

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2022

PLANNING

**THE 2022 TREND
REPORT FOR
PLANNERS**

**GENTRIFICATION
WITHOUT
DISPLACEMENT**

**THE BILLION
DOLLAR CURB**

**PLUS:
HOW TO CREATE
SHOVEL-WORTHY
INFRASTRUCTURE**





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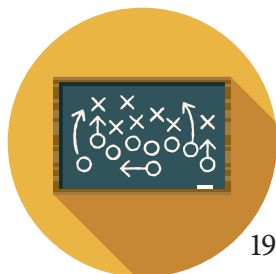
As a decade of disruptors changes gentrification patterns, the same question remains: Can planners spark revitalization without displacement?

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On the cover: A 2022 trend—3D-printed housing in progress. Top: In Chicago, protestors call for a neighborhood agreement. Above: Boost your department's profile by sharing behind-the-scenes work.

Contributors



Xavier de Souza Briggs Katya Fels Smyth

*Create Shovel-Worthy Infrastructure,
page 16*

For 30 years, Fels Smyth has forged partnerships that demonstrate the power of wellbeing as a design principle. Together, the authors see this historic moment as an opportunity and obligation for planning “to be the transformative force we have always hoped for,” says longtime planner and educator de Souza Briggs.



Pete Saunders

The State of Gentrification, page 24

Growing up in Detroit in the '70s and '80s, this planner, writer, and researcher was fascinated with urban change long before “gentrification” became a four-letter word. “I’ve always been intrigued by how cities can embrace change and reverse the forces that can combine to cause decline,” he says.



Chrissy Mancini Nichols John Dorsett, AICP

How to Create a Curb Management Framework, page 39

“Planning is a dynamic and ever-changing field,” says Dorsett, a mobility and parking planner who has worked in every state (and other countries, too). For lasting, positive change, planner Mancini Nichols recommends combining curiosity with policy expertise. Visit her blog mycuriouscity.com to learn more.

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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 THE DIVISIONS COUNCIL CHAIR

Public Health Hits Close to Home

FOR MORE THAN 20 years, I have been the planning director for the City of Grand Island and Hall County, Nebraska. Grand Island anchors a regional market with a population of more than 50,000 and two regional hospitals. Many of the small towns around us come here for medical services, something that's increasingly common in more rural areas as health care options shrink. As planners know, health services in small towns and rural communities have been under stress for some time, and the COVID-19 pandemic certainly has exacerbated those issues.

Being a planning director is my day job. This month, I also begin my term as Chair of the APA Divisions Council's executive committee and as the divisions representative to the APA Board of Directors. I'm excited to take on this role, the latest in some three decades of volunteer leadership.

A new initiative of the Divisions Council brings my volunteer leadership experience at APA very close to the issues of my home community. This past fall, the chairs of all 22 divisions and the executive committee adopted Planning and Public Health as the 2022 Division Initiative. While the realities of COVID-19 and its impacts on communities are impossible to ignore, the group purposefully is charging itself with focusing on public health more broadly. The truth is that we are experiencing some COVID fatigue, and we suspect others are, too. But we still think we can use this moment to learn about the common challenges communities face and, more to the point, share the innovative solutions planners are bringing to bear.

The committee looked at a number of potential planning topics, but public health stood out. And if COVID has taught us one thing, it is that public health impacts planners of all stripes.

For more than 10 years, APA divisions have



'I'm eager to learn about all the various ways planning and public health intersect, and to open my eyes to unexpected connections and points of view.'

—CHAD NABITY, AICP

jointly chosen a single topic to rally around and to anchor content for newsletters, educational sessions at the National Planning Conference, and original research. Each division is asked to look at that topic through the specialty lens of its work, interests, and perspective. For some, like the Food Systems Division or the Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery Planning Division, the connections to public health are rather obvious, but there is crossover for every division.

I'm eager to learn about all the various ways planning and public health intersect and to open my eyes to unexpected connections and

points of view. Of course, there are already significant resources on the topic available from APA and other organizations, including a new series of blog posts that detail strategies that planners and public health professionals can adopt to increase physical activity. The body of work we create under this initiative will add to our shared knowledge about planning and public health. We hope you'll join with other members of your chosen divisions in building up our collective wisdom.

If you're not already involved with APA divisions, I strongly encourage you to consider it. We like to refer to the divisions as the "nouns of APA": the persons, places, and things. APA's 22 divisions—as well as our interest groups—are dedicated to Women in Planning, Planning and the Black Community, County Planning, International Planning, Technology, and Transportation. The list goes on, but these divisions help planners find "their people," learn, and collaborate. (Find out more about divisions at planning.org/divisions.)

Chad Nabity, AICP, is the planning director for the City of Grand Island and Hall County, Nebraska. He is also the Chair of the Divisions Council's Executive Committee.

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LETTERS

Refining Our Mission



THIS EDITION MARKS the year anniversary of a bold new direction for *Planning*, focusing on a digital-first approach and quarterly print issues of the content you rely on. We hope you've enjoyed our reimagined online experience, with better accessibility and shareability of stories (you've responded with more engagement than ever before!). Let's keep the conversation going.

In the coming months, we'll be asking what content you need and want from *Planning*, but in the meantime, we're always glad to hear from you. Reach us on social media or drop me an email at mstromberg@planning.org. Happy New Year!

Join the digital discussion

Have you been keeping up with #PlanMag's online-only content? **Katya Fels Smyth** and **Xavier de Souza Briggs**, authors of "Create Shovel-Worthy Infrastructure" (page 16), kicked off their assessment of the built environment with the op-ed "The Infrastructure of Wellbeing" (bit.ly/infrawellbeing). It sparked conversation and advocacy alike on Twitter after the federal infrastructure package was approved.

"New opportunities for massive infrastructure investments in the U.S. also require a hard look at the impacts of past investments that have deepened inequities," wrote **@DeborahMyerson** while sharing the story. **@leger_small**, meanwhile, tweeted the column at Vice President Kamala Harris, adding, "We need help making sure that this money is spent to align with our drive for wellbeing."

From a practice-based perspective, **@DonJHoward** said the article provides "helpful examples of how infrastructure can advance equity (and how it has failed to in the past)," while **@JamesRojas** connected with the importance the column places on safe, accessible public spaces like



Washington, D.C.'s proposed 11th Street Bridge park.

playgrounds: "The planning of wellbeing begins with our favorite childhood memory." Similarly, **@Planning_Billie** tweeted, "Great read and check out the image of the proposed elevated public park!"

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Ray, who experienced homelessness during the pandemic, will be one of the first tenants to move into the hotel-turned-housing in Brockton, Massachusetts.
COURTESY FATHER BILL'S & MAINSPRING



INTERSECTIONS

WHERE PLANNING AND THE WORLD MEET

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HOUSING

From Struggling Hotel to Permanent Home

How an emergency response to the pandemic became an adaptive reuse success story in the effort to end homelessness. By Will Morgan

WHEN THE COVID-19 pandemic began, people living in congregate facilities—spaces with shared living areas like bedrooms and bathrooms—were especially vulnerable to infection.

At MainSpring House, an emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness in Brockton, Massachusetts, the COVID infection rate among the 140 adult shelter guests rose to more than 30 percent in the first two months of the pandemic.

Today, those stats look very different, and some shelter guests will be moving into units of their own at the Roadway Apartments this winter. What began as an emergency measure to protect MainSpring House guests' health is now an adaptive reuse success story: An underused hotel has been transformed into 69 units of permanent supportive housing, with renovations expected to be complete this spring.

Beyond a stopgap

In April 2020, Father Bill's & MainSpring (FBMS), the shelter's

operator and service provider, depopulated the facility in an effort to allow for safe social distancing and prevent further outbreaks. FBMS quickly erected outdoor tents in an adjacent parking lot and moved some guests there, but the tents were only a stopgap measure.

"We needed a viable, long-term solution to permanently reduce the shelter population, especially since many of our guests are at high risk of infection," says John Yazwinski, FBMS's president and CEO.

Less than three miles away from MainSpring House, the Rodeway Inn sat empty due to the surging pandemic. Seeing an opportunity, FBMS leased the entire hotel in June 2020 and swiftly relocated more than 60 shelter guests.

The move paid off. The COVID infection rate at MainSpring House plummeted to less than one percent. For guests like Charles, 70, who has serious health issues and has experienced homelessness for four years, the change was a lifesaver.



“It’s better because I have my own room. I have my own privacy,” he says. (Charles, like other FBMS clients quoted in this story, is using his first name only for privacy.)

Reimbursements from FEMA helped FBMS run the hotel temporarily as an emergency non-congregate shelter, but FBMS knew the subsidies wouldn’t last. FBMS approached the hotel’s owner and negotiated a purchase for \$4.2 million.

Zoning tools and funding

As the project’s potential came into view, the state’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) announced in August 2020 that it would make up to \$10 million available in capital resources for creating permanent supportive housing.

“As COVID-19 revealed, the lack of affordable housing in the Commonwealth is a public health crisis, particularly for those most vulnerable among us,” says Massachusetts Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. The project received more than \$7 million in subordinate debt and 69 operating subsidies from DHCD for renovation of hotel rooms into enhanced single room occupancy (SRO) units with kitchenettes. (See the table above for a fuller picture of the project’s funding.)

FBMS also needed the support of its partners at the local level, since the change in use from hotel to housing required city approval. But there was no time for a potentially lengthy



FUNDING THE ROADWAY APARTMENTS

The development budget, including a \$4.2 million price tag, came together with a variety of public and private sources.

SOURCES	AMOUNT
4% LIHTC Equity*	\$2,815,855
DHCD [†] Subordinate Debt	\$7,030,000
Beth Israel Lahey Health Grant	\$130,000
Arbella Insurance Foundation Grant	\$100,000
Developer Equity	\$300,000
Total	\$10,375,855
USES	AMOUNT
Acquisition	\$4,200,000
Construction	\$3,389,345
Soft Costs	\$1,518,164
Reserves & Other	\$578,346
Developer Overhead/Fee	\$690,000
Total	\$10,375,855

*Low Income Housing Tax Credits awarded by MassDevelopment and purchased by Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation. [†]Department of Housing and Community Development

A former Rodeway Inn welcomes the first tenants of its newly renovated SRO units this winter.

public permitting process, given the still-surging pandemic.

FBMS used a zoning tool available in Massachusetts known as the Dover Amendment, which exempts nonprofit organizations providing educational services from land use and dimensional requirements. This tool allowed the homeless service provider to quickly secure its building permit without the need for a public process.

“We were happy to support FBMS in bringing new housing and much-needed services into our community,” says Brockton Mayor Robert Sullivan, whose administration helped confirm the applicability of the Dover Amendment.

To afford the acquisition price, FBMS needed a mission-driven lender that understood the project’s complex layering of public and private financing. FBMS turned to the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC), a quasi-public community development financial institution that provides early-stage financing to nonprofits that develop affordable housing across Massachusetts.

“CEDAC was established in 1978 by then-state representative Mel King to support projects just like this one with financial and technical assistance,” explains CEDAC’s Executive Director, Roger Herzog.

In January 2021, CEDAC approved the \$4.2 million acquisition loan to FBMS, which closed on its purchase of the property in March, ensuring that the 69 people living at the hotel temporarily would be able to stay permanently.

Overnight, the congregate shelter population in Brockton was cut in half. The timing couldn’t have been better for Russell, who began experiencing homelessness at the height of the pandemic after struggling with substance use disorder.

“Without them, I would have nothing. I would be on the streets,” says Russell, citing FBMS’s efforts.

A replicable model

Brockton, with a population of 105,000, sits 25 miles south of Boston. The Roadway Apartments building is ideally located across the street from the Brockton VA Medical Center, and two nearby bus lines serve the downtown Brockton commuter rail station. A large shopping center is just a mile away and FBMS's administrative offices lie just beyond that.

Residents also have access to a comprehensive set of wrap-around supportive services provided by FBMS's on-site staff, which has already made a huge difference for Russell, who is celebrating one year of sobriety. "I've never really lived on my own, so it will be pretty cool to have my own space," he says.

Since FBMS first proposed its hotel conversion, CEDAC has been providing technical assistance to several other organizations around the state interested in replicating this Housing First model. The success of future efforts "will require continued state capital and operating funds and dedicated service funding," says CEDAC's Herzog, particularly with more than 1,200 people still living completely unsheltered in Massachusetts.

FBMS began renovations in September 2021 and the first batch of units were finished soon after, in November. Charles will be one of the first residents to move into a completed unit, which will allow him to conveniently get to his doctor's appointments. "This is the best thing that will ever happen," he says.

Will Morgan is an affordable housing project manager at CEDAC.

POLICY

Local Support for Eco Reform Grows

November's elections signal mounting approval of progressive environmental legislation and climate action. By Louis Jacobson



Smoke belches from a plant in New York. Voters there last year added a new amendment to the state constitution: the right to a healthy environment.



FF-YEAR ELECTIONS IN 2021 offered relatively few statewide ballot

measures for voters to consider. But several measures addressed the environment and climate change, reflecting many of the past year's federal debates at a more local level. It's something we can expect to see more of, experts say.

"[These] are areas that voters, especially voters of color, seem to be the most open to for bolder reform," says Caroline Sánchez Avakian, director of strategic communications at the progressive nonprofit Ballot Initiative Strategy Center.

Clean air and water

That held true in New York, where voters approved a measure that added a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment to the state constitution.

It was backed by environmental groups and put on the ballot after easily passing the legislature. The measure prevailed 69 percent to 31 percent—a sign of strength, even as several progressive ballot measures to broaden voting rights failed by wide margins.

"Having this right to clean air and clean water" would ensure "we are no longer overburdening our communities on the front lines with these facilities that are pumping out pollution and harming public health," Julie Tighe, president of the New York League of Conservation Voters, told *The City*.

The New York measure is similar to provisions already on the books in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Republicans and business groups generally opposed it, arguing that it could encourage lawsuits.

Avakian says she expects that progressive-oriented ballot measures like the environmental amendment might become more common in upcoming elections. According to research from the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, voters are willing to embrace reform when it comes to climate change and the environment, "in particular statewide fracking bans and the provision of environmental reparations," she says.

John G. Matsusaka, the executive director of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California, says that flurries of ballot measures usually become widespread if there's a specific, high-profile trigger.

"We generally see surges in certain issues in response to court rulings—such as eminent



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domain and same-sex marriage—or on issues where legislatures seem out of sync with voters and an override is required to get action, such as the minimum wage and marijuana legalization,” Matsusaka says.

Some contention

In Maine, however, voters went the opposite direction on Question 1, which would effectively block a \$1 billion electric transmission line in the state’s rural Upper Kennebec Region. The ballot initiative targeted a project sought by Central Maine Power that would provide New England with renewable electricity generated by Canadian hydroelectric power.

Some environmental groups have opposed the project, which is already underway, but they were joined in opposition by energy companies that face added competition. Confusingly, a “yes” vote was to stop the project, while a “no” vote was to continue it. While opponents of the ballot measure, including Central Maine Power, spent three times as much as the measure’s backers, voters chose to stop the project by a wide margin, 59 percent to 41 percent.

Despite the loss, backers of the line were undeterred, filing a lawsuit that argued that the measure was unconstitutional. The power corridor’s sponsor “has already suggested its continued commitment to the project regardless of the outcome of the vote,” says Jason Libby, a political observer in Augusta, the state capital. “It is possible that this divisive issue may continue to boost support for a consumer-owned utility, something Governor Janet Mills (D) already vetoed earlier this year,” he says.

Louis Jacobson is a senior correspondent with PolitiFact and has been writing for Planning since 1994.



THE PROFESSION

Meet the Nonprofit Centering Blackness in Design

New York-based BlackSpace is kicking off the new year with a growing list of cousin sites and innovative projects. By Tatiana Walk-Morris

YEARS BEFORE the 2020 killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and other Black Americans forced the country to reflect on a legacy of police brutality, planners were dissecting the role planning has played in systemic racism through practices like redlining.

The first Black in Design conference in 2015 was one catalyst. That's when Black architects and planners began organizing in New York, says Daphne Lundi, a deputy director with the NYC Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. A group that included Lundi hosted brunches later that year, and eventually, what started as an intimate gathering of urban planners, architects, and others

in the design space soon blossomed into a national nonprofit: BlackSpace.

The organization has since expanded beyond New York to connect Black design professionals across multiple states, highlight Black contributions to the field, center Blackness in design, inspire Black youth to explore the design fields, and examine and address the ways planning has impacted communities of color.

After a successful six years, the nonprofit continues to grow. In December 2020, it hired its first dedicated staff. Now, they're launching new projects, coalitions, and plans for expansion—all guided by the same dedication to uplifting communities of color.

A BlackSpace Manifesto-based workshop at the Spaces and Places conference, an annual grassroots meeting for urbanists, architects, and planners.

Creating community

A 2018 American Planning Association survey found that only 13 percent of its membership was Black, Latinx, and/or Asian or Pacific Islander. Given that significant lack of racial diversity, it's not unusual to be the only planners, policy makers, or professionals of color in the room, says Lundi, one of BlackSpace's founders and a member of its working board. Planning education can be isolating, too, as it often focuses primarily on white architecture, white urban planners, and white policy makers, she adds.

"The idea of BlackSpace is thinking about how we center Black experience in planning, but also thinking about: How do we rectify the gaps in history and understanding of the role that Black people played in urbanism and continue to play in urbanism?" Lundi says. "So much of the work we do is focused on learning from people in communities, that's why it's also centered on amplifying the work of people, particularly Black urbanists, as a way to fill in the gaps in the planning canon, in general, and how we think about who shapes the built environment."

Since its founding in 2015, BlackSpace has expanded to Atlanta, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Oklahoma. Now, planners in other cities, including Baltimore, Birmingham, Detroit, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Washington, D.C., are exploring becoming cousin—not sister—sites (a play on the loving descriptor often used among Black Americans to describe people who aren't technically relatives but feel like family). A recently developed

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cousin kit will help guide affiliates interested in joining, Lundi says, adding that the organization is currently fine-tuning the infrastructure that will support these cross-country partnerships.

So far, BlackSpace has amassed around 40 members in its organizing community—including board members, cousin groups, staff, project partners, and advisors—and a 389-user Slack network, says Kyra Assibey-Bonsu, the nonprofit's project partner.

A new direction for planning

According to BlackSpace's 2019 annual report, the organization has created 20 learning workshops for more than 1,500 attendees. Before the pandemic, the nonprofit also received and redistributed grant funds to Black food vendors, artists, and others within the Brownsville community in Brooklyn, Lundi says. They were able to direct over \$21,000 to Black-owned small businesses.

As coronavirus regulations relaxed in 2021, the collective held its first in-person gathering in November, which Assibey-Bonsu described as a joyful experience. "It felt really wonderful to be close to people that you've either been communicating with online or just looking at virtually, and the ability to actually connect and to really feel somebody is definitely transformative, to say the least," she says.

Now, the organization has its own dedicated staff to support a growing number of members, cousin cities, and projects, like



a redesign of Red Hook Farm in Brooklyn. BlackSpace worked with staffers from the Red Hook Initiative, a Brooklyn-based youth and community nonprofit, and volunteer farmers of the Wolcott Street Farm to create a new layout, explains Kenyatta McLean, comanaging director of BlackSpace.

The team is also working with the Brownsville Heritage House, a multicultural center in New York, to develop a design strategy and community archive that will highlight Brownsville's history and community, she adds.

These projects are driven by BlackSpace's manifesto, which includes a series of guiding principles: move at the speed of trust; create circles, not lines; celebrate, catalyze, and amplify Black joy;

The BlackSpace Manifesto outlines principles to use as a "gut check," says Daphne Lundi, a member of the board.

and reckon with the past to build the future.

"At minimum, we use it as a gut check to make sure that as we take on a project or as we do an interaction with folks, that we're doing it in a way where we're trying to always read these principles," Lundi says. "I think of it as a guide for how we want to move in the world."

As more allies connected with the organization following 2020's Black Lives Matter uprisings, the manifesto has been an important compass for collaborations, too, she adds.

Looking to the year ahead and beyond, Assibey-Bonsu ultimately wants to see more Black planners entering the industry. To make that easier, she'd like to see more support provided for Black planners who often lack familial wealth and must take out student loans for their education.

Lundi, meanwhile, hopes BlackSpace can devote resources to informing students of color that urban planning is not only a potential career path, but also a field that could benefit tremendously from their lived expertise.

"I want planning to move into a place where it's reckoning with its role in shaping the built environment, in shaping the inequalities that we still see in it, and is moving towards a place of reconciliation, really, in acknowledging harm and wrongdoing and, again, thinking about ways to undo it," Lundi says. "In my mind, it's a truth and reconciliation process that needs to happen."

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



The Year Earth Changed demonstrates nature's power of resilience during the pandemic. Watch it now on Apple TV+.

NOW STREAMING

Nature Is Healing

THE YEAR EARTH CHANGED, a beautiful, thought-provoking documentary from director Tom Beard, explores the many ways shutdowns and lockdowns have impacted our planet during the pandemic.

Environmental documentaries tend to focus on the distressing problems caused by our actions. In nearly everything we do, humans displace, disturb, and degrade the Earth, changing the climate, altering ecosystems, and extinguishing species—sometimes without knowing it. In the face of so much destruction, one might regard nature as a fragile flower, trampled underfoot in our rush to progress.

In contrast, *The Year Earth Changed*—narrated by the ever-hopeful naturalist David Attenborough—demonstrates the planet's remarkable powers of resilience. In just a few short months, much of the environment snapped into recovery mode. Without the noise of

traffic, songbirds were heard again, even in larger cities, with more complete, complex songs. On the suburban fringe—and even some downtowns—herd animals returned to revisit ancestral grazing lands. And most impressive of all, in Jalandhar, India, air quality improved so much that for the first time in a generation, residents could see the Himalayas.

These scenes suggest that our planet is capable of recovery—if we just get out of the way for a bit. For planners eager to help, the film doesn't call for another shutdown. Rather, through smaller adjustments—tweaking how we light our parking lots, closing beaches a few days each month—our world and the creatures we share it with may be nurtured back to health.

Ezra Haber Glenn, AICP, is Planning's regular film reviewer. He teaches in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and writes about cities and film. Follow him at urbanfilm.org and on Twitter @UrbanFilmOrg.

PLANNERS PLAYLIST BOOKS ON TAPE



This month marks the debut of *Booked on Planning*, a new podcast from APA Nebraska with funding from the Chapter Presidents Council. In each episode, host and planner Stephanie Rouse, AICP, dives into the books shaping urban design with a revolving cast of authors and professionals. Listen and learn more about the project at bookedonplanning.com.

GAMES

PARADISE PLANNING

The video game *Animal Crossing* is an obvious mirror of planning, but “New Horizons,” the latest entry in the series, confirms it.

After miraculously earning a job by walking into the “Paradise Planning” office, players are put to work designing vacation homes while factoring in specifications like climate. They can enhance the areas around their homes, too, with gardens and other recreational spaces.

Following their first design, the game's virtual planners learn that their new employer will cover their licensing fees. Ring any bells?

Rachael Hoffman is a customer service associate at APA.



A rendering of the gateway to the 11th Street Bridge park over Washington, D.C.'s Anacostia River. The park aims to connect two economically segregated communities physically and socially via resident-led programming.

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HOW-TO

CREATE SHOVEL-WORTHY INFRASTRUCTURE

A six-point framework for building equitable access to wellbeing.

By Xavier de Souza Briggs and Katya Fels Smyth

HUMAN BEINGS are hardwired to seek out what we define as “wellbeing”: connection and belonging; safety; familiarity and predictability; purposeful and creative influence on our surroundings and future; and access to food, shelter, and other resources without shame or danger.

But while our drive for wellbeing is universal, our access to it is not. That’s because access depends on our surroundings and the meaning we make of them—whether highways block us from opportunity, for example, or what a monument signals about who belongs in a public space.

The default to shovel-ready projects has long contributed to the inequities planning now seeks to address. But with the recently enacted bipartisan infrastructure bill, funding and policy reforms are on the way. Together with presidential executive orders like Justice 40, which promises to deliver at least 40 percent of the benefits of federal climate and clean energy investments to underserved communities, the new law gives us a precious opportunity to do things differently.

Whether, how, and where we build will not be neutral. It will generate healing or harm that lasts decades. A new focus on shovel-worthy projects can address and repair harms while moving us toward a future that prioritizes equitable access to wellbeing. But to define “shovel-worthy,” we need guiding principles and metrics that help us imagine better options, draw meaningful comparisons, and make improvements.

Early in the pandemic, a nationwide group of public officials and community leaders came together to develop a reparative framework to do just that. The resulting Wellbeing Blueprint consolidates examples of good practice to help guide and judge the decisions we make. Below, we outline a framework adapted from the blueprint to help us focus on what the built environment should provide—and how to make sure it delivers.

START WITH WELLBEING. Begin with what matters to people: the interdependent, foundational aspects of wellbeing, like belonging, safety, choice, and meaningful

access to tangible resources. Projects won't reliably create equitable access to wellbeing unless we attend to it from the outset. How are these elements defined and experienced by communities? How would a proposed project expand access to those things? For whom, and how exactly? Asking these questions consistently helps mitigate the tendency of outside experts to decide what should matter to people. This principle also draws on one of planning's core aspirations: to promote quality of place.

DESIGN AND BUILD

WITH, NOT FOR. Join stakeholders in creative dialogue about how infrastructure can enhance the lives they lead—and, significantly, the lives they want to lead. Relevant at each phase of a capital program or project, this principle emphasizes a process of collective discovery, public recognition, and learning, starting with uncovering self-defined assets and needs. More than consultation, this principle calls on us to share the reins that funders, regulators, and professionals have often clung to in the past.

REPAIR AND REGENERATE. Lower-income communities and communities of color have long been stripped of their economic, cultural, and natural wealth. They have also been disproportionately burdened by harms like over-surveillance, environmental degradation, and inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, leaving them all the more vulnerable as economic, social, and climate crises converge.

Harm reduction isn't enough. We must aim for reparative and regenerative justice. Planning's consistent

practice should be maximizing benefits for those who have historically been harmed, not only outside investors or new consumers.

For example, as former prisons are being redeveloped across the country, the communities most impacted by mass incarceration are becoming a driving force in determining what

happens to the facilities and the land. Instead of launching a project by determining what is needed *ex ante*, the design process is guided by stakeholders' input.

FOSTER COMMUNITY

AND CONNECTION. The built environment shapes our sense of who we are, what we are connected to, and our sense of

belonging—all of which are essential for individual and collective wellbeing. Historically, infrastructure has too often fostered exclusion and isolation. New federal investment in urban highway removal is one important move toward reparation and connectedness, but we must think more creatively, too.

A new elevated park taking shape in a historically undervalued, majority Black community in Washington, D.C., illustrates this principle. Both a bridge and a vital public space, the project aims to connect two economically and socially segregated communities, including via programming and linked plans for economic development.

SEEK OUT UNCOMMON PARTNERS

AND SOLUTIONS. The best planning has always been multidisciplinary—think of the healthy communities movement. Atypical collaborations help us reduce blind spots and develop wiser, more innovative solutions in the effort to expand access to wellbeing.

Beyond the neighborhood scale, where community development has long sought multidisciplinary collaboration, planners operating at every level can follow suit by engaging leaders in fields like health and education. In rural Allegany County, New York, management of bus routes is now the purview of a health development network in partnership with local governments.

Planning for equitable access to wellbeing is potent as an organizing principle. The six principles in this framework apply to health, education, caregiving, and other vital forms of "social infrastructure" that make community life and prosperity possible, just as bridges and broadband do. Plus, specific performance standards—like those in the nascent LEEP standard for equitable and sustainable real estate development—can help us evaluate and compare design alternatives.

CONTINUE PANDEMIC-INSPIRED INNOVATIONS THAT WORK.

The legacy of policies like Urban Renewal remind us of the importance of taking the long view as we make major new investments. But we must not overlook the crisis-inspired inventiveness, flexibility, and adaptive solutions born of the last 18 months. From dedicated bus lanes in Los Angeles to murals in Charlotte that depict and honor Black residents, this principle applies not only to the planning process, including innovative forms of digital and culturally competent engagement, but also to broader design choices that support placemaking and helping people move about their communities safely.

Xavier de Souza Briggs is a senior fellow at Brookings Metro. He previously served in the White House and was a planning professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Katya Fels Smyth is the founder and CEO of the Full Frame Initiative and the founding coauthor of the Wellbeing Blueprint. She is a former fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and affiliate of MIT's CoLab.

BOOST YOUR PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S PROFILE

Use these five tips to show the expertise planners bring to the table. *By Bobbie A. Albrecht*

PLANNERS DO A LOT for their communities, oftentimes behind the scenes. As a result, when tight budgets drive decision making and resource allocation, planning departments aren't always at the top of the list.

As local governments feel the financial squeeze triggered

by the pandemic, how can planners articulate the value of their roles and contributions, particularly as we look to recovery and beyond? During a recent APA Learning Circle, a group of planners brainstormed five ways local planning departments can highlight the expertise they bring to the table.



KEEP PROGRESS, CHANGE, AND TRANSPARENCY TOP OF MIND.

If you have a comprehensive plan, celebrate milestones with your community. Share progress more frequently, too. Reporting even incremental improvements is a great way to get your work in front of community members.

Be flexible, too, as circumstances change. Adjust plans and priorities to be responsive to current events and changes in community needs.

Transparency is also vital if planners are to be seen as trusted sources who practice what they preach. Be sure to keep a record of activities, successes, and setbacks—and make the info as public as possible.



ENCOURAGE ALLIES TO RUN FOR OFFICE.

Finding planning allies among local elected officials can help carry the value message more broadly—and directly to those making critical budget decisions. With that in mind, encourage people who come off the planning commission to go into office. You might even have the planning commission reach out to the county board of commissioners.

But don't count your existing elected officials out. Keep communication open with them. Consider taking a more proactive approach by hosting round tables to check in and move conversations about the needs of the community forward.



TAKE PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS.

Get in front of clubs or organizations that are made up of community members for speaking opportunities. Connect with local radio or local access television to share stories and communicate to a broader audience.

Social media is yet another great way to connect with the community. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for example, musicians put their comprehensive plan story into song and shared it online.

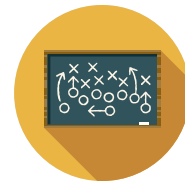
These outreach efforts introduce your department to more community members, demonstrate your expertise, and draw connections between planning and issues like public health and quality of life.



PARTNER WITH ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS FAMILIAR IN THE COMMUNITY.

Collaborating across different disciplines can help you build social capital within your community. Partnering with philanthropic institutions, social service nonprofits, and other allied organizations will help you communicate a set of values that the public recognizes. For example, coalitions around ending homelessness can be tied to your department's affordable housing efforts.

There are other benefits, too. Such partnerships can highlight research that advance planning projects. Allied groups can also help magnify the reach of joint-project success stories.



TELL YOUR PLANNING STORY ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Outcomes of planning processes are the most visible part of that process, which makes them easier to explain and celebrate. But don't forget to tell the whole story.

Community members often need help understanding how long it takes to make things happen, including the full breadth of behind-the-scenes work that goes into a planning effort. So even if you weren't there at the beginning, tell the whole story. Educate stakeholders on the process and the roles of everyone involved.

Bobbie A. Albrecht is APA's career services manager.



Create temporary curb ramps during construction projects (something that was not done in the above photo) to avoid limiting mobility options.

INFRASTRUCTURE

4 MAJOR ROADBLOCKS TO INCLUSIVE STREETS

Mistakes to avoid and best practices to embrace for infrastructure that meets accessibility needs. *By Steve Wright*

STREET NETWORKS ARE essential to mobility. That's especially true for people with disabilities. Dangerous crosswalks, misplaced (or steeply tilted) curb ramps, ubiquitous utility vaults, and countless other obstructions can deny safe accessibility.

You don't have to be a licensed traffic engineer to find fault with much of this infrastructure. Simply take a roll with a person who uses a wheelchair for mobility and you will see how quickly poor design makes it difficult, if not impossible, to connect to transit stops, jobs, parks, shops, schools, and other essential daily destinations. Universal design is what we should be aiming for, but there are 100 ways that even the most well-intended complete street can

deny mobility to wheelchair users due to poor design, implementation, maintenance, and even policy. Here are the top four mistakes—and some solutions.

1 THE SCRAWNY SIDEWALK MADE SCRAWNIER. Wide sidewalks are a basic part of universal design. They benefit everyone, from people pushing strollers to the army of delivery people wheeling goods in our e-commerce era.

The Federal Highway Administration suggests a minimum sidewalk width of eight feet for high pedestrian traffic areas, while the National Association of City Transportation Officials recommends a width of up to 12 feet in downtown and commercial areas.

In practical terms, a sidewalk must

be at least six feet wide to allow two wheelchair users to safely pass each other. But in many cases, sidewalks are barely four feet wide. The base width might be around five feet, but the effective width is pinched to three by parking meters, bike racks, and other obstructions. Construction projects often close entire blocks of sidewalk, too, while tunnellike scaffolding causes its own problems.

So how do we fix this? A road diet paired with sidewalk fattening could help, as could removing obstructions, especially if they're obsolete. Some codes allow a boost in floor-area ratio or height in return for the developer's creating extra sidewalk width along the frontage of the property. Chicago's code, for example, allows floor-area bonuses, as determined by the zoning administrator, for sidewalk widening.

Planners can also push for the creation of a clearinghouse for sidewalk data that tracks the dozens of agencies and entities that impact the right-of-way (ROW). That way, the county pole doesn't block the state department of transportation sidewalk. And when it comes to maintaining mobility during construction projects, adequate temporary curb ramps and scaffolding that doesn't obstruct the travel path are necessities.

2 THE CRAPPY CURB RAMP. When cities put a single, narrow curb ramp at an intersection, it's more than uncomfortable—it's downright life-threatening. Curb ramps must be at least three feet wide, with no more than a 1:12 (8.3 percent) grade, according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Local conditions, like a high step up to the curb or a bike lane, might even call for more thoughtful design.

Other curb ramp issues include street furniture and other barriers on or at the top of the ramp, flooding at

the street edge due to poor drainage, and street repairs where contractors demolish ramps, even temporarily. Too-narrow curb ramps force those who use wheelchairs, scooters, and other assistive mobility devices to roll partway into oncoming traffic. That can be incredibly dangerous.



Curb ramp issues include too-narrow ramps, garbage cans and street furniture on the sidewalk, and poor drainage.

Think about the height of a wheelchair user; the standard seat is 21 inches tall, placing the user's midsection at about the same height as an SUV, which is exempt from the maximum sedan bumper height of 20 inches. A wheelchair user needs to be seen to be safe, but depending on the vehicle, some are obstructed from the driver's view. An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study found that pedestrian traffic fatalities rose by 53 percent from 2009 to 2018, and that at speeds between 20 and 39 mph, 30 percent of pedestrians struck by SUVs died.

The best solution is a pair of curb ramps at each corner: one aligned perfectly with the painted north-south crosswalk, and the other matched to the east-west one. The curbs act as continuations of the sidewalk into the

crosswalk. A very wide, continuous curb ramp that spans the entirety of a corner also is a best practice.

3 THE DANGEROUS CROSS SLOPE. Because street design often makes the car king at the peril of pedestrians, the ROW is made up of not just many lanes of traffic, but also curb cuts for driveways. That often means blocks of sidewalks broken up by dangerous cross slopes. That tilt helps cars come out of a driveway at an angle that meets the street (without bottoming out). But for wheelchair users, it can be uncomfortable at best—and incredibly hazardous at worst.

The answer is to take back traffic lanes for human beings. Rather than positioning a cross slope in the sidewalk, it should be on the street side of the pedestrian way. The driveway can meet the five-foot-wide level sidewalk, then tilt down to the street.

4 ABLE-BODIED DECISION MAKERS ONLY. A typical department of transportation project has a dozen expert subcontractors, from surveyors to landscape architects to lighting specialists to geotech experts. With budgets for corridor studies and construction projects in the millions of dollars, there is room for one more expert: an accessibility expert with personal experience.

If cities want to be inclusive, budgets must support site visits and reports crafted by people who use wheelchairs for mobility—the only end users who truly understand the hazards to mobility, as well as the simple, long-lasting solutions that help clear the way.

Steve Wright (@stevewright64) is a writer, disability-rights activist, and marketer of planning services. He presented on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at the APA Florida's 2021 conference. Based in Miami, he blogs daily at urbantravelandaccessibility.blogspot.com.

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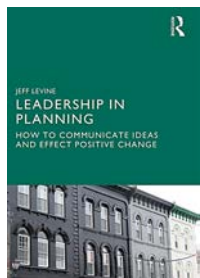


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SO YOU WANT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

Planner Jeff Levine's new book underscores the importance of communication and coalition building. *By Ezra Haber Glenn*



Leadership in Planning: How to Communicate Ideas and Effect Positive Change

By Jeff Levine,
2021, Routledge,
190 pp;
\$128.00 cloth,
\$39.95 paper,
\$35.95 e-book



AFTER 25 YEARS as a planner in local government in New England, Jeff Levine, AICP, is training the next generation of planners as a faculty member in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His new book, *Leadership in Planning*, explores a variety of real-world examples to get at what makes a good leader.

Planning's Ezra Haber Glenn caught up with Levine to discuss elevator speeches, balancing best practices with innovation, and the value in getting it wrong. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

GLENN: We all know communication is at the heart of good, inclusive planning, but how do you think it contributes to being a good leader?

LEVINE: Leading in a public-facing profession like planning can't be done unilaterally. You need to build a coalition of political leaders and professionals who share your vision and will work alongside you to advance it. You need to be able to explain what direction you want to take things and why. That involves having strong communication skills, especially an ability to get others excited about something that may seem mundane.

You hear the term "elevator speech" a lot—the sales pitch you give if you get someone in an elevator with you and have a short time to convince them of something. You need to have an "elevator speech" for your planning goals in order to lead!

GLENN: For most planners, a lot of what we do was learned on the job, typically through experience (and mistakes!). How do you strike a balance between best practices and innovation?

LEVINE: In my work, I always say you need to know

both the best practices and the local context. The best leaders don't just take an idea from another place and apply it to their community. It's very common for residents to say, "that may be how they do things there, but our community is different." The reality is somewhere in-between.

I like to start with a toolkit of national best practices and an environmental scan of the local political, physical, and social context. The best leaders can take those two sets of information and find solutions that apply those toolkits locally.

GLENN: You've clearly thought a lot about how we can frame our agendas—how to decide which problems we are ready to solve, which

need more discussion, and which ones we should just accept or even ignore for the moment. How did you learn that?

LEVINE: By getting it wrong! It's easy to not filter your convictions through what can or can't actually get done as a planner. I'd argue that, as good as it may feel to fight to solve every problem at the same time, that's not what planning is about. Planning is about successful solutions, not just strong advocacy. So, it's important to be thinking about what policy windows are open and which ones are closed. You can work to open those closed windows, but you're unlikely to open them entirely by yourself.

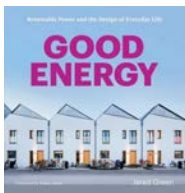
Ezra Haber Glenn, AICP, is Planning's regular film reviewer. He teaches in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and writes about cities and film. Follow him at urbanfilm.org and @UrbanFilmOrg.



JEFF LEVINE

Q&A

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**Good Energy:
Renewable Power and the
Design of Everyday Life**

By Jared Green, 2021, Princeton Architectural Press, 239 pp.; \$40

“HOMES OF ANY size and for any income level can be designed to meet their own energy needs,” argues author Jared Green in this gorgeously illustrated book. Fifteen of its 35 case studies deal with housing; the remaining 20 include community spaces, schools, offices, and power plants, with roughly half from the U.S. and half from overseas.

The book is a visual treat that doesn't duck difficult questions. For instance, the reader learns that El Paso's new 73-unit complex (for seniors and people with disabilities earning 30 percent or less of the annual median income) “produces all the energy the community consumes in a calendar year.” It did cost about twice as much to build as a conventional public housing project, but maintenance costs are low, and the complex pays nothing for energy.

How can the new net-zero, energy-positive world work? The introduction points to a few tactics, like extra planning and openness in the face of policy and regulatory obstacles, financial innovations that lower costs, integrating novel technologies and approaches that serve multiple functions, and using these projects to educate local

**The book is
a visual treat
that doesn't
duck difficult
questions in its
35 case studies,
15 of which focus
on sustainable
housing.**

communities. The author also suggests replacing mined and processed materials with “local, sustainably harvested structural wood that stores carbon or reuses waste materials.”

The text includes both high- and low-end projects in widely differing locales, and difficulties are addressed. One brief mention reaches beyond design: “To protect our remaining ecosystems and biological diversity, there needs to be more compact infill development in urban and suburban centers. Development outside these areas should be strictly reserved for regenerative projects that support ecological preservation and restoration.” This seems likely to be a tough sell. Can advanced building designs like these pave the way for urban planning boundaries with teeth?

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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THE STATE OF

GENTRIF

How will the pandemic, racial equity commitments, and climate threats change gentrification and displacement patterns?

By PETE SAUNDERS

Activists called for a community benefits agreement during the development of the Obama Presidential Center on Chicago's South Side.

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ICATION



COMPARED TO MOST recent presidential libraries honoring former American presidents, the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago has witnessed prolonged development and construction delays. The Obamas and the Obama Foundation made the conscious choice to place the presidential library on Chicago's South Side, instrumental in shaping the lives and values of the former president and first lady.

They settled on a site in the South Side's Woodlawn neighborhood. But despite the Obamas' popularity in their hometown, there was considerable pushback from community residents who feared the institution's entry into the community. There were promises by the Obama Foundation to build an asset that would complement the community, not overwhelm it. A skeptical community, however, believed otherwise.

Why? Gentrification and displacement.

Concerns over these two forces—neighborhood revitalization and subsequent displacement of low-income residents by affluent newcomers, in this case drawn by a new community asset—led many community activists to push for a negotiated community benefits agreement between the Obama Foundation and a coalition of community residents.

When President Obama left office in January 2017, plans for the Obama Center were fully fleshed out and ready to go, but court challenges meant the project endured significant delays. Ultimately, however, the courts rejected the challenges and construction began in August 2021.

A victory for the development status quo? Not exactly. While the challenges were rejected, there's a recognition among activists that investment is necessary to see the community improvements they want, and they did make the Obama Center a better institution in the process. This may represent the next phase of how American cities deal with gentrification.

Time to revisit a critical question: Can gentrification happen without displacement? And can planners spark neighborhood growth and revitalization without fundamentally altering neighborhood character?

CHANGING PATTERNS OF GENTRIFICATION

IPOSED THESE QUESTIONS a couple of years ago in *Planning* (bit.ly/scales-gentrification) and found examples of municipalities doing what they could to promote equitable growth. More of that is happening as planners and local governments realize that avoiding displacement that destabilizes communities requires mindful action.

First, consider that the notion of revitalization and inherent displacement is a relatively recent phenomenon in American history. Our nation's policy makers haven't yet developed effective responses because the gentrification process is new, at least in an urban context.

For much of our history, American cities were founded, settled, grew, and expanded outward, with inward areas always being replenished by immigrants who followed the same pattern. As cities developed into metropolitan areas, the process continued. As metropolitan areas grew larger,

the process expanded to newer cities and started again. Competition over land in inner portions of cities never really occurred prior to about 1970; the socioeconomic escalator that carried people from inner city neighborhoods to outlying city areas, then to the suburbs, and later to the suburban periphery was augmented by the migration to Sun Belt cities.

A sweeping look at U.S. Census population counts for the 50 largest cities in 1950 and beyond bears this out. I selected the 1950 census as a starting point for several reasons. It was the first completed after the two tumultuous decades that witnessed the Great Depression and World War II, and the nation had secured its position as the world's preeminent manufacturer. Also, it took place right at the onset of two significant trends: postwar suburban expansion and the rise of southern and western cities.



HARVEY WINJE/THE DIVERSITY OF GENTRIFICATION: MULTIPLE FORMS OF GENTRIFICATION IN MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL



Can gentrification happen without displacement? And can planners spark revitalization without fundamentally altering neighborhood character?

The nation's northeastern and midwestern cities were at or near their peak in population and prestige, but many were at the start of a precipitous decline.

Looking at census counts between 1950 and 2020 can reveal some interesting patterns. The 1950s were not particularly kind to the nation's largest cities. During the decade, 24 of the top 50 cities lost population, including 15 of the top 21. Those cities fared even worse in the 1960s, with 30 out of 50 losing population, including 17 of the top 21. But some places were finding a way to reverse the decline.

Gentrification and displacement are increasing in Minneapolis (above) and St. Paul. Common concerns from residents in gentrifying neighborhoods included housing affordability, business turnover, displacement fears, and shifting racial demographics, according to a 2019 report about the Twin Cities.

New York City was unique in that it posted a population loss between 1950 and 1960 but a population rebound between 1960 and 1970. (Technically, Richmond, Virginia, and Jacksonville, Florida, did this as well, but through expansive annexations or consolidations.) Several other cities (San Francisco; Seattle; Oakland, California; and Portland, Oregon, among others) showed population gains by the 1990 census. Even more cities (Chicago, Boston, Denver, and Atlanta, among others) grew during the 1990s, according to the 2000 census.

True enough, factors like increased immigration played a major role in city population growth at the time. But most who study cities recognize that the tectonic shift in the American economy—from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-, service-, and technology-based one—can account for much of the population growth of large cities. Particularly in many large, older cities, a growing number of people were choosing to forego a suburban lifestyle and stake a claim in urban neighborhoods.

Of course, this came at a cost. Many of the neighborhoods those early urban pioneers were drawn to were “gateway” neighborhoods—places where urban newcomers could settle cheaply, find good jobs, and get their bearings, all while saving money that would allow them to move out and move up. Homes in gateway neighborhoods became available and in demand because of broader economic trends. Those gateway neighborhoods soon became what they never had been before—less transient, more settled, and more expensive. That pattern set the stage for what we understand today as gentrification.

Three things, however, have occurred since the start of the current decade that dramatically alter the impact of this revitalization and displacement cycle. The COVID-19 pandemic; the protests in the aftermath of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery; and the rapid acceleration of climate change impacts have exposed fissures in our divided society. The push for equity has gained a renewed sense of urgency. But it's an open question as to whether our society is able—or willing—to address it.

THE “RACIAL RECKONING”

MINNEAPOLIS WAS CERTAINLY in the forefront of national debates about racial and economic inequality in 2020. The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin sparked thousands of protests around the world.

Minneapolis and nearby St. Paul have witnessed their fair share of racial inequities, and a report prepared just prior to the murder and subsequent protests highlighted underlying themes in the Twin Cities. That 2019 report, from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, took a quantitative and qualitative approach to examining gentrification in the region.

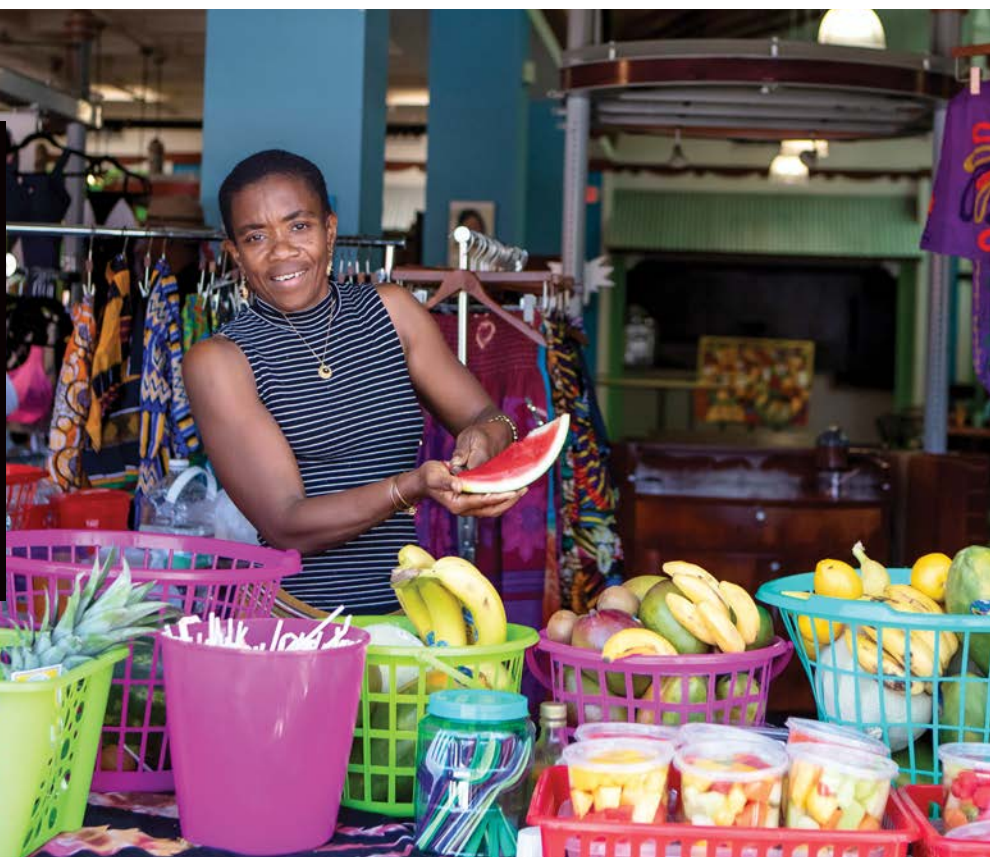
On the quantitative side, the researchers found significant evidence of gentrification (defined broadly in the report as the upgrading of previously disinvested neighborhoods) in about a third of Minneapolis-St. Paul census tracts that were deemed vulnerable for such activity in 2000. Between 2000 and 2015,

Located a few miles in from the coast, Miami’s Little Haiti neighborhood is being inundated by newcomers whose coastal properties are threatened by climate change-driven flooding. The shift is driving up housing prices, and putting longtime residents and local businesses, like those in the Haitian Cultural Center (below), at risk of displacement.

gentrifying neighborhoods saw increases in the number of residents with bachelor’s degrees, surpassing citywide educational attainment trends. Yet during the same period, both gentrifying and nongentrifying neighborhoods saw a decline in median household income. How so? The researchers found higher levels of inequality in gentrifying neighborhoods, as low-income households saw their incomes decrease at a rate faster than higher-income residents’ wages were rising. Rents and home prices in gentrifying neighborhoods generally grew at a rate twice that of nongentrifying areas.

The qualitative analysis, however, illustrated a recognition of the tensions that would later boil over in the aftermath of Floyd’s death. While local officials were split on whether displacement was occurring because of increased investment, neighborhood leaders were firm in stating that physical and cultural displacement was disproportionately impacting people of color and people with low incomes. One critical trend identified by neighborhood leaders? The rise of overcriminalization—the expansion of

Climate change could be causing much more displacement in coastal cities, particularly along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.



laws and law enforcement activity—in Twin Cities neighborhoods. A quote from the report sums up the debate:

A long-term renter of color expressed a bit of irony as she argued that crime has always been an issue in the area that all families, irrespective of race or class, have expressed concern about over the years. However, this community stakeholder argued that a new level of attention has been given to the conversation in the last few years, signifying to this long-term resident that a new residential demographic has arrived and is using its power to influence the direction of the neighborhood's attention and resources.

This year, the role of police in cities became the proxy debate on gentrification in Minneapolis—and a referendum on gentrification perceptions. Activists who were behind the “defund the police” movement that came out of the George Floyd protests were successful in getting a measure on the ballot that would amend the city’s charter to replace the Minneapolis Police Department with a public-health-oriented Department of Public Safety. But on November 2, Minneapolis voters soundly rejected the measure—perhaps signaling a desire for incremental change, rather than a radical one.

CLIMATE CHANGE

MIAMI’S LITTLE HAITI neighborhood sits a few miles inland from the city’s gleaming oceanfront condo towers.

Much of Miami’s growth over the last 50 years has been fueled by oceanfront development and considerable investment from the Caribbean and Latin America. Little Haiti, however, grew as a humble community of Haitian exiles.

Little Haiti does not offer the stunning ocean views that beachfront condos do. But it does offer something the beachfront does not: relative protection from frequent flooding. Little Haiti is becoming more desirable because it rests on land that is seven to 10 feet above sea level. Oceanfront condos don’t enjoy that kind of natural protection from sea level rise driven by climate change. As a result, investors are flooding into the area, driving up home prices

and rents and displacing longtime residents and local businesses.

Climate change could cause much more displacement in coastal cities, particularly along the Atlantic and Gulf shores, but also in fire-plagued communities in the West. Recently built subdivisions nestled deep into forested foothills—areas known as the wildland-urban interface—are becoming the targets of recent wildfires, and many of their residents may begin looking for safer locations. Climate change is already altering how and where Americans live.

THE PANDEMIC

IT’S WELL UNDERSTOOD that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income communities, both in terms of economics and health. Working-class residents who work primarily in the service sector were expected to keep the fundamentals of our economy running, working as big-box store clerks and cashiers, workers in food processing plants, delivery drivers, and more.

These essential workers negotiated the risks of working with the public through a pandemic and were initially heaped with thanks for their role in keeping the economy afloat. Yet today, many service jobs go unfilled, as workers are reconsidering their options in the late stages (one hopes) of the pandemic.

If COVID revealed anything, it’s that our nation’s reliance on a low-paid service class played a key role in the development and spread of the professional class that spurs gentrification and displacement in our cities. In many ways, the service class supports the upper-middle-class lifestyle, with few opportunities for service-class members to enter the middle class. This contributes to the destabilization of neighborhoods that later become the targets for future gentrification and displacement.

Service workers would benefit from a new avenue for upward economic mobility, similar to what Ford Motor Company did in 1914 when it announced that it would more than double the pay of assembly-line workers to five dollars a day. The action validated manufacturing work as legitimate work and increased stability and productivity at the same time. Manufacturing workers were able to develop communities of their own, leading to the growth of the modern American middle class.

Could such a strategy be in the works today, as we strive to enter a post-COVID era?

DISPLACEMENT BY DECLINE

URBAN OBSERVERS ARE beginning to get a better understanding of the dynamics in cities today, beginning with the notion that, nationwide, urban decline continues to spread faster than urban revitalization. More urban census tracts are sliding further into poverty than climbing out of it. Does this set the stage for future gentrification?

Consider Chicago’s south lakefront. The 15-square-mile area just south of the Loop, hugging Lake Michigan, has long been known as a gateway community for Blacks coming to Chicago. Its transition from white to Black began more than a hundred years ago; there had been a small Black

community beginning in the 1890s, but by 1920, Blacks constituted 32 percent of the Grand Boulevard area (one of nine designated community areas that make up the south lakefront). Just 10 years later, in 1930, Blacks made up 94 percent of the more than 87,000 people in Grand Boulevard.

The stifling segregation imposed on Black residents in Chicago concentrated Blacks in the south lakefront. In 1950 there were nearly 537,000 residents—36,000 people per square mile, or 56 people per acre—and more than 80 percent of them were Black. The concentration was highest in the Grand Boulevard community, with 114,000 residents—66,000 people per square mile, or 104 people per acre—of whom 99 percent were Black. It was a self-contained, vibrant community.

But its high density—paired with a lack of private investment in housing and commercial development and a lack of public investment in schools, parks, and other public services—also served as a reminder that Blacks did not enjoy the same opportunities as whites in Chicago. As new neighborhoods opened up to Black residents, the exodus began in earnest.

The south lakefront was virtually emptied. The area lost nearly 250,000 residents by 1980, falling below 290,000. Another 90,000 residents left by 2010. After six consecutive decennial cycles of population loss, the south lakefront had less than 40 percent of the residents it did at its 1950 peak.

This movement was quite different from the displacement we discuss today, but it was—and is—displacement nonetheless. Residents who could afford it left a resource-starved area for neighborhoods with more amenities and opportunities. The people who remained were the ones without the resources to do the same, accelerating a cycle of decline. And as formerly white neighborhoods become new segregated Black neighborhoods, the cycle repeats.

The 2020 census, however, illustrated a turnaround for Chicago's south lakefront. New development, largely concentrated in the Near South Side neighborhood closest to the Loop but still scattered throughout much of the area, pushed the south lakefront's population up by nearly 10 percent.

South lakefront communities have become more diverse, as white, Latino, and Asian residents move in. They've also become more educated as people with college degrees move in. Importantly, the same is also true for the increasing number of Black residents who moved in. But displacement by decline, characterized by generations of neglect creating conditions of near abandonment, followed by a spark of revitalization, exacts a heavy toll on people and the cities they inhabit. It's a recognizable pattern in many cities. At its heart, its core, is Black avoidance.

CAN DEVELOPMENT BECOME MORE EQUITABLE?

WHAT IF THE ONUS to confront gentrification and displacement wasn't placed on the residents fearing change, but on the developers creating it? What if developers were incentivized to build inclusive projects in the same way they're incentivized to build environmentally sustainable ones?

That's the thrust behind the LEEP Initiative (Leadership in Engineering Equitable Participation). It represents one possible solution. It's an initiative emerging from the West Coast, a region associated with perhaps

the most contentious debates on gentrification and displacement.

The Urban Land Institute's fall meeting in Chicago last October provided insight on the initiative with a presentation from two key players: Ana McPhail, PhD, executive director of the emerging nonprofit behind LEEP, and Alan Dones, the developer of two projects in Oakland, California, that are serving as test cases for LEEP principles and standards.

In a nutshell, LEEP aims to address many issues that are challenging to confront, or rarely even considered, in the development process. By integrating solutions into developments for issues like employment and career development, workforce housing and affordability, environmental justice, small-business support, ownership and wealth creation, and general physical and mental well-being, developers would be able to gain certification for inclusively developed





There is, perhaps, a sensitivity to the negative impacts of revitalization that we haven't seen since the civil rights movement.

projects in the same way LEED does for environmentally sustainable ones.

Dones's proposed Mandela Station, a mixed-use, transit-oriented development in West Oakland, embodies the goals of LEEP. Designed to serve the needs of West Oakland's current and future residents, the development plans to offer 760 residential units, 300,000 square feet of office and life sciences space, 53,000 square feet of ground-level retail, and 1.7 acres of open space—all on a 5.5-acre site.

Dones is clear about his approach to development and how he envisions equity going forward: "It is time for the built environment

Mandela Station, a proposed mixed-use development in West Oakland, is a test case for integrating the goals of the LEEP Initiative, including transit-oriented development. The project integrates housing, commercial uses, and a Bay Area Rapid Transit station.

to embrace equality in the same way it has embraced environmental sustainability."

The bottom line? There is, perhaps, a sensitivity to the negative impacts of revitalization that we haven't seen since the civil rights movement. Local governments and institutions are more openly acknowledging those impacts and becoming more intentional about creating tools that mitigate them. On the other side, community activists are growing more informed and savvy and have learned to negotiate with development, rather than push to stop it.

So now, new questions arise: What role will planners play? Can we put what we've learned into viable solutions for cities?

Pete Saunders is a practicing urban planner and the community and economic development director of a community in suburban Chicago. He has been the editor of the urbanist blog Corner Side Yard since 2012 and is currently an urban policy columnist for Bloomberg.

2022

Trends for Planners: A Sneak Peek

A foresight-driven compass for the new year and beyond. By PETRA HURTADO

COVID-19 HAS TURNED the world upside down. When the American Planning Association's Foresight team entered the second year of our partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the symptoms and side effects of the pandemic were reflected in nearly every trend, changing the way we live, work, and play. And while the world is still trying to flatten the COVID curve, we need to flatten others—social inequalities, the climate emergency, and the speed of technological innovation that makes it difficult to keep up.

This year, we will publish the *2022 Trend Report for Planners*, your guide for the new year and beyond. With guidance from our Trend Scouting Foresight Community, a diverse group of 31 forward-thinking thought leaders, we've identified what planners need to act on today, what we need to start preparing



for, and what we need to better understand and continue watching throughout the year. The report also takes a look at

some big-picture developments and trend patterns—and what they all mean for the future of planning.

Here, take a sneak peek at six of the nearly 100 trends and signals from the report.

Additional topics range from innovative ways to encourage equitable community investment to the future of data collection and analytics, the climate emergency, and political polarization. We're also working on finding answers to some of our most pressing questions: What's the future of transportation? How can 3D printing be a part of the solution to the housing crisis? And why should it matter to planners when Jeff Bezos starts sending tourists into space?

Read on for the answers and more.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALISON SEIFFER



Ctrl + P Housing

WE'VE LONG BEEN TRACKING the potential impacts of 3D printing on planning, but in the past year, the trend has moved up from our watchlist to our high-priority trend list as housing and infrastructure projects get underway.

Specifically, we're closely observing a development near Austin, Texas. The 3D printing company ICON has joined forces with real estate developer Lennar and architecture firm Bjarke Ingels Group to build the largest community of 3D-printed homes to date. The project will print 100 energy-efficient houses that claim to be built faster, with less waste, and to last longer than conventional construction.

The tech could prove to be an attractive solution to many issues, from the housing crisis to supply chain challenges. Some companies are even exploring 3D printing food. While the broader impact of Austin's 3D-printed neighborhood is yet to be seen, this is certainly a trend planners should keep a close eye on.



The homes in the development near Austin, Texas, will feature 3D-printed architecture and photovoltaic roofs.

COURTESY ICON



The Great Resignation

THE TERM WAS COINED by Anthony Klotz, a psychologist and professor at Texas A&M, to describe the record-high wave of people quitting their jobs in 2021. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, four million people resigned in April 2021, and by July, the Bureau had registered almost 11 million open jobs.

The most impacted sectors are food and hospitality, comprising 6.8 percent of U.S. resignations in August 2021 alone. Outside the leisure sector, retail has been hit the hardest, with 4.7 percent in the same month. Health care, IT, construction, and transportation also have been affected.

Looking at these numbers, the COVID-19 connection becomes very clear. Many of those who resigned were low-wage workers in frontline positions during the darkest months of the pandemic, or those who worked in industries

that experienced extreme growth in the past few years. But the pandemic isn't the only reason for this development.

The trend of low-wage workers resigning was already building in 2019. Though it paused during the worst of the pandemic, it picked back up more intensely in 2021. That's because the root causes—lack of benefits, minimum wage levels, and generally poor working conditions—existed well before COVID. The pandemic only added to these factors, increasing demand and burnout while introducing more safety and health concerns.

For people who shifted to working from home (or working from anywhere—yes, that's also in our report), the motivation to change jobs is different. Working from home means more flexibility, eliminated commutes, increased time with family and friends, and, for many, the opportunity to reconsider the so-called work-life balance.

According to psychologist Klotz, who we are as employees has long been key to American identity. But

working from home has driven people to shift their priorities and focus on life outside of work. Klotz argues that near-death situations or life-threatening illnesses usually inspire people “to take a step back and ask existential questions,” he told *Business Insider*. “Like, what gives me purpose and happiness in life, and does that match up with how I’m spending my time right now?”

Employers will need to keep this in mind when hiring new staff. Companies that don't offer certain perks in a post-COVID world will have a hard time finding competitive employees. The Great Resignation is currently spurring an increase in wages for low-income workers at a rate not seen since the Great Recession.

It's not yet clear how the Great Resignation will affect how we plan. We can already see, though, that it's impacting how people live, work, play, and move around, which means it must factor into how we think about future economic development, land use, and transportation planning.

INSIGHT FROM OUR TREND SCOUTS

“There are some trends in the food system that were accelerated by COVID, namely, increasingly digital access to food and increasing home delivery—the Amazonification of the way we get our food. I think that’s really impacting the way that food moves through our cities.” — Ben Kerrick, Senior Consultant at Karen Karp & Partners

Space Oddity

A NEW SPACE RACE

is underway, this time between private corporations like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic, and the United Launch Alliance.

This competition is fueling a revolution in launch capabilities in the U.S. and abroad that is leading to major cost reductions and sustained interest in the commodification of space. This commercialization and privatization can generally be explored in the context of three emerging trends: growing competition for commercial satellite launches, space tourism, and the long-term colonization of space.

Currently, the impacts of space travel mainly disrupt communities where launch sites are located, like Boca Chica, Texas, where test launches and failures occur.

A vision of the possibilities of space travel, circa 2018, from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

A ONCE IN A LIFETIME GETAWAY

THE GRAND TOUR

JUPITER / SATURN / URANUS / NEPTUNE
EXPERIENCE THE CHARM OF GRAVITY ASSISTS

EVERY 175 YEARS

NOW BOARDING

INSIGHT FROM OUR TREND SCOUTS

“I do see that youth is where a lot of the energy for mobilizing for social change is coming from right now. We need to support that, lift it up, and feed off of it. That energy is amazing and transformative.” — *Karen Chapple, PhD, Director of School of Cities and Professor, University of Toronto, and Professor Emerita, UC Berkeley*



Departure from the Cave

IF YOUR EMPLOYER ASKS YOU TO COME BACK to the office a few days a week but you're still wary about sharing a space with multiple people; if you recently went to a restaurant and couldn't wait to get back home; or if you went to the movie theater only to change your mind at the box office, even while vaccinated, you are not alone.

Researchers at University of California (UC), Berkeley, have been exploring a phenomenon called “cave syndrome.” For many, staying at home and away from people for almost two years has made it difficult to readjust to the social, public lives we once led. In general, the pandemic has caused an increase in mental health issues, including anxiety and depression.

While many people might be comfortable with their current work-from-home situation, UC Berkeley professor Robert W. Levenson says that, especially for young people, it is critical to leave the pandemic cave, reconnect with the outside world, and (re)establish a social life and career outside the home.

“Young people need to be in environments where unexpected things happen and where they are challenged and inspired,” he told *Berkeley News*. “They need to flex their emotional and perceptual muscles.”

Emiliana Simon-Thomas, science director at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, believes reestablishing these connections will be crucial for all of us to create a “sense of common humanity and collective interests.” Emerging from our pandemic caves might take a while, but “being physically near each other and not experiencing harmful or threatening consequences is the way that our nervous systems need to relearn the foundational trust and the affiliative and cooperative potential that is so fundamental to human ultrasociality.”

Planners can play an essential role in addressing mental health issues like pandemic cave syndrome. Location, equitable design, and accessibility of public and green places determine how we feel and experience space, and they can be important factors in our decision to leave the house in the first place. Planning can create spaces where unexpected things happen, where we are challenged in a good way, where we are inspired. And if done right—with intentional consideration for equity, diversity, and inclusion—planning can get us out of our caves and back in public spaces.



Ljubljana, Slovenia, converted its entire downtown to a car-free zone.

Green Signals from Across the Pond

THE REPORT TAKES a deep dive into environmental concerns, like the fact that we are running out of time when it comes to the climate emergency. But we're also observing some green signals on the horizon.

As some European countries ban short-distance flights, cities are transitioning to a car-free era. Oslo, Norway, and Ljubljana, Slovenia, have already converted their entire downtown areas into car-free

zones, while Paris and many others have implemented or are planning extensive car-free areas throughout cities.

It's not an entirely foreign concept in the U.S. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many American cities have converted streets into shared or pedestrian zones, some permanently. Making streets a place where people can safely spend their leisure time has become a

widely embraced trend and should continue to be considered by planners when imagining healthy, environmentally responsible communities.

Another green signal from abroad is the uptick in the circular economy, an approach to sustainable production and consumption that prioritizes sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling products and materials. In 2018, China stopped taking plastics from many

countries, including the U.S. As a result, these countries had to get creative about what to do with their waste. The EU adopted the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) in 2020, a mix of legislative and nonlegislative measures. The circular economy is starting to grow in the U.S., with more retailers exploring buyback and recycling programs. And as supply chain backups continue, we could see this trend further accelerate.



In Oregon, multifamily buildings are now allowed in neighborhoods once zoned for single family.

Zoning Reform Goes Mainstream

SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING is the dominant residential land use in the U.S., largely due to local zoning codes and maps that have remained unchanged for decades—but not for much longer.

Many local governments are looking into zoning reform as a means of increasing housing choice and affordability and reducing racial and economic segregation. With cities like Minneapolis revising their codes to permit “missing middle” housing types in formerly restrictive districts and California and Oregon instituting statewide bans on single-family-only zoning, a movement is building, and quickly. Even at the federal level, legislators are working to tie local funding to the revision of exclusionary zoning regulations.

Expect these measures to continue to gain momentum in cities and states of all sizes as housing costs, displacement, and homelessness continue to rise.



COMING SOON

2022 TREND REPORT FOR PLANNERS

Developed in partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Consortium for Scenario Planning, this research can help planners guide change and create more sustainable and equitable outcomes. Read the report and learn more about APA Foresight at planning.org/foresight.

Welcome to the Metaverse

THE TERM “METAVERSE” was coined in the 1990s, but it’s gained more attention since Facebook changed its name to Meta in October 2021. While the metaverse doesn’t exist just yet, it might be the next step in the evolution of the internet.

The metaverse is a computer-generated universe or “extended reality” that combines augmented, virtual, and mixed reality.

According to proponents, it will be the new platform we use to socialize, conduct business, and do anything else that can be done in a virtual, 3D space. It’s expected to be as transformative to the ways we live, work, and play as the cell phone. And for those of us growing tired of being on video all day, we can create cartoon avatars who can mimic our facial expressions, wear digital outfits we buy, and take on alternate personalities.

In his announcement about Meta, founder Mark Zuckerberg says he envisions the metaverse to be “an embodied internet, where instead of just viewing content, you are in it. And you feel present with other people as if you were in other places, having different experiences that you couldn’t necessarily do on a 2D app or web page, like dancing, for example, or different types of fitness.”

As the company’s new name reveals, Meta plans to be a big player in this space. So do others in the big tech sector, ranging from Microsoft to Epic Games. Tech giants have often been accused of prioritizing profit over the common good, or as Jessa Crispin, columnist at the *Guardian*, put it around the time former Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos briefly traveled to space, “tech billionaires [are] trying to leave the world to evade responsibility for their malevolent influence on it.” Many believe that allowing these companies control over the metaverse could be a dystopian nightmare.

So far, it’s not clear what the metaverse will mean for privacy, how inclusive the experience will be, or how harmful content will be mitigated or avoided. There’s obviously a lot to unpack here, but it could have enormous impacts on the trajectory of our future. We face great risks repeating past mistakes from the analog world in a digital society. Ultimately, we need to think carefully and critically about how people will engage with this platform and how that will change lifestyles, behaviors, and the work of planners.



Louis Vuitton creative director Nicolas Ghesquière, left, designed skins within the League of Legends video game for the champion Senna, with matching merchandise to buy IRL.

Petra Hurtado, PhD, is the research director of APA. Learn more about APA’s applied research program at planning.org/research.



A step-by-step
roadmap for policy that
balances public and
private sector needs—
and unlocks billions
in potential revenue.

By *CHRISSEY MANCINI NICHOLS*
and *JOHN DORSETT, AICP*

HOW TO CREATE A CURB MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

'CURB MANAGEMENT' IS THE HOTTEST TERM IN TRANSPORTATION RIGHT NOW.

Much of the current conversation is focused on the exciting parts: technology, delivery reservation systems, parklets, camera monitoring, passenger loading zones, scooters. In other words, transportation glitz and glamour.

We need that glamour because it energizes stakeholders, attracts investments, and moves policy forward. But we also need to do the work to create substance. Failure to set standards and priorities will continue to undervalue the most prime piece of public real estate in our cities and exacerbate all the inefficiencies and problems that typically result from this undervaluation.

This story is part of *Planning's* series "The Billion Dollar Curb," a multipart roadmap to help communities of all sizes identify curb management strategies that balance competing demands and equity concerns with improving service and recovering cost. As part of this work, the authors of this series explore findings from our Walker Consultants' survey of on-street parking policies in 50 U.S. capital cities, plus lessons from curb management research that tests new technology for collecting curb data. Our goal? Plans, policies, and pricing strategies that can help cities control the dynamic curb and the billions of dollars locked up in it.

Over the course of the series so far, we've chronicled how cities have undervalued their valuable curbs by turning them into private-vehicle storage—and lost out on billions in revenue as a result. That's largely happened because cities don't have priorities in place to guide use of the space.

That's where a curb management framework comes in. This living document guides a crucial prioritization process for how the curb functions. It also provides a lens for creating policy, treatments, and monetization, plus helps cities better evaluate technology and partnership opportunities.

From financing mechanisms to zoning to new tech and troves of data, cities have access to a variety of tools and resources that can help them create and meet goals that balance public and private sector needs. Developing the framework is the hard work. It might not be as glamorous as cameras or geofencing, but it will ensure curb access is prioritized to make places more equitable, improve the level of service for everyone, support local business, advance mobility and climate goals, and create a sustainable revenue source.



define your curb goals

THE FIRST STEP in developing a curb management framework is deciding what you want it to accomplish. Drawing on citywide planning and policy initiatives, community input, and stakeholder feedback, create a set of goals that can help guide how the space is prioritized. Be sure they are in line with local priorities for mobility, equity, access, livability, sustainability, safety, economic development, cost recovery, and more.

Education and outreach should occur throughout the development of a curb management framework, but it is especially important at this stage. On-the-ground user experience of the curbside from multiple perspectives and modes can make real connections to data analysis and evaluation—support that is necessary to help pass new policy.

Once goals are set, curb functions or guidelines for curb uses along a block or corridor should be determined. For example, curb functions used by the cities of San Francisco and Seattle include access for people, goods, and commerce; public space and services; storage for vehicles; movement; greening; space activation; and mobility.



Bikes, deliveries, pedestrians, ride-hailing, and private vehicles all vie for limited curb space. A framework can help balance these uses and needs.

A SUCCESSFUL CURB FRAMEWORK NEEDS...

HIGH-LEVEL GOALS based on citywide plans and policies

LOCATIONS SPECIFICALLY SELECTED due to high activity

A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING of how curb space will function and be allocated to different users

LAND-USE TYPES mapped out to help guide curb functions

CURB PRIORITIES based on those land uses and functions

A MEANS OF EVALUATING policies, tools, and strategies used to allocate curb space along a block or corridor, including performance metrics

RESOURCES AND PROCESSES that help operationalize curb management across city departments and with the public



ID land-use types

BECAUSE ADJACENT land uses should guide how curb functions are allocated on a block and along a corridor, the next step is categorizing land-use types. San Francisco has identified six, ranging from single-family residential to entertainment districts to industrial areas.

With curb functions set and land uses categorized, cities can determine priorities and create curb typologies based on adjacent land uses and overall goals. For example, if a goal for curb output is to reduce congestion and increase access, a busy commercial corridor typology with lots of retail and restaurant activity should prioritize people and their mobility.

build a digital index

TYPICALLY, curb management policies are most beneficial and necessary in locations and around land uses with a lot of activity, like commercial centers, entertainment districts, and mixed-use areas. To determine if a location is a good candidate, we need to know how much curb space is available, how the space is regulated, and how it is used. We also need to create a baseline productivity metric determined through an understanding of dwell times, turnover, and occupancy.

We also need to create a baseline productivity metric determined through an understanding of dwell times, turnover, and occupancy that includes an equity evaluation based on both demographics and modal share.

Few cities have an organized inventory of how curbs are regulated or used. More typical is an annual parking survey or documentation on curb regulations that may or may not have been updated with changes over time. In the past, we walked each block to detail the location and regulation of every sign, curb cut, and fire hydrant. The inventory then likely sat in an Excel database in one city department.

Today, given that new curb dynamics involve multiple agencies, private-sector partners, and changing demands, we need more than a static inventory. A shareable, digital version can help cities visualize, analyze, and update curb strategies and regulations and communicate with the private sector to manage activities in real time.

Companies like Populus and Coord provide tools and apps to capture curb and sign images and pull together existing data (those old, static Excel sheets) into standardized formats. The nonprofit Shared Streets is also developing CurbWheel, an app cities can use to create a digital inventory.

With multiple curb-inventory and planning products on the market, we need a standard data specification so cities can work and plan together—and the private sector can talk to and across cities with one language, similar to public transit's General Transit Feed Specification, to park scooters, reserve delivery space, and pay access fees. The Open Mobility Foundation is developing a standard data specification for curb regulations, events, and metrics that will provide a uniform way for cities to identify curb uses, pull in real-time data from third parties like parking meters, and determine statistics on curb uses such as parking occupancy, ride-hailing dwell times, and scooter parking.

When inventorying the curb, we also need to rethink how we itemize the space. Digital curbs won't be numbered as spaces, but more likely measured in terms of linear feet, with changes in use throughout the day and week based on city priorities and demands.

collect curb use data

ONCE THE CURB IS INVENTORIED, we need to understand how it is used throughout the day with updated data-collection practices. Ride-hailing drop-offs happen in less than a minute, and on-demand delivery drivers quickly jump out of their cars to pick up food. Collecting curb activity by walking blocks on the hour to observe occupancy at a point in time could miss most of that activity.

As part of Walker's curb management research project, we set out to capture that dynamic curb-activity data. The results were unlike anything we've seen in past studies, where we collected point-in-time data on the hour or half hour (i.e., observing curb occupancy at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., etc.).

Using camera-based technology (a goal of the research study is to vet and test curb management technology), we first worked with Sarasota, Florida, and VADE, a technology company developing solutions to manage the curb. In February and March of 2021, we positioned 16 solar-powered cameras to cover downtown curb and alley locations regulated for parking, no standing, and loading zones. We collected data every 10 seconds to ensure we would capture all activity, including quick drop-offs and deliveries—activity we would have missed if we only collected point-in-time use on the hour. Over 24 days, we amassed 13.2 million data points on occupancy, turnover, dwell times, and violations (all manually reviewed for accuracy). We also developed a useful dashboard to analyze the data.

Our findings show why precise data on curb activity matters for planning to maximize curb space and more efficiently serve businesses. When we compared alley occupancy on the hour (or point-in-time, i.e., 9 a.m., 10 a.m., etc.) with occupancy data by minute across the hour (60 points in time, i.e., 9:01 a.m., 9:02 a.m., etc.), we found there was

more capacity in the alleys during specific periods, especially during peak times. For example, at 2 p.m. on the dot, alleys were over 80 percent occupied; 15 minutes later, some of those vehicles had delivered their goods and left. If we only had the 2 p.m. point-in-time data, we would have assumed the alleys were over 80 percent occupied and unavailable to accommodate more deliveries. We would not know there would be as much as 40 percent more capacity across the hour. Now, we have a real understanding of how the space is used throughout the day, and we can plan for how to stretch that capacity to plan for more efficient deliveries.

We also compared Sarasota's parking meter transaction data and found it was inconsistent with our camera-based data, meaning if the city were only looking at parking transaction data, they would have missed some activity, especially short-term parking stays.

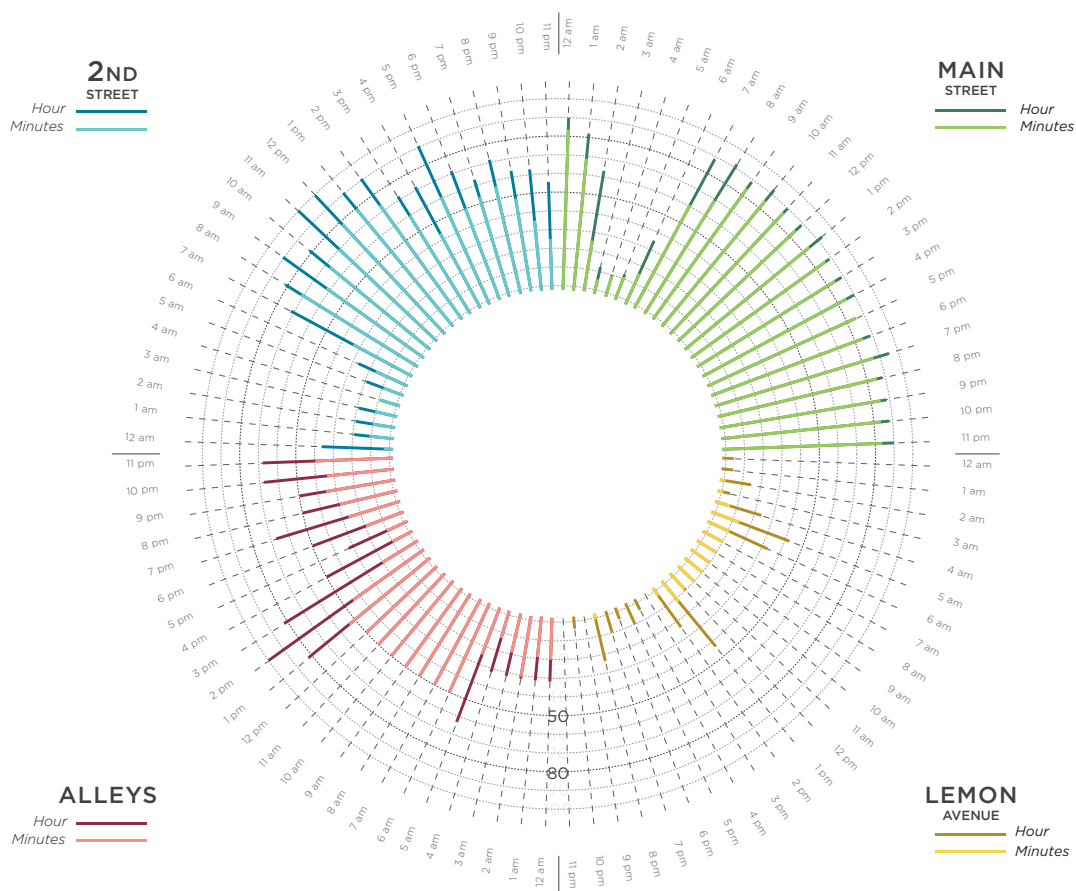
Not all cities can make an investment in cameras and technology, so we set out to test manual data collection for curb activity. Partnering with Noblesville, Indiana, our team collected data in the city's busy downtown commercial core, an area where the curb is mostly regulated for parking and loading, and where the city recently transitioned long-term parking to short-term, 10-minute spaces. Working in pairs to cover individual blocks, we collected curb-use activity every 15 minutes over the course of a day, resulting in thousands of data points.

We found that manual data collection requires a significant staffing effort, with one person needed to monitor each block and even one side of the street, with the help of well-organized data sheets. In areas with several different uses (e.g., ride hailing, parking, delivery), one person should monitor one or two uses to collect accurate dwell times.

We're currently working in two more cities to collect data as part of an overall analysis that will inform a set of universal curb typologies and use statistics based on adjacent land uses. We'll share our findings and the details of vetting and testing all of the technology in a later article. But the evidence is already clear: To understand curb use in a meaningful way, cities need to collect precise data for planning and ongoing evaluation.

DYNAMIC CURB ACTIVITY IN DOWNTOWN SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Solar-powered cameras recorded curb use every 10 seconds, amassing 13.2 million data points on occupancy, turnover, dwell times, vehicle color, activity, and violations (all manually reviewed for accuracy). Compared to hourly data recordings (shown in darker shades below), this approach delivers a more complete picture of curb use—and how quickly that can change throughout the day. Streets with shorter stays, for example, have more curb capacity than expected.



A ROADMAP FOR CURB MANAGEMENT

This story is the third installment in *Planning's* series "The Billion Dollar Curb," a data-driven review of equitable and lucrative plans, policies, and pricing strategies that can help communities of all sizes better manage their curb space. For previous parts in the series and to keep up with future installments, visit planning.org/planning.



outline your vision

ONCE YOUR GOALS, priorities, and data are in place, it's time to evaluate and define your strategy and everything you'll need for curb allocation: pickup and drop-off zones, transit stops, bus lanes, short-term parking, commercial loading zones, electric-vehicle charging, and all of the associated fees, technology, and partnerships.

The process for implementing tools and strategies must include an equity evaluation to prioritize access based on demographics (do lower-income people have affordable options?) and modal choice (what percent of trips are

COMMERCIAL LOADING ZONE PILOT: COLUMBUS, OHIO

Lessons learned from an on-demand, reservation-based system for delivery drivers.

The city of Columbus, Ohio, wanted to manage the growing demand for curb access from delivery vehicles, which was leading to dangerous double parking that blocked crosswalks and travel, bicycle, and bus lanes. In November 2019, the city entered into a partnership with curbFlow, a commercial delivery curb management company, to conduct a six-month pilot to test an on-demand, curbside, reservation-based system for delivery drivers. The city wanted to use the pilot to better understand the operational needs of commercial and on-demand delivery operators and test whether a delivery reservation system could make the streets safer and improve overall efficiency for businesses.

Drivers were required to register and download a smartphone app, then reserve space at one of eight loading zone locations. When drivers arrived, they were required to check in and out via the app. To enforce the zones, a companion app was embedded in the devices used by parking enforcement, allowing officers to patrol the area in real time.

By the pilot's end, 2,400 commercial and on-demand drivers had registered with the app from more than 100 companies, ranging in size from commercial delivery like FedEx to on-demand services like DoorDash. The loading zones



An app allowing drivers to reserve designated loading spaces in Columbus, Ohio, was used by more than 100 companies.

were used 19,000 times in total over the pilot, or about 105 times per day. The average dwell time per vehicle (or the time it sat in the loading zone) was about five minutes, with freight and parcel deliveries dwelling longer than on-demand deliveries. Peak demand was from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Lessons learned include:

RESERVED LOADING ZONES

prevented illegal and double parking, plus made for faster pickups and drop-offs for merchants near loading zones by at least two minutes.

DEDICATED LOADING ZONES can encourage participation based on the quantity. Some delivery companies did not participate because it required changing

company policy for just eight loading zones.

ENFORCEMENT IS IMPORTANT

to the success of a reservation system. The city's parking enforcement does not always issue tickets to drivers of commercial vehicles for illegal parking, so there was less incentive to use the system.

NO FEES WERE CHARGED for curb reservation. The city found that a pay-per-use model using credit cards would not work because the transaction fees would be higher than the revenue generated.

APP RESISTANCE was an issue with some drivers and must be overcome for the system to be successful—and fully monetized with reservation fees.

Overall, basing a loading zone reservation system on a smartphone app can be an impediment to success. If drivers are unwilling to download the app or do not check in and out of the space, there is no way to manage, enforce, or charge a fee for the reservation. One solution could be camera-based technology and software with license plate or decal recognition.

As part of Walker's curb management practice, we are researching the best available solutions, as well as how to implement this technology for more effective enforcement.



Each framework should cater to local needs. In downtown Noblesville, Indiana, activities that support the commercial core like parking and pedestrian access are a special focus.

taken by biking, walking, transit, or driving compared to the percent of curb space allocated for these uses?). Cities must also evaluate the trade-offs, like losing parking space to make way for parklets that can help support businesses and provide traffic calming.

Walker's curb management research shows us how these needs can change throughout the day, too. In some locations, commercial delivery peaks in the morning, late afternoon, and overnight. In others, there is less of a need for loading zones and more demand for parking and passenger pickup and drop-off spaces. This data can tell us how to prioritize or "flex" the curb based on demand to help eliminate conflicts. During morning and evening rush hours, for example, people movement can often be prioritized over commercial deliveries.

launch a pilot for testing

IN GENERAL, curb management planning is a product of trial and error. Regularly testing which types of treatments will work, what is a good fit for the area, and how the public might respond are key. These treatments will likely change over time, so solutions should be selected with flexibility in mind, especially as mobility and tech options continue to evolve quickly.

One of the most effective methods of presenting curb management treatment options is to organize a pilot program for testing. This allows the community, the private sector, and other stakeholders to interact with the treatment and provide feedback on their experiences.

create an all-user guide

THIS PROCESS CAN BE a maze of policies, plans, fees, and regulations. To bring everyone on board, cities should develop an easy-to-read, digestible reference document that details the practices and processes for permitting, design guidance, and development review. For example, the guide should detail how to apply for a passenger loading zone and tell city staff how departments can modify or remove curb regulations.

The framework should also detail how policy, programming, and pricing changes will impact work and the need for integration across departments. That includes steps and best practices for pilot projects and new technology, partnership agreements with private entities and technology companies, and best practices for potential revenue sharing or public-private partnerships.

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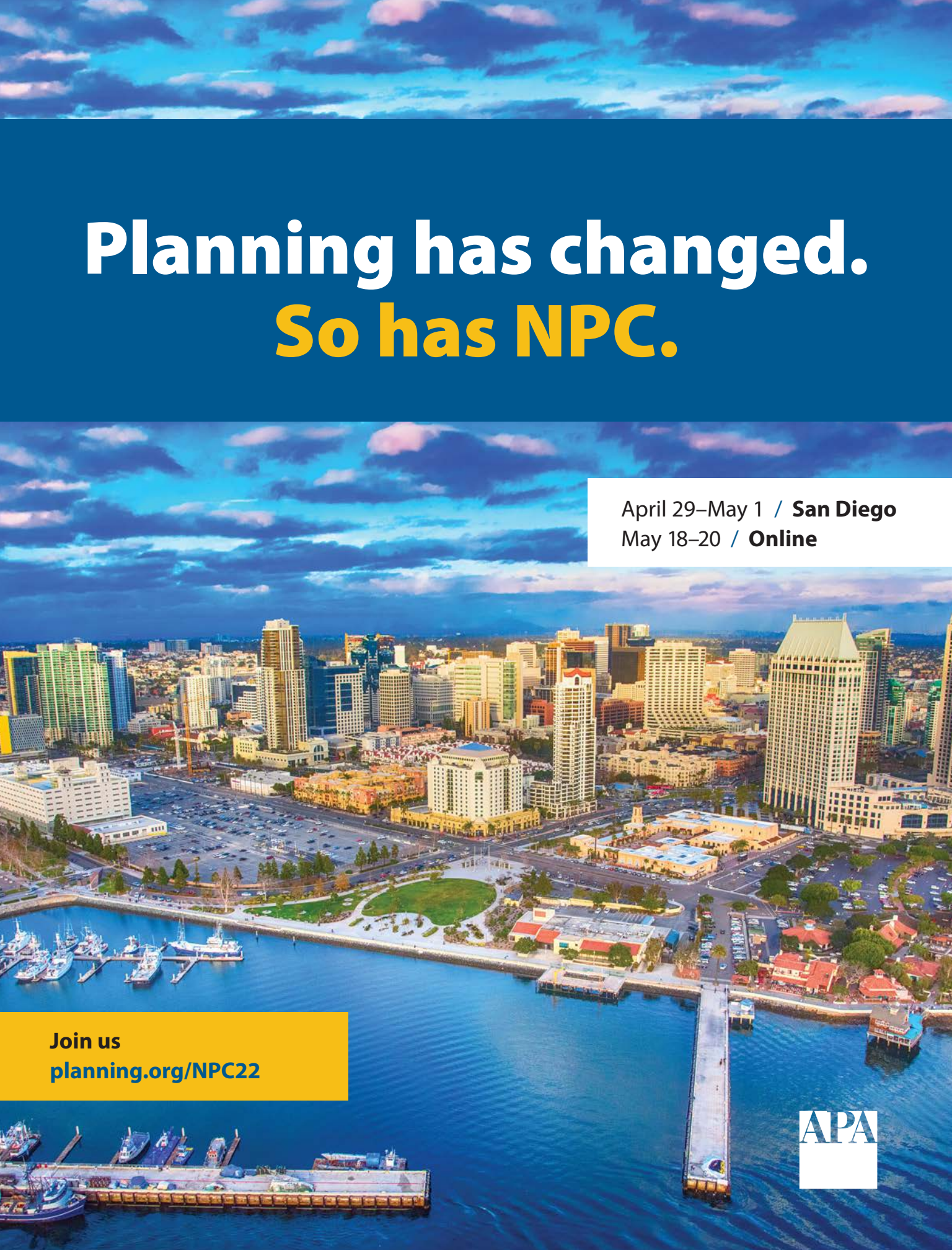


ASPEN PEDESTRIAN MALL

Aspen, Colorado

ASPEN IS ALL ABOUT THE OUTDOORS, and its 45-year-strong pedestrian mall stays busy all year round. Easily accessible by foot, bike, or transit, the mall is a beloved community gathering space, as is the adjacent park. Public art adorns the C-shaped space, including a playful fountain, an inviting fire hearth, and the Sister Cities Plaza. It was designated a local historic landmark in 2017 and a Great Place in America the following year. Learn more at planning.org/greatplaces/spaces/2018/aspen.

This year marks the 71st celebration of Wintersköl, a weekend of eclectic events that showcase Aspen's unique alpine lifestyle, including the snow-carving contest known as Winterskulpt.

An aerial photograph of San Diego, California, showing the city skyline, the waterfront, and the harbor. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The city features a mix of modern high-rise buildings and older, lower-rise structures. The waterfront is lined with piers and docks, with several boats visible in the water. A large green park area is visible in the foreground, adjacent to the waterfront.

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