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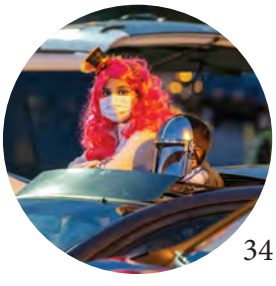

On the cover and top: Tidelands Park in Coronado in San Diego, California. Above: Family-friendly drive-in event in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Contributors

Ariana Drehsler
Cover, "Temporary Paradise" to Ambitious Future, page 24

This San Diego-based photojournalist focuses on social and political issues. "What I loved about this shoot is that I was able to show different sides of San Diego," she says. From La Jolla's modern architecture to the art and food of Barrio Logan, "different areas have their own unique vibe, like most, if not all, cities. I love that *Planning* is showing that."

Patrick Sisson
"Temporary Paradise" to Ambitious Future, page 24

A Los Angeles-based writer, Sisson focuses on cities and the tech, developments, and policy shaping their future. "It's heartening, at a time when the housing market seems to continuously one-up itself, to see local advocates-turned-electeds in San Diego present a concerted, holistic solution to one of the city and state's defining crises," he says.

Michelle McCue
Is Tourism Still a Viable Economic Development Strategy?, page 38

This place-marketing specialist has helped destinations navigate crises for nearly two decades. "The pandemic hit global tourism like a power outage: all at once," she says. "But many people began traveling again the moment restrictions were lifted, which attests to the strength of the wanderlust impulse—and the staying power of this sector."

PLANNING

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

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 APA'S PLANNING AND COMMUNITY HEALTH MANAGER

Upskilling Ourselves and the Planning Profession

I HAVE BEEN a researcher at APA for five years; most of my work has been focused on grant-funded research at the intersection of planning and public health, with health equity as a focal point. Over the years, this has provided me with opportunities to interact with planning practitioners from around the country.

Lately, these meaningful conversations often center on a major challenge for our profession: We planners are often more caught up in reacting to the present than preparing for the future. This worries me. Planning for the future is integral to our profession, and while we can't predict what will happen, one thing is certain: There will be more changes. Unexpected occurrences like the pandemic, disruptors such as technology, and worsening existing challenges like climate change will keep coming. We need to meet them head on by understanding the dynamics of the change, preparing to evolve planning processes and approaches, and continuing to learn new skills.

That's where APA's just-launched Upskilling Initiative comes in. What is upskilling? In short, it's the process of teaching or learning new skills within someone's current job or profession that help them adapt to changing needs. The aim of the APA Upskilling Initiative is straightforward: We want to equip planners with the right skillsets to excel in dynamic environments.

This effort interconnects with another top APA priority: advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. That means that EDI-related skills gaps will receive a special focus in the Upskilling Initiative. An important part of upskilling is sometimes unlearning something, and that's especially true when it comes to EDI. Unlearning is not about forgetting what we know, but about changing our mindset to learn and use different methods to address a challenge.

'An important part of upskilling is sometimes unlearning something, and that's especially true when it comes to EDI. Unlearning is not about forgetting what we know, but about changing our mindset.'

—SAGAR SHAH, PHD, AICP

In order for the planning profession to upskill—and for APA to provide learning opportunities to help—we first need to know where the gaps are. We are developing a skills gap analysis process that draws on insights from APA's Foresight practice, EDI-related expert groups, members, and other sources.

We also need your help. What are you facing in your work that's new, tricky, or even overwhelming? What shifts are happening in your communities? What skills do you need to rise to those challenges and grow professionally? In the future, we'll share ways APA members can help with the skills gap analysis, and we look forward to your perspective and expertise.

Once we know what the gaps are, APA researchers, the education team, and other content creators will work with subject matter experts to develop relevant resources for planners. This will be a continuous process of assessing planners' unmet needs and creating upskilling education and training to help us effectively manage change. Stay tuned for opportunities to upskill yourselves, and take advantage of existing APA resources, like the Knowledge Center (planning.org/knowledgecenter), Foresight practice (planning.org/foresight), and more.

As a planning researcher, learning new things is a main motivator in my work—and besides, it's necessary for helping me adapt to change. Right now, I am undergoing project management training to manage the Upskilling Initiative. (Project management is such an essential skill for planners, but it is typically absent from formal education; it certainly was from mine.) I hope you'll join me in identifying your own skills gaps and taking steps to upskill yourself.

Sagar Shah, PHD, AICP, is APA's planning and community health manager.

Around 100,000 public chargers like this one in San Francisco are currently in operation across the U.S., but experts say we could need a million more for a full switch to EVs. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act could help state legislators narrow that gap.

KELSEY MCCLELLAN/*THE NEW YORK TIMES*

INTER SECTIONS

WHERE PLANNING AND THE WORLD MEET

Infrastructure | Historic Preservation | People Behind the Plans | Et cetera

INFRASTRUCTURE

New Federal Funding Sparks Surge in EV Legislation

As the new infrastructure law prompts action, state lawmakers call 2022 a "turning point" for electric vehicles. By Alex Brown

AUTOMAKERS ARE planning to put nearly one million new electric vehicles on American roads in 2022. Lawmakers are trying to make sure their states are ready.

"We will see a lot more emphasis on electric vehicles in 2022 and 2023," says Dylan McDowell, deputy director of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, a collaborative forum for state lawmakers. "This is the start of a really big turning point."

Across the country, legislatures in blue and red states are considering bills to bolster charging infrastructure, expand consumer incentives, electrify state fleets, and mandate charging stations in new buildings. States also will be tasked with deploying billions in new federal funds for charging stations approved in the new infrastructure law, and some legislators say they plan to take an active role in that strategy.

"This is being taken seriously in a way it hasn't been before, because the trajectory is very clear," says Marc Geller, a board member and spokesperson for the Electric Vehicle Association.

In the U.S., the transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, making up nearly 30 percent of the national total. While many states have plans to switch to renewable electricity sources, reducing vehicle emissions is much more complicated. But as the private sector market for electric vehicles matures, many lawmakers see an opportunity.

Electric vehicle sales in the U.S. doubled in 2021 compared with 2020, and car buyers in 2022 will have twice as many electric models from which to choose. As the market grows quickly, state lawmakers say they're focused on making sure infrastructure keeps up, and—in what is perhaps the greater challenge—ensuring that electric vehicle benefits aren't just enjoyed by their wealthiest residents.

Local action

Hawaii ranks second in the nation behind California for electric vehicle adoption. "We're just at the inflection point where we're about to take off in a huge way," says Hawaii state senator Chris

Lee, the Democrat who chairs the Transportation Committee. "Our charging capacity has been greatly outstripped by the number of EVs out there. We need a lot more capacity, and quickly."

Hawaii legislators are looking to build more charging stations for rental cars, which make up a significant portion of the tourism-heavy state's EVs. They're planning to use federal funds to create charging hubs. Other proposals would put in place a requirement for charging stations in public parking lots and a new consumer rebate for electric vehicle purchases, with a focus on lower-income communities.

Meanwhile, Republican lawmakers in both Indiana and Wisconsin are backing bills that would allow the owners of charging stations to sell electricity by the kilowatt-hour, rather than by the minute. That would benefit drivers of slower-charging vehicles. Sponsors say the bills would allow businesses to play a greater role in providing charging infrastructure.

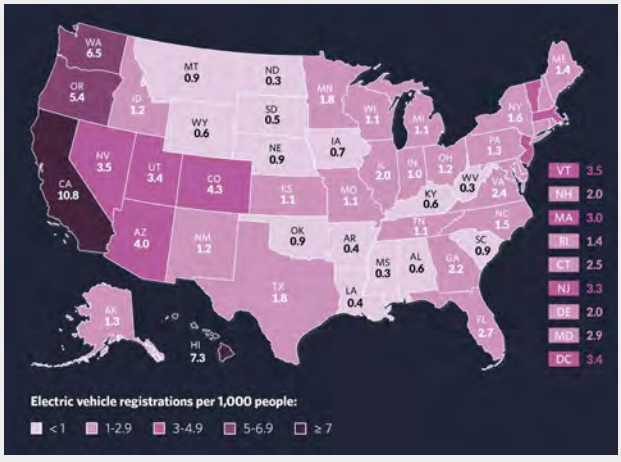
In California, Democratic governor Gavin Newsom is proposing more than $6 billion in investments to speed up electric vehicle adoption. More than $250 million would be targeted to assist low-income consumers, with another $900 million to build chargers in underserved neighborhoods.

"In this clean transportation revolution, the next phase is making sure that low-income communities and communities of color are able to take advantage," Jared Blumenfeld, secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, said in a press call.

> 'Our charging capacity has been greatly outstripped by the number of EVs out there. We need a lot more capacity, and quickly.'
>
> —CHRIS LEE, HAWAII STATE SENATOR

WESTERN STATES TAKE LEAD ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Electric vehicle adoption varies widely across the country, and many lawmakers are pushing bills in 2022 that seek to speed their state's transition.



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.

Federal funds

The federal infrastructure package Congress passed in 2021 includes $7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging stations, with $5 billion given directly to the states. Some Republicans oppose the use of government funds to support electric vehicle adoption, but the funding has gotten the attention of conservative states that have otherwise shown little interest in climate policy.

Missouri, for instance, will receive $99 million to expand electric vehicle charging over five years. Brian Quinn, a spokesperson for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, says the agency plans to collaborate with the Missouri Department of Transportation to deploy chargers along national highways.

Michigan expects to receive $110 million of the charging funds. "This will get a lot of people over the hump in making the choice to have their next vehicle be an EV," Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, a Democrat, says. "This year is going to be the one that makes the difference."

The state has partnered with its Midwestern neighbors to form a coalition focused on a regional network of charging stations, and it is also investing in a workforce development plan to ready residents for jobs in the electric vehicles industry.

In New York, state officials expect to receive $175 million from the feds.

"As more EVs are on the road, the business case for

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installing charging stations gets better and better," says Adam Ruder, assistant director for clean transportation with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. "We're trying to get to that point where it becomes a self-sustaining market. This infrastructure money and the other investments we're making can really help us get there."

Some New York officials want mandates. State Senator Liz Krueger, a Democrat, has sponsored a bill that would require newly constructed buildings to include wiring for electric vehicle chargers in a certain percentage of their parking spaces.

But mandates have drawn pushback. Missouri state Representative Jim Murphy, a Republican, has proposed a bill that would block cities and counties from requiring businesses or buildings to install charging stations. Murphy says St. Louis County's mandate requires any business that wants to resurface its parking lot to spend thousands on charging stations. His bill would require that mandating governments pay for them.

"There's no feeling that we should stop the growth of EVs, that's the future," Murphy says. "But you can't put it on the backs of small businesses and churches. If we're going to make the little guy pay for it, I'm going to champion against it."

Alex Brown is a staff writer for Stateline. *This story was reprinted with permission from* Stateline, *an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

LGBTQ+ Stories Are American History

At local and national levels, context studies are honoring influential people and places—and driving planning efforts. By Tatiana Walk-Morris

AT LEAST seven percent of U.S. adults—or more than 20 million people—identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, a 2021 Gallup poll estimates. That proportion is up from 4.5 percent in 2017, in part due to Gen Z's coming of age: one in five adults born between 1997 and 2003 currently identify as LGBT.

Despite making up a sizable and growing part of the population, the diverse LGBTQ+ community rarely sees targeted engagement from the urban design fields. But a building preservation movement is working to change that with a valuable tool: historical context studies.

A means of identifying historically significant places around a theme, these reports can guide vital planning work. The nation's first LGBTQ+ historical survey was created by the group Friends of 1800 for San Francisco in 2004; the city built on that with a study in 2015 that helped advocates create the Compton's Transgender Cultural District, which offers community services in the Tenderloin, where the country's first transgender uprising occurred.

Elsewhere, the National Park Service, which keeps the National Register of Historic Places, released in 2016 *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*, the first national effort of its kind in the world. And at the state level, two context studies are setting the curve: Kentucky's in 2016, and most recently, Maryland's in 2020. That project is taking on new life with a dynamic, soon-to-be released report aimed at the public.

"The statewide context, in my opinion, is one of the best ways to approach thematic history in planning," says Meagan Baco, project manager of Maryland's study and the director of communications at Preservation Maryland when they launched the project. "The report definitely filled a vacuum. People were really looking for this type of comprehensive look that then allowed and empowered them to do local-facing projects that really have impact."

The U.S. Naval Academy class of 1985. Maryland's LGBTQ+ context study required searching for stories in overlooked places, including the state's maritime and naval academies.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Reflecting the community

Maryland's LGBTQ+ survey identifies almost 400 sites with ties to important figures, community groups, businesses, AIDS and marriage advocacy, and more. As in Kentucky, much of this work was grant funded and required extensive local engagement and coordination.

It's important to meet members of the LGBTQ+ community where they are, says Rebeccah Ballo, historic preservation program supervisor with the Montgomery County Planning Department, which was closely engaged in the Maryland project. Part of that involved intersecting communities, she explains, like examining the state's maritime and naval academy histories for overlooked LGBTQ+ stories.

Catherine Fosl, professor of women's gender and sexuality studies at the University of Louisville and lead author of the *Kentucky LGBTQ Historic Context Narrative*, echoes Ballo's advice. Teams should also reflect the LGBTQ+ community they're working to highlight, Fosl says, while remembering that some may wish to keep their gender identities and sexualities discreet.

Fosl recommends reassuring participants that their materials will be handled with care, as much of this history comes from private items like letters and photographs. Local community groups, gay and lesbian bars, and oral history centers and archives at universities are also valuable resources, Fosl says.

Maryland plans to use the study to build out its register of historic places, among other efforts. Locally, it will influence master plans, Ballo says.

"What's required of us as planners," Ballo says, "[is making] sure that our plans are for the people who live here, all of the people here, and that they see themselves reflected in our work."

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

PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLANS

Leslie Kern on Gender and the City

CITIES ARE NOT gender neutral. Much of the built environment has been designed by and for men, explains Leslie Kern. And even then, a narrow male subject: "Usually a white, middle-class father, breadwinner, worker, able bodied, heterosexual, and so on."

From out-of-reach subway straps to train lines with inadequate routes for caretakers, "women are kind of reminded the city wasn't really built for you," says Kern, associate professor of geography and environment and director of women's and gender studies at Mount Allison University.

Her latest book, *Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-Made World*, takes a critical look at the gender disparities inherent in the built environment—and how to address them. I recently spoke with her on an episode of APA's podcast series *People Behind the Plans* to learn how planners can join the effort. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

'For me, a feminist city is about thinking beyond the city as an economic unit and instead as a place for people, for care work, for social relationships, for interacting with the environment, and as a vehicle for social change.'

—LESLIE KERN

COURTNEY KASHIMA: What is a feminist city, and why is it important?

LESLIE KERN: For me, the feminist city is a vision, really—a set of values and principles that are dedicated to equity, to justice, to sustainability, and to reenvisioning what we really think the city is for. I think during the pandemic, it's been a real key moment for this because so many

Q&A

of us have been told over and over again that we have to look out for the economy. But what is the economy founded on? What other elements of the urban environment are important to us, and what other kinds of roles and work and relationships are really the foundational elements?

So for me, a feminist city is about thinking beyond the city as an economic unit and instead as a place for people, for care work, for social relationships, for interacting with the environment, and as a vehicle for social change.

KASHIMA: Are there any glimmers of hope?

KERN: I think one of the conversations [the pandemic] has sparked is around issues of care work in the home, gender in the workplace, and how those things interrelate together, because in many ways, we are recognizing that despite all of our pretensions to gender equality in the home and workplace, there's still a disproportionate share of care labor that falls on women in the home. And in both Canada and the

MITCHEL RAPHAEL

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U.S., many thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of women have lost their jobs. So what's the glimmer of hope in that?

Well, our government here in Canada, just like yours in the U.S., now has started to recognize that there can be no real economic recovery without some attention to these gender issues. So we've had renewed conversations about the possibility of a national childcare plan, which is something that comes up over and over again but very little action has been taken towards it.

And I think at the urban level, there's also been some interesting moments where people were saying, "Get outside, socialize outside, make use of outdoor public space, it's safer," and so on. But many of our cities have not really been well set up to encourage that socializing. So some cities took it upon themselves to do things that, again, they'd been dragging their feet on for a long time. They increased bicycle lanes and pedestrian access. They created more space for socializing in urban public space. They limited car traffic. They created opportunities for other sorts of social engagements, whether that's through outdoor dining or outdoor public activities. So I think it's a moment where we could see perhaps some changes in how we use urban public space.

KASHIMA: Do improvements made using a feminist lens benefit all kinds of people?

KERN: Absolutely. There's nothing that I would imagine as part of a feminist city that is about taking something away from somebody else or limiting another group's access to public spaces, workplaces, and so on. It's about imagining, how do we broaden that access, both in a physical sense in terms of the things that you were talking about, like physical accessibility and the built environment, but also social accessibility, safety, cultural norms, all of these different things that contribute to a person or a group's sense of being included as being part of the city, as belonging to the city.

And the more we can expand that, the more

everyone will benefit. And a feminist lens, a gender equity lens, is just one way of opening that up. It's not the only way. And I would never advocate for it to replace other ways of looking at the city. But certainly, if we think about a feminist analysis of care work, for example, you know, who does the unpaid and paid labor that keeps human beings alive and cared for and nursed and educated and fed and clean? All of that kind of labor—how is that organized in the city? How could we reshape elements of city spaces to prioritize that care work?

That's not just something that benefits the women who do that work, but that's something that benefits everybody, all sorts of different groups in society.

KASHIMA: And what role do you think municipal urban planners can or should play?
KERN: Planners can engage in active listening with communities, really try to do that on-the-ground work of community engagement. They can also think about what an equity lens would mean for their decision-making processes. So when you're thinking about where to put a new transit line or new park or even just a reorganization of a particular space, you can ask yourself: Does this enhance gender equity and other forms of equity? Does it leave it neutral, or might it have negative effects on that? And that can be a guidepost, kind of a compass, for some decision making as well.

And I think planners can also think about how to diversify the profession. I think in the U.S., from what I've looked into, the profession is still about 80 percent white. That's also an equity issue. So how can we have better representation amongst planners so that some of these questions are not, again, afterthoughts, but that the people already in the room might be saying, "Hey, what about stroller access? What about children? What about seniors? What about racial equity?"

Courtney Kashima is founder and principal of Muse Community + Design, a planning and public engagement studio in Chicago, and a frequent host of the APA podcast.

PODCAST
Listen to the full conversation on the APA podcast for ways to promote gender equity in your community.
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TO READ

UNFLINCHING CLIMATE REALITY

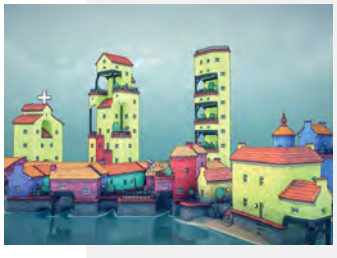
The next two decades could bring far more severe climate hazards if the planet warms another 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, with already-vulnerable areas and populations the most at risk, finds *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. This latest report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offers an unflinching look at the impacts on the natural and built environments of every continent, along with policy recommendations for mitigation and adaption. Read it now at ipcc.ch.

GAMING

ONE-CLICK PLANNING

Wouldn't it be nice to build a town with just a few clicks of a button?

While that isn't possible in the real world just yet, *Townscaper* lets you do so on a Mac, PC, and Nintendo Switch. With each press of the button, users can create roads and add and expand buildings. Little surprises pop up along the way, too, like balconies, rooftop gardens, and slivers of beaches.



Altogether, *Townscaper* is a soothing, beautiful take on world building—and planning.

Rachael Hoffman is APA's customer service associate.

LeBron James in *I Promise*. Watch it for free at bit.ly/ipslebron.

NOW STREAMING

An Education Slam Dunk?

EVERY 26 SECONDS, a student drops out of school in the U.S.

That's the opening message of *I Promise*, a new documentary from Marc Levin about an innovative school in Akron, Ohio. The result of a partnership between the city's public school system and the LeBron James Family Foundation, I Promise School launched in 2018 with 240 third and fourth graders.

Unlike many charter schools, these students were selected from the lower 25 percent of the district based on standardized test performance—according to the school's premise, they're the ones most at risk of falling behind, being held back, and dropping out. The approach to combatting these statistics is summed up in the school's slogan, emblazoned on nearly every T-shirt, banner, and sign: "We Are Family." This commitment extends beyond the classroom, to the students' parents, housing, healthcare, and neighborhoods.

Many of the resulting insights will be familiar to planners: How can students learn if they come to school hungry? If they don't feel safe? How can parents provide supportive environments without steady employment or housing? And so, even in its first years, the mission expands with mental health care, a food pantry, and plans for an "I Promise Village" with housing and other services.

Importantly, the school stresses building these systems and relationships over the long-term. (As LeBron James says, "this is not instant oatmeal, just add water.") The partners are honest about the need to learn as they grow, even through missteps and failures. Despite the challenges, the film ultimately offers an optimistic vision: If we don't give up on our young learners, they won't, either.

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

FROM LEFT: *TOWNSCAPER*, *I PROMISE*

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9 ZONING HACKS FOR MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Thoughtful tweaks to your community's code can have a big impact on housing diversity and density. *By Kati Woock*

ONE-THIRD OF AMERICAN households are made up of a single individual. Up to 85 percent of households will not include children by 2025. By 2030, one in five Americans will be over the age of 65.

These statistics add up to a simple fact: Demand is high for smaller homes, lower living costs, walkable neighborhoods, and places for people to age in place. Yet zoning across the U.S. largely discourages these features.

That's because codes tend to be based on residential density, which is measured in dwelling units per acre, and most prioritize single-family housing. As of 2019, a *New York Times* report found that "it is illegal on 75 percent of the residential land in many American cities to build anything other than a detached single-family home." Not only are large multifamily buildings banned from many neighborhoods, but so are smaller housing types that cost less than a single-family home: side-by-side and stacked duplexes, triplexes, townhouses. These constitute "missing middle housing," or "house-scale buildings that just happen to have multiple units in them," says Daniel Parolek of Opticos Design, who coined the term in 2010.

In the past few years, Oregon, Minneapolis, California, and other states and cities have launched zoning reform efforts to better promote housing affordability, diversity, and density. If your community lacks the political will to make these kinds of sweeping changes, a few thoughtful tweaks can still make a big impact. Adapted from Parolek's APA Learn course (bit.ly/zhacks), these nine zoning hacks—and a bonus tip—can help planners increase local density.

1 REDUCE MINIMUM LOT SIZE. Does your code require two lots to build a duplex or a fourplex? If a builder must aggregate multiple lots to build a small multiunit building, your minimum lot sizes are too big.

Instead, replace minimum lot sizes with minimum lot widths and tie types of buildings to the lot's width, not its square footage.

2 REGULATE MAXIMUM WIDTH AND DEPTH. Replace rear setback requirements with maximum depths to ensure house-scale buildings and document existing building sizes to create a set of maximum widths and depths. These restrictions also discourage demolitions that might replace small single-family homes with very large ones.

3 INCREASE ALLOWED DENSITIES. Rather than applying a blanket density increase to all types, officials in Medford, Oregon, tested different building types on various lot sizes to find density numbers that compliment specific neighborhoods.

4 ALLOW FOR MORE HOUSING TYPES AND REVISIT STRUCTURE SIZES. As Joe Zehnder, chief planner for Portland, Oregon's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, says, "if the house size is the same, why do you care how many units are in there?" In Portland, zoning changes now allow someone building on a 5,000-square-foot lot to construct up to four units divided between a main building and detached accessory dwelling units. Five or six units are allowed if half of them are affordable to low-income residents.

5 LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR SMALLER UNITS. More density doesn't always mean bigger buildings. In Santa Barbara, California, an average unit size ordinance provides for increased density as the average unit size decreases. This enables missing middle housing by allowing for greater density, even in smaller structures.

6 REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PARKING MINIMUMS. "If you want missing middle [housing], you need to fix your parking standards," says Parolek. "We've done a better job delivering houses for cars than we have delivering houses for people." If you require more than one off-street parking space per unit, it's not economically viable or physically possible to create missing middle housing on infill lots. Instead, opt for one parking space—or even none—per unit and no guest parking.

In suburban or rural areas, like Beaufort County, South Carolina, driving might be a fact of life. Try being creative about how you design parking so it can become an extra unit in the future, if factors like demand or public transit change.

> Respect the neighborhood context, but don't be slavish to it—most neighborhoods are made of different building types.

7 RETHINK PRIVATE OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS. While the motivations behind private open space requirements are good, they typically result in unattractive balconies that are used primarily for storage. In a walkable, urban neighborhood, the amenity is the environment. Rather than delivering outdoor amenities on a unit-by-unit basis, focus on shared spaces like courtyards and vibrant streets.

8 ALLOW MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING EVERYWHERE (IF POSSIBLE). Is more than 20 percent of your land area zoned exclusively for single-family housing? Then you need to change the boundaries limiting missing middle housing to deliver it effectively and equitably. In Portland, Oregon, planners proposed allowing middle housing types in all districts across the city unless there is a physical limitation, like flooding or landslide hazards.

In response to displacement concerns, Zehnder says, "the more places where we allow this to happen, the less it's going to overwhelm any individual place." And development won't happen all at once: Portland planners estimate an add of 4,000 new units over the next 15 years. But if a single house in a wealthy neighborhood is replaced with three units, that alone can help take the pressure off demolitions in an area with lower incomes, Zehnder says.

9 IMPROVE INFILL DESIGN. Respect the neighborhood context, but don't be slavish to it—most neighborhoods are made of different building types. (Tuck-under townhouses that face away from the street, however, can quickly overwhelm available infill lots without enhancing neighborhoods, Parolek says.) Focus on a number of stories instead of a maximum height, and limit where parking is allowed. You can also limit curb cuts and garage frontage to preserve the street front.

Take the opportunity to increase accessibility, too. In Portland, new codes require lots with three or more units to ensure that at least one is "visitable," with a no-step entry, ground-floor bathroom, and ground-floor living space.

BONUS: FRAME THE CONVERSATION. When you're presenting your ideas to the community, it can be helpful to avoid terms that might have negative connotations to some, like "density," "multifamily," or "upzoning." Present zoning changes as a way to offer new housing choices or options. Focus on form and scale, not density metrics. Imagery (missingmiddlehousing.com) can help community members understand how missing middle types could look in their neighborhoods.

Kati Woock is a freelance editor and writer based in Michigan.

THE PROFESSION

LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

How to translate values into action. *By Bobbie Albrecht*

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) initiatives are all about translating values into actions. In a recent APA Learning Circle, planners shared the steps their agencies and firms are taking to do just that.

In 2020, for example, Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti issued an executive directive on fairness, diversity, equal opportunity, and transparency in city government. In response, the LA city planning department hired its first chief equity officer, planner Faisal Roble, that same year.

And on the private side, as part of a recent reorganization, global engineering consulting firm WSP developed a three-year strategy to increase and support racial and gender diversity of staff. A significant part of that has been a new program to develop better leadership opportunities for people of color and women within the company.

Lee Pearce, the manager of talent management for WSP USA, says that a key driver for change has been the formation of a representative council, a diverse group of high-performing employees selected to act as a conduit between employees and the executive team. Council members serve as mentors and role models, provide valuable insights on professional development skills that are needed, and suggest changes to the leadership pipeline.

A commitment to diversity and inclusion is a start, but to fully benefit from increased racial and gender diversity, organizations must be willing to change the culture and power structure. Organizations must not only have strong support from leadership to promote fairness and equal participation at all levels, but also a commitment to a frank analysis of the current culture, practices, and policies. And as in any area of work, employees need ongoing training and support to accomplish goals and evaluate progress.

To ensure EDI policies and initiatives produce their desired results, firms and planning departments must create a program with measurable outcomes. Below, find three ways to help get you started.

Bobbie Albrecht is APA's career services manager.

THREE STEPS TO MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR AN EDI PROGRAM

GATHER DATA

Review pertinent departmental functions, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, training, retention, promotions, and contracting. Create a mechanism to hear from employees. The city of Los Angeles uses focus groups to do this, while WSP's representative council of employees both gathers information and makes recommendations. Analyze your office policies and practices to determine whether they are helping or hindering efforts.

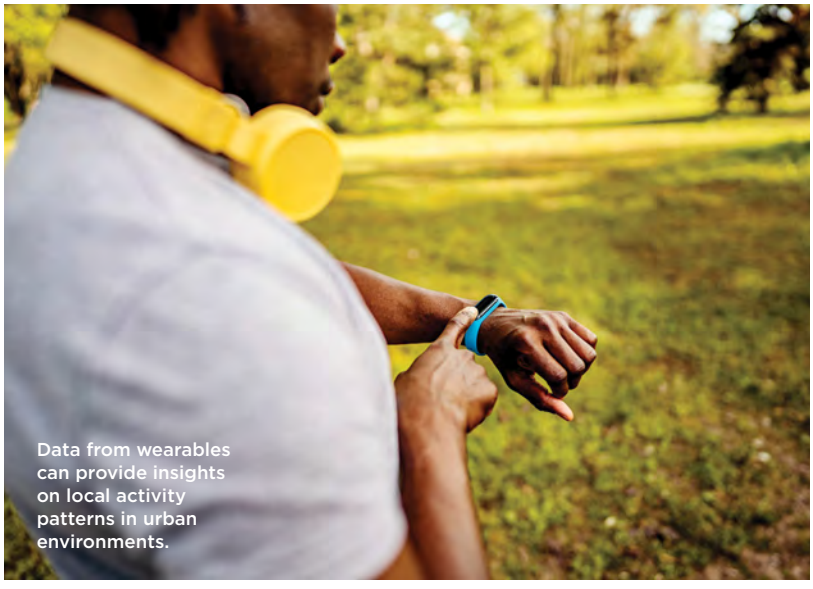
SET GOALS

Create a list of equity indicators specific to a department or office and describe how the department can develop reliable data to track progress on equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. Consider, too, training goals and retention as indicators of progress.

CREATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The plans should identify any anticipated challenges, include a reporting and auditing component, and designate staff who will be principally charged with administering the proposed plan. Identify disparities in workforce outcomes, too. When LA measured hiring by gender, it discovered a gap and worked toward closing it. Today, 57 percent of the city staff are women.

ENIS AKSOY/DIGITALVISION VECTORS/GETTY IMAGES



Data from wearables can provide insights on local activity patterns in urban environments.

URBAZON/E+/GETTY IMAGES

TECH

WHAT PLANNERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BIG DATA

Five applications and considerations to get started. *By Alexsandra Gomez*

WITH DOZENS OF technological innovations on the horizon, now is the time for planners to prepare by gaining new skills and creating new policies.

In an ongoing partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, APA's Foresight team recently released the *2022 Trend Report for Planners* (planning.org/foresight), an in-depth look at nearly 100 of the existing, emerging, and potential trends and innovations relevant to planning. Artificial intelligence, automated transportation, and data analytics are just some of the new tools and resources we need to understand—and be sure to use in inclusive, equitable ways.

Big data in particular holds much potential for planning. Vast improvements in data collection provide more access to higher-quality, real-time information, while new approaches are being developed to better reflect the diverse experiences and identities of the communities we serve. Together, these advancements can give planners new ways to integrate data into decision-making processes, plans, and recommendations.

To gain a better understanding of big data in planning, start with these five applications and considerations:

1. The complexities of identity

Demographic and population data collection require new approaches to better reflect diversity within communities. Planning needs to reflect the fact that people exist at the intersection of multiple identities at once (like race, age, gender, ability, and religion). Planning also needs to avoid assuming people belong to homogenous groups

that have the same values or needs. More dynamic solutions are necessary to help planners adapt or tailor their efforts—especially when it comes to planning with groups that policies have historically underrepresented, underserved, and harmed.

An increasing number of local, state, and federal programs are mandating the creation and explicit measurement of equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. The related data can be difficult to collect, however, and it can require asking for or inferring personal information, like religious beliefs or sexual orientation. To prepare for these requirements, planners need to reflect on their current approaches to data collection and project evaluation.

Importantly, as part of these efforts, planning education and the profession need to do a better job of recruiting people with a wider variety of identities and backgrounds to better reflect the communities we serve.

2. Scoring systems

Police, immigration officials, banks, universities, and other private institutions are increasingly using scoring systems—ways to measure different social attributes, qualities, and characteristics, often powered by artificial intelligence—to inform decisions, despite persistent issues with bias. If planners begin to use similar technical programs or scoring systems, it can further formalize harmful biases in planning and land-use decisions. For example, they can lead to maps that score neighborhoods based on social characteristics and miss other factors at play, essentially reproducing social "blight" maps, which could have harmful outcomes.

3. Crowdsourcing

A growing number of governments of all scales have adopted crowdsourcing, often to increase accessibility for residents and reduce public participation costs. It can be a supplement—or even an alternative—to the use of big data in decision-making or scenario planning that promotes consensus building, learning from local knowledge, and mobilization of residents.

Crowdsourcing can also be a formal iteration of civic tech: Residents can use it to directly provide large amounts of data that reflect their preferences. Planners should prepare for both an increased interest in crowdsourcing from local governments and an influx of new information that could provide different findings than data collected through traditional methods.

4. Wearable tech

Through monitoring and location-based services, data from wearables—like smart watches or glasses—can provide insights on local activity patterns. This information is beginning to become widely available, and planners need to prepare to leverage it, potentially by partnering with data providers.

5. Data protection and privacy

As big data collection and use grows, so do privacy concerns. The result is a need for more regulation, stated ethical standards, and storage and ownership considerations. Currently, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (gdpr.eu) is the strictest regulation globally. Some U.S. states have also started to implement data protection regulations; the California Consumer Privacy Act is the most comprehensive.

As planners gain more access to new kinds of data, they will also need to understand how these data protection regulations affect use. This will be particularly important when implementing smart city applications to mine data.

Alexsandra Gomez is APA's research associate.

The Muse at Torrey Pines is one of the developments in the burgeoning life science and tech hub in San Diego. The life sciences industry generates $27.7 billion annually and employs 72,000 people.

'TEMPORARY PARADISE' TO AMBITIOUS FUTURE

San Diego planning is shifting to denser, more sustainable development served by transit—and it's paying off.

By PATRICK SISSON Photographs by ARIANA DREHSLER

THE CRISIS GRIPPING COASTAL CALIFORNIA—EXPLOSIVE JOB GROWTH and opportunity souring due to a severe lack of housing—hasn't spared San Diego. Like other Golden State metros, it's incredibly unlikely to meet state-assigned housing goals, and prices have been skyrocketing.

There have been recent successes, like a 25 percent boost in housing starts and affordable housing production in 2020. Still, the region built just shy of half the homes mandated by the state over the previous decade. But trends and shifts by city and regional planners and policy makers in recent years suggest it may be tackling issues like affordability and transportation more effectively than Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Until the last couple of decades, "San Diego was seen as a sleepy town with the character of a beach community," says Professor Isaac Martin, chair of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). "The city's growing beyond its reputation from decades past as not being an innovator in this space, and in the last few years, everything seems to be coming together."

A series of significant political and policy shifts in recent years have helped the city and region adopt a more holistic approach to housing, transportation, and economic development. To name a few notable developments: A homegrown YIMBY movement and more forward-thinking city council have passed zoning and development policies accelerating denser development and new transit investments. The newly opened Mid-Coast Trolley extends the Blue Line another 10.9 miles; stretching from the Mexican border to University City near La Jolla, the full route is now the spine of a potential game-changing public transportation network. The life sciences and tech community, an economic powerhouse that gained strength during the pandemic, has exploded. And a new executive director for the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), LA-transplant Hassan Ikhrata, oversaw the draft of an ambitious regional plan that, if fully funded and adopted, would push the region towards meeting equity and environmental goals.

"We're a big city," says Martin. "This is a big shift culturally but also from a political and policy standpoint. We've connected at every level, from the municipal level to the federal level, and want people to stop thinking like a small town, because we're not."

BOTH DEMOGRAPHICS AND geography prodded San Diego planning to shift forward, placing the city at an inflection point. Hemmed in by natural limits like the Pacific Ocean, the Camp Pendleton Marine base, conservation land, and the border with Mexico, the city and region have little choice but to densify and build up, as space for standard issue master-planned communities has run out.

Then there is the self-fulfilling cycle of young knowledge and tech workers, as Martin and others explain. Especially focused in biotech, newcomers are arriving and seeking out dense urban environments in which to live, creating a market incentive for more such development and in turn, attracting more demographic change. (That certainly isn't the only important demographic shift: The city is also planning for a population where the number of adults over 65 will increase 106 percent by 2035, and the *Age-Friendly San Diego Action Plan* aims to add and expand recreation and transportation options while focusing on housing transition options and wellness.)

The area has radically changed from its 20th-century roots, a tangle of Spanish and Mexican design and cultural influences that shaped the northernmost city in Baja California, its role as an emerging resort town during the Hotel del Coronado era, and a massive post-World War II military buildup. In the 1970s, an influential planning document about the region dubbed it a "Temporary Paradise."

"Our 2020 mayoral race, the most recent election, basically boiled down to two candidates offering the YIMBY and NIMBY options," says Dike Anyiwo, a member of the YIMBY Democrats and vice chair of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group, one of several

The UC San Diego Central Campus station is a stop on the newly opened Mid-Coast Trolley, which now stretches more than 26 miles from the Mexican border to La Jolla. See for yourself how the university is embracing the transit-oriented development model in the NPC22 mobile workshop UC San Diego's Transformational Development Plan.

The Fourth and Fifth Avenue bike lanes are a significant disruptor project, a part of San Diego's general rejection of its car-centric past in favor of an integrated, multimodal future. The city is also looking to maximize its parking inventory without adding substantial capital cost. Local planners will share those lessons in the NPC22 mobile workshop **Parking Meter Revenue: Big Changes from Small Change**.

citizen-led groups formally recognized by the city that make recommendations to the San Diego Planning Commission about land-use decisions. "Democrat Todd Gloria, the YIMBY, won, running on a platform of housing affordability, transit opportunity, and climate action."

Perhaps the most optimistic vision of what this shift means can be found in the pages of the SANDAG *2021 Regional Plan* proposal, a bold, $172 billion vision for reworking the transportation network, an opportunity seized after previous plans didn't meet the state's emissions-reduction targets.

One key proposal eliminates highway expansion, opting to transform many existing lanes into managed lanes for carpools, rapid bus service, and those paying tolls. The plan includes "5 Big Moves" geared toward active transportation advancements, like a better bike network, micromobility and new transit tech, coastal rail trails, and a long-term proposal for a major light rail extension and towering central city mobility hub. It adds up to a blueprint for transit-centered density, connecting more workers to jobs and opportunity.

Colin Parent is a council member in La Mesa (one of the 18 cities in San Diego County) and the executive director of Circulate San Diego, a local transit- and urbanism-focused nonprofit. He argues that the plan is just a "big document with lots of ideas," mainly speculative and uncertain. The political realities of securing funding, currently subject to as-yet-approved bonds and ballot measures set to be evaluated by voters beginning in November 2022, have dampened some of the enthusiasm. Nevertheless, many see the upcoming SANDAG *2023 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan* as a solid first step towards following the larger, innovative roadmap.

San Diego's continued embrace of more aggressive zoning and development policy to encourage downtown growth and density around transit corridors (the downtown was first rezoned for higher densities in 2006) offers a significant reason for optimism.

In reaction to gridlock in localities that repeatedly fall short of housing production goals and an ever-spiraling affordability crisis (the San Diego countywide median home price is $842,000, a 17 percent increase in the last year), California state leaders and legislators have in recent years been more aggressive in enforcing housing rules and have passed laws to prod cities to build. Two, passed in late 2021, particularly stand out: SB 9, which allows single-family lots to be split in two and permits duplexes on each of the new lots (effectively allowing for four homes where there was one) and SB 10, which allows local governments to rezone for developments of 10 units or fewer in urban infill or transit-adjacent parcels without additional environmental review.

San Diego has long had geographically focused community plans, both downtown and throughout the city. Many were updated recently to allow for significantly more housing growth than before, and in some cases, the zoning changes and other policies go further than state housing laws require. The State Density Bonus Law, for instance, offers a 35 percent bonus for developing on-site affordable units; San Diego bumped the bonus to 50 percent. A citywide ballot measure in 2020 eliminated the region's 1972 30-foot height limit, but in December 2021, a court blocked San Diego from putting the measure into effect. That ruling is being appealed.

The 2020 *Complete Communities* plan allows relief from some density- and height-limit restrictions for developments near transit with significant low- and middle-income housing. This policy was built upon California's Sustainable and Affordable Housing Act from 2018, which also boosts residential density near transit and was authored by current San Diego mayor Todd Gloria when he was a California state assemblymember.

Another key shift was approving by-right development for projects that meet certain criteria around local design standards and proximity to transit. This shift from discretionary approval to ministerial approval avoids the state's infamous California Environmental Quality Act review process, saving months and significant money for developers. These programmatic changes, in effect, add up to a new focus on transit-oriented development, says Parent.

"The city's moves have really transformed what we can do on urban infill lots that were zoned very low density," says Kelly Modén, president and CEO of infill and multifamily housing developer cREate Development, and a member of the city planning commission. She notes that a market-rate multifamily project she's currently developing on a half-acre site in the Golden Hill neighborhood would have previously supported 14 units, not quite enough to pencil out, but the combination of provisions from *Complete Communities* (it's inside a transit corridor and near downtown employers) and transit adjacency (a rapid bus stop is directly in front of the property) mean she can now fit 91 units on the same space.

"I don't think any other jurisdiction within the state of California allows for such streamlining of a project," she added.

As developers use these tools to their advantage, and the formerly sacrosanct single-family home neighborhood is being given all manner of means to get dense and go vertical, a new generation of megaprojects showcase the kinds of

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY: BOLD AND READY FOR CHANGE

Its planners are going beyond state targets in housing and climate action. BY MEGHAN STROMBERG

Planners and policy makers in San Diego County are tackling familiar but tricky challenges. *Planning* sat down with Dahvia Lynch, AICP, the director of Planning & Development Services, to talk about the agency's approach and outcomes. Our interview has been edited for length and clarity, but you can listen to the whole conversation at planning.org/podcasts.

***PLANNING*:** What makes San Diego County so unique?
DAHVIA LYNCH: It is such a diverse place in terms of people, climate, and ecosystems. We have small towns and urban areas, vast areas of incredibly rich natural land preserves, and a robust agricultural community. The unincorporated area is big: about 80 percent of the size of Connecticut.

***PLANNING*:** How is the agency tackling its affordable housing shortfall?
LYNCH: The purpose of the housing element of the general plan, adopted in 2021, is to ensure that we are planning for and removing any barriers to the development of up to about 6,700 units.

How can we make the right kind of housing, in the right place, possible? Well, planning is just one piece of it. There's an economic development component, as well as market forces and environmental constraints to development, that have to be considered. We've been directed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to evaluate what it would take to do a parcel-by-parcel analysis of certain areas and are asking: What are the barriers to implementing higher density, potentially affordable housing in these areas? Is it infrastructure? Is it a need to consolidate parcels? How can we streamline housing opportunities?

DAHVIA LYNCH, AICP

Q&A

***PLANNING*:** What is one of your most successful housing programs?
LYNCH: So far, we have over 60 programs related to housing. We've seen a huge uptick in ADUs. That is due to state regulations, in part, but I'm really proud of what the county has done to help facilitate that. We've committed over $10 million over a period of five years to waive fees for ADUs.

And, boy, have we seen the impact of that: a 70 percent increase in ADUs in the past year! We have also created fully approved, predesigned plans, which actually went viral on TikTok. Those designs, along with the waivers, can save folks up to $30,000 in fees.

***PLANNING*:** Can you tell us about the 2018 *Climate Action Plan*?
LYNCH: Our CAP, and the update we're working on, is not aimed at just meeting our state targets. We're going much further: Our board's goal is to go carbon neutral. We know that some of that is within our authority and some of it is far outside of it, so it requires partnerships.

One effort that offers a lot of co-benefits is our purchase of agricultural conservation easements, which benefits the property owners by reducing their tax burden, permanently conserves the land for agricultural purposes, creates corridors for wildlife, and acts as a carbon sequestration tool. We've permanently preserved over 3,000 acres since 2011.

We also have an Electric Vehicle Roadmap, and we're working to reduce VMT (vehicle miles traveled). There are a lot of different state policy directives regarding climate change and net VMT reductions, along with housing, conservation, and agriculture. Without a really intentional thought process, these issues could conflict very readily. And, if vehicle miles traveled is the driver, so to speak, of land use, a whole lot of development in these distant, remote areas isn't viable. We must have a focused approach, and that means planning for about 5,000 new units in the more urban areas of the county.

Meghan Stromberg is APA's editor in chief.

San Diego is focusing on giving people access to public spaces, including in dense areas. The 14th Street Greenway Park, opened in 2021, replaces a travel lane and eight parking spots with trees, landscaping, a pedestrian path, and story panels highlighting the industrial roots of the East Village downtown neighborhood. At NPC22, **Downtown San Diego: Post-Pandemic Toolkit for Urban Communities** will delve into flexible regulations for central cities that offer solutions to common challenges.

Mujeres Brew House is one of two craft breweries with strong roots in Barrio Logan, a historic neighborhood just south of downtown San Diego that's home to a naval base, shipyard, and the iconic Chicano Park. Examine the intersectional state of business, art, historic preservation, and planning in Latino communities, including Barrio Logan, with the NPC22 mobile workshop **A Beginners Guide to Chicano Park**.

large-scale, transit-friendly, urban infill developments San Diego wants to champion.

As an example, in Mission Valley, the Riverwalk Golf Club is undergoing a transformation into a 4,000-unit mixed-use village adjacent to a transit stop. The massive Sports Arena redevelopment, which has stumbled after procedural issues with city proposals and the state's Surplus Land Act, is finally poised to move forward, with five competing bids and plans to add 4,000 units, 20 percent of which will be affordable, and a 12-acre park.

The most important addition—and most expensive, at $2.17 billion—to the region's transit system is the extension of the Mid-Coast Trolley. It runs 26.3 miles north from the Mexican border through downtown to the labs and lecture halls of UCSD and the surrounding area, known as University City.

Its relevance lies not just in the scale of the expansion north, which added nine stations parallel to Highway 5, but the way its completion (in late 2021) created a backbone of transit access. It is a one-seat ride connecting downtown—as well as low-income communities—with high-paying job centers up north. With rezoning and neighborhood planning currently in the works in the University City district, the trolley's arrival can ideally catalyze more high-rise development.

It also provides a central node of the regional plan's ambitious transit expansion, a trunk line for branches of micromobility and rapid bus service investments. SANDAG also plans to create a large, central mobility hub—a San Diego Grand Central—that would link rail, bus, and multimodal alternatives, itself becoming a new node of transit-oriented development (sites downtown and a former Navy site have been debated for years).

"San Diego has one of the worst job-housing imbalances," says Diego Velasco, AICP, founder and principal of Citythinkers, a planning, urban research, and design firm. "A lot of the high-paying jobs are up in the northern part of the county in Kearny Mesa, Mira Mesa, Sorrento Mesa, and the University-Torrey Pines area. And the majority of people live in the southern or eastern parts of the county where it's more affordable."

The Trolley also serves as a down payment on the city's efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions. Much more will need to be built—or in the case of highways, not built—but the city's draft *Our Climate, Our Future: Climate Action Plan* calls for 25 percent of residents who live near transit to become transit commuters by 2035, an achievable goal with already planned investments. Convincing the region's governments—not just SANDAG and San Diego—to fund the regional plan's transit vision will be the key challenge.

The combination of denser housing and transit links to UCSD can help bolster and build upon the region's success as a biotech center and the rabid demand for more lab space. (Arguably, biotech is the sexiest of the industries in San Diego, and it's getting a lot of attention. Other stalwarts of the region's economy include tourism, the military, and activities related to the border with Mexico.)

One of biotech's three biggest markets, San Diego's life sciences industry generates $27.7 billion annually and employs 72,000 workers at a time when new technological developments and a pandemic-era boost in interest has made this one of the nation's brightest sectors for start-up funding and real estate development.

The city's main research hubs all plan expensive and extensive expansions: the Salk Institute for Biological Studies is building a $250 million Center for Science and Technology; Scripps Research is adding a new $100 million laboratory facility; and UCSD has plans for both a new Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science and another biomedical lab complex.

The University City rezoning, which carries the promise of adding more housing close to cutting-edge laboratories and research centers, hits at a central issue with industry expansion. It also requires the fruits of good planning, including more affordable housing options and transportation options. Expansion into downtown San Diego, including a massive redevelopment of the former Horton Plaza mall and waterfront development by homegrown developer IQHQ across from a potential transit hub, suggests that the biotech industry is racing to acquire space and attract workers.

"Firms that count on being able to recruit top talent from around the world to come work in life sciences in San Diego are losing the competition for talent in some cases because we can't pay people enough for them to find houses," says Martin.

San Diego's success has come in large part from using smart growth policies to incentivize private development to meet public goals. As the city and region explore ways to fund transit expansion and boost housing production, meeting these lofty goals will depend on creating city- and region-wide regulations that can reverse steadily rising housing costs and emissions.

The real test will be whether the infrastructure and development that this new denser, transit-diverse region requires will be welcomed and used—or spark backlash from residents who, accustomed to a more car-centric past, feel threatened by a rapidly changing San Diego.

Patrick Sisson is an LA-based writer and reporter focused on the tech, trends, and policies that shape our cities.

CHARLOTTE FUTURE | 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

6 Ways to Engage Youth in Comprehensive Planning

From TikTok challenges to movie screenings, use these tips to connect with your community's youngest residents.

By RACHEL GREENWALD

To seek input on a new comprehensive plan, Charlotte, North Carolina, hosted a series of drive-in community meetings that were capped off with a movie screening. The events drew hundreds. GLYN A STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Of all the key constituents in planning projects, the group that can be most neglected *and* directly impacted by planning efforts is people under 18—despite making up 22 percent of the U.S. population.

"They're a group we often overlook, but they often have the best feedback," says Nepherterra Best, chief communications officer of Pride PR, a strategic communications firm focused on local government and nonprofits. "More planning teams need to be thoughtful about inviting the people that will be most impacted to share their lens[es] and experiences and thoughts."

This was the challenge in Charlotte, North Carolina, as it embarked on the Charlotte Future 2040 comprehensive plan—the city's first major long-range planning effort since the 1970s. Framed around a complete communities concept, the plan will guide growth in land use, investment, and infrastructure development for the next 20 years.

As part of the process, the project team laid out an equity engagement strategy identifying five underrepresented groups to intentionally connect with and seek input from: senior citizens, lower-income residents, Black and Latinx residents, and young people.

"Young people are the demographic and cohort where the decisions we make today will impact the most, so why not bring them to the table and help them shape the plan?" says Alysia Osborne, AICP, division manager of Long-Range and Strategic Planning for the city of Charlotte.

But bringing young people into the planning process is about more than just ticking a box—it's an opportunity to cultivate diverse, imaginative, thoughtful, unexpected, and forward-thinking ideas. To find powerful ways to connect with this tough-to-reach group in the midst of a pandemic, Charlotte's planning team brought on planning and consulting firms MIG and Pride PR as partners to build and implement an innovative and integrated youth engagement program.

According to Jay Renkens, AICP, MIG's director of Planning and Design Services, the intention of the program was to meaningfully engage youth in the process of visioning, goal setting, policy and strategy development, and implementation. To do that, the program team developed specific tools and strategies and incorporated youth-focused engagement into broader community outreach. Their efforts offer a variety of lessons for planners seeking authentic ways to reach young people in their communities.

1 KEEP MESSAGING UNDERSTANDABLE AND APPROACHABLE.

Charlotte's planning department brought on communications specialists as part of the core delivery team from the outset, enabling the team to identify the most effective approaches from the start. Pride PR worked with the planning department throughout the multi-year process to develop messaging that clears up the complex, often opaque comprehensive plan process in ways all residents, especially young people, can understand.

"We're such technicians and practitioners, so it was helpful to have a team of people who would take these complicated ideas and simplify them to something that is understandable and resonates from a youth perspective," says Osborne. "They were able to translate really complicated ideas into messaging that resonates with young people."

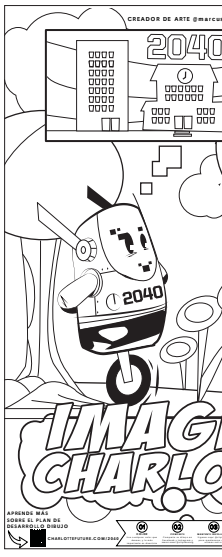
The core messages and themes centered on residents' lived experiences, along with the implications and impacts of the plan on their own lives. "Our approach was 'less is more' in communicating in a way where they could make a connection to how this relates to them, where you're allowing communities to process this information in terms of 'how does this affect me' and 'why should I care,' and being able to make that connection and find ways to connect those dots," says Best.

They tried to communicate elements of the plan that would feel specific to young people and their lives, rather than focusing on wider, more abstract concepts. For example, instead of talking about infrastructure broadly, they referred to sidewalks and bike lanes. And they positioned the plan through the lens of individual and community values, helping young people understand their role in shaping how the city will look 10 or 20 years from now.

The project team was careful to use messaging and storytelling not to talk at young people but rather as an opportunity to listen and engage in conversation to create a safe space where they could feel comfortable sharing their ideas.

"Having these kinds of conversations with adults can be intimidating, but how do you create a safe space for them to share?" says Osborne. "We talked with kids a lot about retaining Charlotte's identity, this city being their home, all the things they love about it, and how to keep what's already great about the city."

An entry in Charlotte's TikTok city recipe challenge.



Charlotte-themed board game and coloring pages.

2 EMBRACE DIGITAL PLATFORMS LIKE TIKTOK.

With the support of leadership open to innovating and venturing beyond their comfort zones, Charlotte's planning department challenged themselves to embrace nontraditional engagement methods to make sure they were meeting young people where they are—like on social media.

The planning team worked with Pride PR to host an #ImagineCLT TikTok challenge, capitalizing on the attention the platform has captured among young people during the pandemic. Riffing on viral cooking and recipe TikToks, the team came up with their own prompt: They encouraged Charlotte residents to identify ingredients for a recipe that would make a future Charlotte they want to see.

The submissions and posts garnered suggested improving transportation access, parks and sporting infrastructure, sidewalks, small business support, arts and culture access, economic mobility, affordability housing, equity and diversity, and neighborhood development.

3 BUT DON'T FORGET TO GET CREATIVE WITH ANALOG METHODS, TOO.

Keeping inequities related to internet access and technological proficiency in mind, the project team developed an integrated youth engagement program that combined digital interventions with analog activities like coloring sheets and board games.

The coloring sheets, which were created by local artist Marcus Kiser and provided in English and Spanish, show a futuristic version of Charlotte. The designs reflect characteristics of Afrofuturism to show young people of color their influence over the city's future, Kiser told *The Charlotte Post*. More than 1,000 sheets were distributed in lunchboxes at over 20 schools and available at Black-owned restaurants and local businesses.

Meanwhile, a city-building board game called *Growing Better Places: A More Equitable and Inclusive Charlotte* was developed and distributed online and at in-person events to show young people and families the different building blocks of growth and development priorities. Upwards of 1,800 people played the game, giving them greater insight into the relationships between transit planning, mixed-use development, and displacement—and how that interplay results in different scenarios, each with its own trade-offs.

These activities aimed to not only solicit and encourage input, but to also do a better job of explaining the comprehensive planning process more generally to young residents.

4 THROW FUN, FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS.

After the initial lockdown period of the pandemic, the planning team also started hosting outdoor gatherings and events, including a series of drive-in community meetings, which saw hundreds of attendees. The project team presented updates and developments on the plan while attendees listened through their car radios and used signals like horns, wipers, and lights to

FROM LEFT: PRIDE PR COMMUNICATIONS, PORTION & PIXELS, COLORING SHEET ARTIST MARCUS KISER

An "Open Streets" pop-up.

Staff and youth engagement at a drive-through event.

respond to the presentation. The final meeting was followed by a drive-in screening of *Back to the Future*.

5 MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITY STAKEHOLDERS.

Youth engagement is often treated as a prescriptive, one-time exercise, with planners or consultants visiting a school for an isolated 45-minute session. But as Renkens says, "Usually that first engagement and quick touch point is insufficient to get anything meaningful." Too often in planning, he adds, not enough is done to raise awareness about the process in general, and instead planners often show up only when they want something.

He suggests elevating young people as a priority stakeholder group and building infrastructure and representation around that: identifying and appointing youth ambassadors and advisors, setting up steering committees to communicate back to decision makers throughout the process, and conducting regular focus groups. Osborne and Renkens both point to the importance of bringing in younger team members, like entry-level employees and interns, as facilitators to help lead youth engagement efforts.

Through ongoing and consistent forums, planners can find fun and interactive ways to facilitate in-depth sessions that create time and space for context setting, explaining planning processes, and group deliberation and discussion. For *Charlotte Future 2040*, this took the form of a series of equity chats with local high students, delivered in partnership with youth civic engagement nonprofit GenerationNation. The series of conversations—led by college interns and younger staff from the planning department—covered challenges and opportunities around equity and access in Charlotte and how they inform the planning process. They also discussed what is most important to the student members of GenerationNation's Youth Council, the official student advisory council of Charlotte and broader Mecklenburg County governments.

6 INSPIRE FUTURE PLANNERS.

After the equity chats, members of the Youth Council became much more vocal planning advocates among friends and family, says Amy Farrell, executive director of GenerationNation. "They feel more ownership around planning processes and have been able to talk to friends and people in their community about the plan and are proud of their role in that."

Beyond incorporating input from the demographic, ongoing youth engagement efforts can be an important opportunity to help build a lifelong interest in and engagement with the city—and to introduce young people from diverse backgrounds to career pathways.

"A lot of planners like myself didn't learn about planning as a career option growing up," Osborne says. "But we're asking ourselves: What if we start introducing people to the profession early on and building that into our curriculum as part of our department?"

Rebecca Greenwald is a researcher, strategist, and writer with a passion for cities, urban development, and arts and culture.

THIS PAGE: CITY OF CHARLOTTE STAFF; GLYN A STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Is Tourism Still a Viable Economic Development Strategy?

By MICHELLE McCUE

YES,

In Palm Desert, new boutique hotels (top), a recently revitalized city center (above), and the proximity to the natural beauty of the desert (right), helped the city benefit from the "backyard travel" trend during the pandemic.

CHRIS MILLER (TOP); COURTESY CITY OF PALM DESERT (ABOVE, RIGHT)

OVER THE COURSE OF 2019, THE TRAVEL AND tourism industries generated $1.9 trillion in economic output and supported 9.5 million American jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. That's more than the agriculture, mining, and utility sectors each that same year.

And then came COVID-19.

Now, two years into the pandemic, the sector remains so unpredictable that the National Travel and Tourism Office of the Department of Commerce has indefinitely suspended its annual *Forecast for International Travel to the United States*.

That uncertainty is felt differently in communities across the country. On balance, the current outlook for tourism as an economic development strategy is closely linked to both geography and infrastructure. Those with favorable weather, proximity to major metro markets, and strong funding to support and promote tourism businesses are on the road to recovery. Some destinations are benefiting, too, from a renewed interest in "backyard travel."

Others, however, continue to suffer significant revenue losses as international, events, and business travel recover at slower rates than domestic and leisure travel—and as virus variants continue to spark surges and cancellations across the country.


BUT

'The same question is coming up now as after the Great Recession: Are all of our eggs in one basket here? Does this make us more vulnerable?'

—Thomas Soule, public affairs manager, Palm Desert, California

After two years of COVID chaos, communities are wondering: Is tourism still a viable economic development strategy?

For many, the answer still seems to be yes—but with some new considerations.

"The conversation here has shifted greatly to: How can we diversify our economy, and what would that look like?" says Thomas Soule, public affairs manager of Palm Desert, one of nine cities in Coachella Valley, a popular resort region in southern California.

With an eye on recovery and stability, communities with tourism-dependent economies are now looking for ways to stimulate new industries through tourism, take advantage of sector trends and local assets, and better support the people who live and work there year-round.

Shifting audiences and industries

With golf courses, major shopping centers, and extensive lodging options (resorts, hotels, and short-term rentals) that pay into the city's transient occupancy tax (TOT), Palm Desert banks on tourism.

"Sales tax is our number one revenue generator, followed closely by TOT—and tourism fuels both," says Soule. He initially joined Palm Desert's city staff as the first tourism and marketing manager; now, he continues to serve as the city's tourism liaison while taking on a broader public affairs role. "We're in an interesting moment right now with COVID. Just as we start to get our footing back, another wave will come up."

That pattern has hit the Coachella Valley's biggest moneymakers hard. Roughly equidistant from Palm Springs and Indio, Palm Desert's tourism outlook is closely linked to the success of several major festivals and events, particularly the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, which spans six days over two weekends and brings about 200,000 visitors to the region. Coachella, as it's better known, was canceled in April 2020, rescheduled for that October, canceled, rescheduled for April 2021, canceled, rescheduled for October 2021, and

In upstate New York, the Finger Lakes Region benefitted from an interest in agritourism encompassing wine regions (below) and family farms (right). In rural communities, tourism is driving conversations around zoning and aesthetic regulations aimed at preserving the region's appeal as a destination and its quality of life for residents.

LEFT: JESSIE LYNN PHOTOGRAPHY; THIS PAGE: KATE COLLINS/*HORNELL EVENING TRIBUNE*

then canceled again. It's now scheduled to take place in April 2022. "We are waiting with bated breath," says Soule.

In the meantime, Palm Desert is making do with leisure travelers from southern California's major metropolitan "drive markets," including Los Angeles, Anaheim, and San Diego, which together amount to some 15 million potential tourists. According to data from Visit California, the state's official marketing organization, the Coachella Valley region has seen a 10 percent increase in in-state visitors.

That represents a significant shift in thinking from pre-COVID days, Soule says, when international travelers were key targets because of their longer stays. The international travel bans of the early pandemic forced the recalibration, but at the start of 2022, even with bans largely lifted for vaccinated travelers, some cities are wary of investing now-scarce resources in the global game. With the prospect of future pandemic-related travel bans, political uncertainty, and increasingly frequent extreme weather, some tourism researchers recommend keeping the focus closer to home.

To do so, Soule says the city and its partners in regional and county government are using a variety of techniques, including funding advertising campaigns and funneling federal, state, and regional grant opportunities to local businesses to help them ramp up safety and marketing efforts. The city has also temporarily lifted zoning restrictions to entice city dwellers with the promise of al fresco dining.

While these efforts have managed to keep the local tourism industry afloat, the city is looking to the future with a more critical eye. "The same question is coming up now as after the Great Recession," Soule says. "Are all of our eggs in one basket here? Does this make us more vulnerable?"

Palm Desert also is taking major steps to diversify its economy, starting with the innovation sector. It recently opened a business incubator dubbed Palm Desert iHub, managed by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership. "We're trying to encourage small businesses that are very tech focused, forward thinking, and set them up to help take our economy in new directions," Soule says. "But it's not an easy fix, and it's not a short-term fix."

One of the city's weaknesses, he explains, is broadband. While internet access is nearly ubiquitous across Palm Desert, the kind of superfast, super-reliable connection needed to attract major tech businesses is not yet available. The city also lacks robust housing options to support a diverse workforce. The median household income hovers around $50,000, but according to Realtor.com, the median list price for a home in Palm Desert was nearly $550,000 in early 2022, while RentCafe.com reports that 73 percent of rental payments exceed $1,500 per month.

"As a resort destination, short-term rentals of course play a role, and we need them to satisfy some visitors' preferences for that kind of accommodation," Soule says. "But we also find ourselves thinking about affordable housing so that we have enough housing for our workforce."

At the end of 2020, Palm Desert voted to enact short-term rental (STR) regulations that prohibit properties in multiple districts zoned residential. In these areas, homes can only be listed on sites like Airbnb if hosts remain on-site during guests' stays, or if they're located in gated neighborhoods where homeowner associations permit STRs.

"This pandemic has driven home, with great drama, just how critical it is that we diversify our economy," Mayor Kathleen Kelly said in 2020 when the city council met to vote on the issue. "As that begins to happen, we're going to be attracting additional workers to Palm Desert, and a paramount policy of this city has been to house more of the workers who are employed in Palm Desert within the city. That is probably the single most significant thing we could do to have a positive impact on the environment, because housing more of the people who work in Palm Desert within the city reduces, or eliminates, commutes. To accomplish that, we have to, as a matter of policy, guard against the commercialization of traditional neighborhoods, which would reduce, rather than increase, available housing for working people who are part of Palm Desert."

The STR ban was challenged with a lawsuit in 2021 but remains in effect.

Agritourism and zoning

Nearly 3,000 miles from Palm Desert in the Finger Lakes region of New York, Brittany Gibson also cites drive-in markets as the community's saving grace during the pandemic.

'Throughout COVID, we've really benefited from…the rediscovery of what's in their backyard.'

—Brittany Gibson, executive director, Seneca Lake Winery Association

"We are within a five-hour drive of 25 percent of the country's population, so we have a really high potential audience," says Gibson, executive director of the Seneca Lake Winery Association, a membership organization comprising dozens of wineries that collectively market the area as a tourism destination, in partnership with the regional Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance. Located in rural western New York, Seneca Lake and the Finger Lakes region are within a few hundred miles of New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh residents.

"Throughout COVID, we've really benefited from that proximity," Gibson says. "We've been part of the rediscovery of what's in their backyard." They've also capitalized on a fast-growing segment of the tourism industry: agritourism. Encompassing tastings at vineyards, pick-your-own berry farms, oyster farm dinners, and the like, agritourism is increasingly seen as a way for farms to broaden their appeal and add to their bottom line.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, state policy makers are supporting these efforts, and interest in agritourism is growing across the country. However, supporting agritourism can be a less-than-straightforward proposition for planners in many communities. Zoning ordinances, for example, often consider farming and events like weddings or concerts to be incompatible uses—largely because of the traffic they generate on rural roads, but also because of issues that can impact rural neighbors, like exterior lighting, parking, and noise.

In some regions, the tension between supporting agritourism and upholding zoning restrictions has led to public battles between ag businesses and residents, with planners caught in the middle. In Sonoma County, California, agritourism has expanded rapidly over the past two decades as hundreds of wineries, breweries, and orchards have sought to market their properties for tastings, tours, educational experiences, and private events. But many suffered pandemic-related revenue losses, including local farmers who supplied area restaurants. That only added to the pressure.

In response to wineries and other properties offering tours, tastings, and private events, Sonoma County drafted a Winery Events Ordinance that may serve as a model for others.

COURTESY SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM

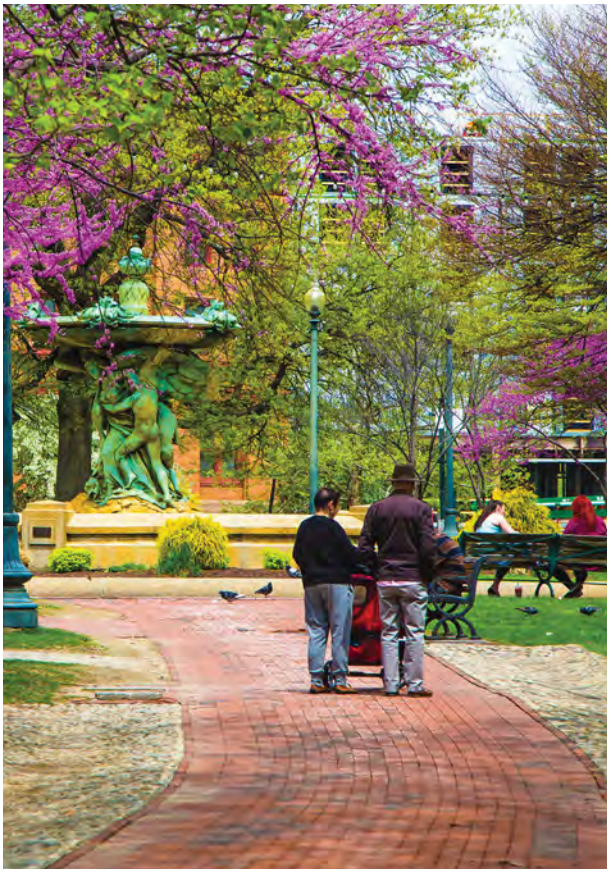
In response, Sonoma County planners drafted a Winery Events Ordinance aimed at balancing the interests of residents with the economic considerations of wine tourism. Presented in mid-2021, the ordinance is currently moving through the public process and, if adopted, could serve as a model for other cities and regions facing similar issues.

"Zoning is a hot topic in our area right now," says Gibson, noting that some towns in the Finger Lakes region still have no zoning ordinance of any kind in place. In her rural community, tourism, aesthetic regulations, and preservation are currently driving the conversations. Issues related to siting solar farms, New York State's recent legalization of recreational cannabis, and warehouse development along major thoroughfares all have the potential to impact the ways people perceive and experience the region, she says.

"Communication is what's important. We have to break down the barriers between economic development and community management and political leadership and destination marketing organizations and chambers of commerce," says Gibson. "We all have to be at the table together."

Cultural tourism

Another fast-growing trend, cultural tourism, is guiding efforts in places like Providence, Rhode Island. Branded and marketed as "The Creative Capital," Providence is advancing an economic development strategy that weaves tourism development with strengthening the city's arts and cultural sectors.



Providence, Rhode Island, is advancing an economic development strategy that weaves tourism with strengthening the city's arts and cultural sectors. This includes highlighting (clockwise from top left) the summer celebration "Waterfire" on the Providence River, The Avenue Concept program (and the Arnold Building mural by artist Garden of Journey), city parks, and the Rhode Island School of Design museum.

TOP ROW: DAVID SANTILLI; BOTTOM ROW: COURTESY RHODE ISLAND VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU

'We see the recovery of tourism as integral to the overall vibrancy and vitality of the regional economy.' *—Martha Sheridan, president and CEO, Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau*

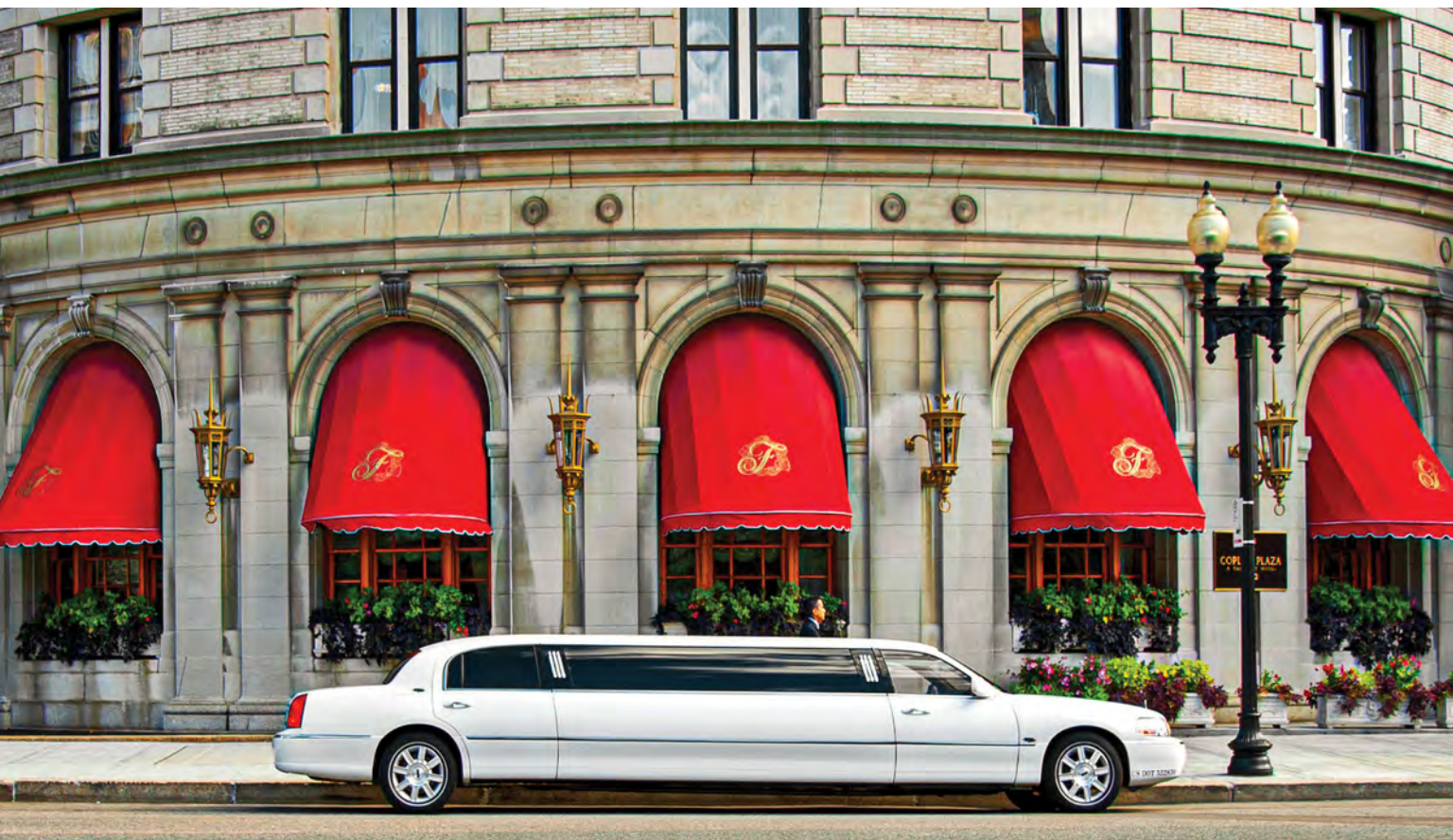
"[We have] a dual mission to integrate arts and culture into community life while showcasing Providence as an international cultural destination," says Stephanie Fortunato, director of the city's Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism. "We are always weighing the needs of residents and businesses with those of visitors to the city. This balancing act is certainly present as we think about the city's recovery."

As the home of Rhode Island School of Design, the Ivy League Brown University, and culinary arts powerhouse Johnson & Wales University, Providence leans hard into its cultural assets to attract tourists and create jobs for residents. In 2021, the city released a draft of its updated cultural plan, *PVDx2031: A Cultural Plan for Culture Shift*. The plan emphasizes the importance of partnerships between the city, cultural organizations, the tourism industry, and local creatives and designers. It also underscores the importance of elevating BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and LGBTQ+ voices in strategic planning efforts and leadership roles.

Specifically, some of the plan's key takeaways include calls for living-wage jobs for artists and investments in arts and culture to acknowledge and repair trauma stemming from the city's historical ties to slavery and colonization of Indigenous lands.

PVDx2031 is likely to have some teeth as the city gets ready to deploy federal recovery funds. "Mayor [Jorge] Elorza's proposed plan for using the city's American Rescue Plan funding addresses not only the needs of art tourism and hospitality, but also considers how this fits in amidst all of the other areas of investment needed for Providence not just to recover, but to thrive," says Fortunato.

The plan proposes $7.7 million in art tourism and hospitality funding to support investment in the creative industries and partner sectors, aiming to create jobs in each of the city's 25 neighborhoods. This investment also aims to shore up Providence's position as a cultural



In Boston, Tourism Destination Marketing Districts impose fees on stays at hotels, like the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel (below), to generate funding to promote tourism. Another program, All Inclusive Boston, aims to attract a more diverse audience and promote cultural assets, including the Park Street Church and Freedom Trail at Boston Common (right).

destination, earmarking more than $4 million for expansion and improvement of cultural facilities, $1.2 million to support development of cultural events, and nearly $1 million to create public art aimed at encouraging tourism, among other arts-related investments.

Much is riding on this focus on cultural tourism. With the slow recovery of business travel and large group events, Providence hotels are still struggling.

"Occupancy has plummeted," says Fortunato. "Providence has not fully recovered because meetings, conventions, and sports are the backbone of the tourism economy here."

Destination marketing districts

While Boston has suffered from many of the same issues as Providence, some credit the pandemic with expediting a long-sought solution to the city's need for a dedicated and dependable funding mechanism for destination marketing.

In January 2021, Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts signed an economic development bill with a provision enabling the formation of Tourism Destination Marketing Districts (TDMDs) in the state. These districts, elsewhere known as Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs), permit hotels to add a nominal assessment fee (typically between 1 and 10 percent) to guest bills that is then invested back into local development and marketing. In California, where the concept was first introduced in 1989, there are now more than 85 active TIDs that together generate approximately $180 million in annual funding for tourism development and marketing, according to a white paper by tourism-research firm Tourism Economics.

Boston has struggled to gain tourism and convention market shares against well-funded competitors. The TDMD is projected to increase local tourism funding fivefold, from $7.5 million in 2019 to $40 million when hotel occupancy and rates return to pre-pandemic levels.

Martha Sheridan, president and CEO of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GBCVB), describes the all-hands-on-deck effort to get the state and local legislation passed: "[We] worked with many partners and stakeholders to form the TDMD, including state and city officials. We operated on many parallel tracks as we sought to pass enabling legislation in the Massachusetts legislature while also socializing the concept with our hotels and educating them on why we desperately needed to create a district."

The enabling legislation had been languishing in committee for nearly two years. GBCVB saw an opportunity to attach the TDMD bill as an amendment to a larger economic recovery bill aimed at pandemic relief. The local ordinance to form a district passed unanimously in August 2021.

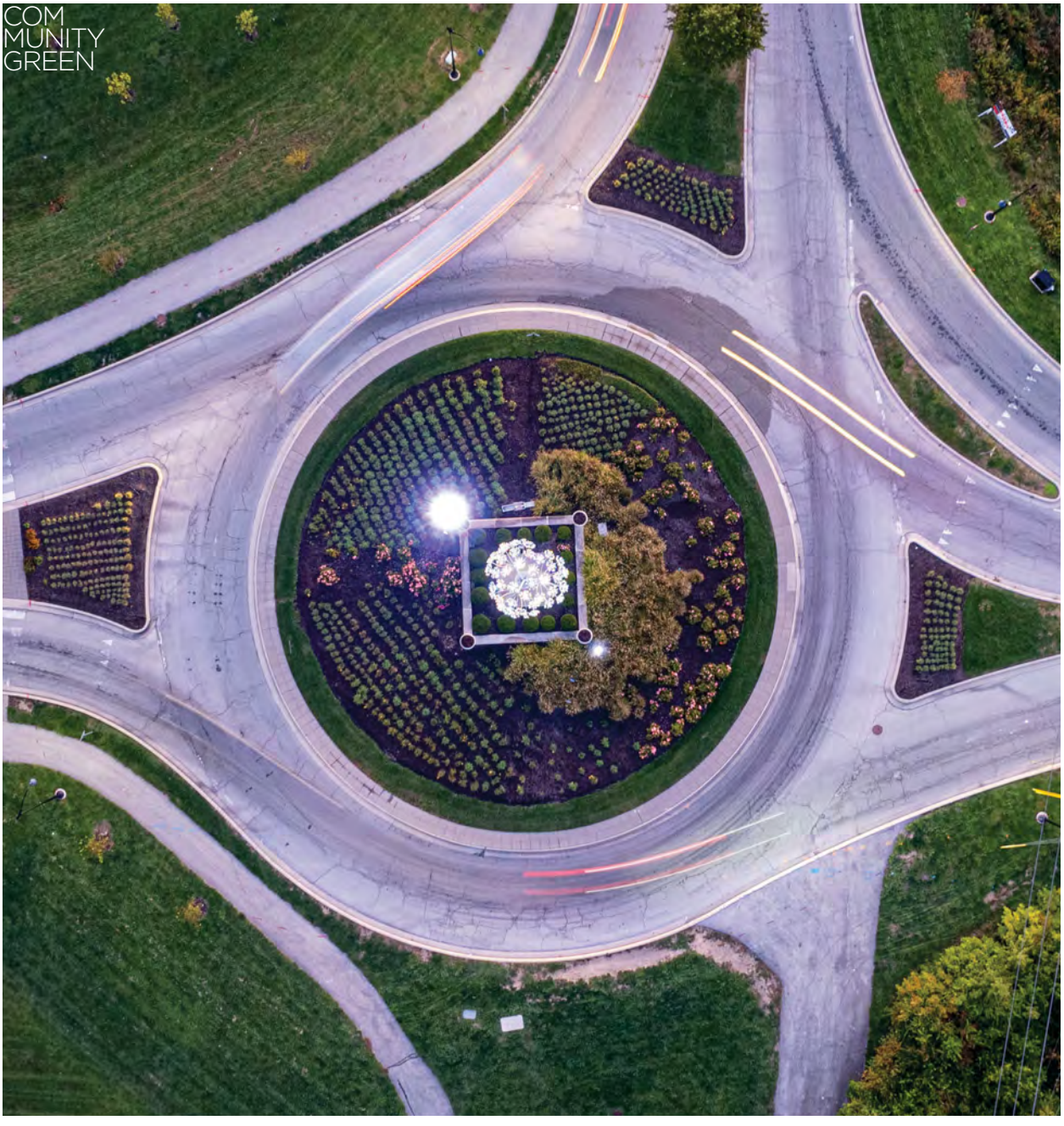
A focus of their messaging throughout the process was the long-term positive outlook of the TDMD. They framed the passage as necessary to recovery of the travel and hospitality and the sectors' diverse workforces, which comprise about 10 percent of the labor market in the state. Besides the provisions for hotels, the district plan—developed in collaboration with elected officials—also addresses community concerns, including sustainability and commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. An example is the recently launched marketing campaign All Inclusive Boston, which endeavors to both attract a more diverse tourism audience to the city and to promote cultural assets across all of Boston's neighborhoods.

Ultimately, tourism has ripple effects in other key economic sectors, Sheridan says—which is why Boston is still betting on it as an economic recovery and development tool.

"So many of our innovation sectors—medical research, life sciences, smart manufacturing, and fintech—depend on recruitment and retainment strategies that are directly linked to how we market the destination," she says. "For example, the cultural, culinary, and commercial assets that we promote to draw visitors are often the same essential characteristics that make someone want to attend school here, or move here for work, or relocate a business."

"We see the recovery of [tourism] as integral to the overall vibrancy and vitality of the regional economy," Sheridan says.

Michelle McCue is the founder of McCue Marketing Communications, a consulting firm that helps build strong communities and place-based brands through strategic planning, branding, and communications. Specializing in tourism, food, and agriculture-based development, McCue combines practical planning knowledge with strategic outreach to help clients achieve sustainable growth.



"BEACON BLOOM" ROUNDABOUT

Carmel, Indiana

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT the much beloved (or maligned?) roundabout would be a twofer: a safer design for intersections and a cleaner one, too? Officials in Carmel, Indiana, say roundabouts save 24,000 gallons of gas a year and are part of an overall community greening strategy that includes a hybrid and biofuels fleet. Just how much roundabouts reduce carbon emissions compared to traditional intersections is not so straightforward, but several studies note a 20 to 30 percent drop. And a representative from the Institute of Transportation Engineers told the *New York Times* in November that today's roundabouts "are the most sustainable and resilient intersections around." (Got a climate win-win that makes your Community Green? Tell us about it at mstromberg@planning.org.)

Carmel, Indiana's rate of crashes with injuries has dropped 78 percent, thanks to roundabouts like the Beacon Bloom, which is one of 140 there. And, because cars don't idle at stoplights, they burn less gas, which makes for cleaner air.

AJ MAST/THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

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