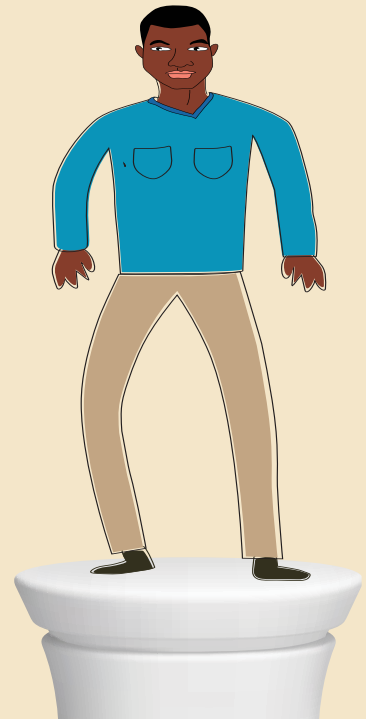
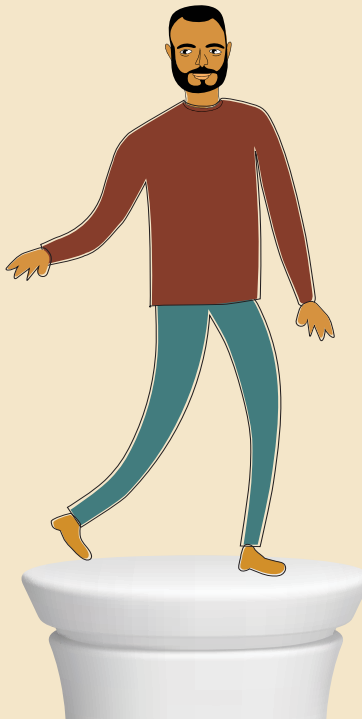
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