

PLANNING

**HOW ONE TOWN
EMBRACED
ZONING REFORM**

**10 YEARS AFTER
HURRICANE SANDY,
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40 *Power Failure*

A decade after Hurricane Sandy, mitigation and recovery policies still fail to protect the most vulnerable. Two New York City planners lay out what happened and what needs to change. **PLUS:** A Superstorm and Its Lasting Impacts.



On the cover: Walla Walla, Washington's historic downtown. Above: Planner and former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros. Right: The Berkshires prepare for climate migration in Massachusetts.

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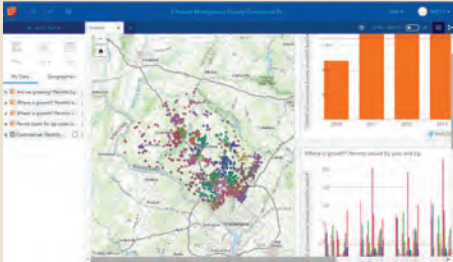
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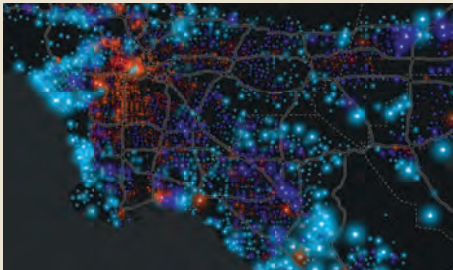
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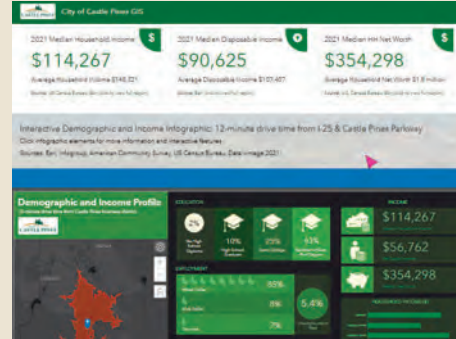
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Planners can view and measure the impact of scenarios on population, jobs, utilities, traffic, tax revenue, and other aspects.

Contributors



Byron Nicholas, AICP

New Federal Grant Targets Racist Highway Legacy, page 10

This transportation planner created Black + Urban (blackandurban.com) as a safe space for solution-oriented ideas affecting Black communities. Consensus building is an important part of implementing equitable practices, he says. "The new infrastructure law has an opportunity to be transformative. It's the job of us planners to connect the funding with the communities we serve."



Celeste Noché

Zoning's Future, page 24

A lover of old homes, this Portland-based photographer was intrigued by Walla Walla's housing diversity. "As someone who values equity, I think these mixed-zoning communities are the key to diversifying neighborhoods and creating more housing options while still preserving many of our beloved historic homes," she says. "To me, it feels like a win-win."



Donovan Finn and Thaddeus Pawlowski

Power Failure, page 40

These planners witnessed the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy firsthand. Ten years later, recovery remains a daily reality for some economically vulnerable areas of New York City, they say. "Planners knew what needed to be done, but we were handcuffed by federal rules and local politics. We have to change the way that system works."



PLANNING

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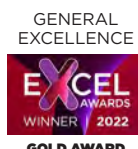
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FROM THE DESK OF AN SRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

AICP as a Compass for Emerging Planners

I'VE UNDERSTOOD for a long time that planning is a multidisciplinary field, providing a bridge between the subjects of land use, transportation, sustainability, and more. However, only recently did I realize that I could apply my planning background to a role many might consider pretty nontraditional.

After working in the public sector for four years, I joined Uber in 2021 as part of their growing transit team. I quickly realized that I was not the only planner working at Uber and that our common skills were extremely valuable in the tech space. Then, a year ago, I obtained my AICP certification, a move that has been fundamental in sharpening my skills and helping me stay connected to the planning profession.

I also volunteer as a representative on APA's Student Representatives Council (SRC) Executive Committee. From that seat, I get to see the many career paths that students and emerging professionals take. Additionally, I serve as the SRC's liaison to the AICP Commission, which allows me to advocate for new professionals who are also looking to become certified.

I get a lot of questions from students about the "right" way to become a planner. The truth is, I went into my planning program knowing I wanted to work in transportation and assuming that meant a government agency or consulting firm. I would have never imagined that I'd be where I am today—working in tech, while helping transit agencies find solutions to their mobility needs. That's the beauty of planning. Your career journey can take many different routes.

In making certification a milestone aspect of my personal career journey I'm realizing I have several new strengths: I am a better advocate, a stronger analyst, and a professional who is guided by a compass of proven best practices. In the past year, I have noticed a tremendous difference in the way I view myself, my career,



'Feeling confident in your abilities and judgment is key to making your voice heard and making an impact in the communities you serve.'

—KEVIN LUZONG, AICP

and my skills as a planner.

I recognize, however, that gaining experience is only half the battle. As an emerging planner, feeling confident in your abilities and judgment is key to making your voice heard and making an impact in the communities that you serve. In my work, I often collaborate with local transportation agency planners, and I find that my AICP certification brings credibility to my professional contributions. It is especially valuable in my nontraditional role, where it helps build trust and demonstrates that I recognize the challenges that planners face. It also reflects that

I actively maintain my planning education and that I abide by the professional code of ethics.

I recently spoke with SRC Chair Kohl Malo, AICP, who also works in the private sector as a planner with Renaissance Planning. He reminded me that the AICP certification can also offer guidance in decision making. "Sometimes even really good data, whether from the models or from public engagement, can get really messy. That's when planners are most needed, and it's also the time to lean on our certification." I agree. Being AICP-certified reminds us that we have the tools and training, and that even if we are emerging planners, we are well qualified for the jobs we do.

As planners, we put significant time and effort into our careers. In the short year since I became certified, I have been consistently reminded of why I wanted AICP certification to be part of my professional path, and why I'm grateful that I achieved it.

Kevin Luzong, AICP, is a customer success manager on Uber's transit team, focused on supporting transit agency partners across the globe. He is also the SRC Executive Committee Region 5 Representative. Registration for the November certification exam is open October 3 through 28 at planning.org/certification/register.



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LETTERS

We're Awfully Proud



FOR THE SECOND year in a row, *Planning* magazine won a Gold EXCEL Award from the Associations, Media & Publishing Network. We also took home a Silver EXCEL for planning.org/planning, which was launched last summer with the goal of delivering the information you need when and where you need it. Awards are gratifying, of course, but what really matters is what our readers think. How is *Planning*, in all its formats, working for you, and what can we do better? Let us know at any time. Email me at mstromberg@planning.org, or hit us up on Twitter @APA_Planning or by using the hashtag #PlanMag.

—Meghan Stromberg, editor in chief

Digging into zoning's past

This summer, as communities across the country continued to grapple with a housing crisis, planners looked to the past for guidance on zoning reform with “How State Judiciaries Battled Exclusionary Zoning.” (Read it at bit.ly/legalzoning.) The analysis of pre-*Euclid* state supreme court cases comes from **Francine S. Romero**, an associate professor at the University of Texas, San Antonio—and a former zoning commissioner. The piece sparked engaging conversations on social media about housing justice, policy change, and whether some zoning decisions have violated the constitution.

“I have a lot of respect for Dr. Francine Romero, her work, & her public service. Lots to chew on in this critical take on the context of early legal challenges to exclusionary zoning,” @ajennyh said while sharing the article on Twitter. “Last month I visited Kansas City and saw @JCPRDparks excellent exhibit ‘Redlined.’ Both Dr. Romero’s article and the exhibit left me thinking about the intersection of these exclusionary practices and environmental justice.”

@AleRigolon was struck by the assertion that police power fails to justify single-family-only zoning. “This is a key argument,” he tweeted. “Single-family zoning does nothing to address public welfare or safety (police power). It just pleases the aesthetic preferences of residents (esp. homeowners).”

In some instances, criticism of exclusionary zoning has turned into action. A tweet from @ayeegreen notes that “Raleigh is tackling this right now with its Missing Middle text change to its [unified development ordinance].” (See page 24 for another example.)

Meanwhile, attorney @DanAlban offered a word of professional caution—and teased an upcoming case from the **Institute for Justice** on the topic. “Relying on 100+ [year-old] cases is often fraught with peril, but it’s def. true that state constitutional provisions can provide greater protection than the federal constitution,” he said, “especially re: zoning issues after *Euclid*. Stay tuned for upcoming @IJ case...”

To learn more about the history of zoning, turn to page 30 for a curated timeline of reform efforts.



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Federal grants could reimagine highways. This rendering shows the future of Buffalo's Scajaquada Corridor, supported by the Federal Highway Administration's National Highway Performance Program. The corridor feeds into Kensington Expressway, which locals hope the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program will transform back into a tree-lined boulevard.

RENDERING BY CANNONDESIGN



INTERSECTIONS



WHERE PLANNING AND THE WORLD MEET

Infrastructure | People Behind the Plans |
Housing | Et cetera

INFRASTRUCTURE

New Federal Grant Targets Racist Highway Legacy

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program reimagines roads that divide and pollute communities of color. By Byron Nicholas, AICP, PP

IMAGINE: IT'S 2050, and most of America's interstate highways are gone from the central business districts. Tree-lined boulevards and transit lines have replaced highway infrastructure, and the attendant noise, traffic, and air pollution have decreased. Once-isolated homes and businesses are connected to healthy, active corridors that help local economies thrive.

That's the future many place-making experts are working toward, backed by new tools and funding resources from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

USDOT is charged with administering transportation programs from the \$1 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed by Congress in November 2021. Part of that law, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, is being hailed as a transformative grant opportunity to directly rectify harm caused by highway construction.

From 1956 through the two decades that followed, construction of the U.S. interstate highway system displaced over a million people, according to the USDOT report *Beyond Traffic: 2045*.

"In many cases, interstate routes were chosen based on areas where land costs were the lowest or where political resistance was weakest," the report says. "In practice, this meant that urban interstates cut through low-income and minority communities more often than not."

Last year, current USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg further acknowledged this legacy, calling the design of U.S. highways "racist," and said that would be the focus of the legislation. Many cities have welcomed the shift toward accountability.

Addie Weber, AICP, Toole Design Group's Atlanta office director, says the construction of I-345 has dramatically impacted Dallas.

"At the very local level, the highway and its interchanges have generated significant noise and light pollution; severely limited opportunities for walking, biking, transit, and local car access by destroying the block structure; and created an ugly, blighted landscape that depressed land values." Toole Design Group has partnered with Texas DOT to reimagine I-345, a 1.4-mile elevated freeway reaching the end of its lifespan.

INTER SECTIONS

Infrastructure
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Through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, the USDOT will allocate at least \$1 billion over a five-year period to help more places address transportation facilities like highways that continue to create barriers to connectivity, cause health issues like asthma, and stunt economic development.

A move toward justice

In Buffalo, New York, residents are ready to see Kensington Expressway returned to what it once was. Constructed in the mid-1900s, it replaced a grand, tree-lined boulevard—historic Humboldt Parkway, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted—with a below-grade highway that divided the surrounding neighborhoods. This new program could make it a verdant, vital artery once more, says community leader and activist Stephanie Barber-Geter, the chairperson of the Restore Our Community Coalition, a nonprofit specifically dedicated to remediating the devastation and civic injustice created by the highway.

“We will apply for the planning grant, in partnership with the mayor of Buffalo, to further engage the community throughout the project’s next steps,” she says. Public engagement is an eligible activity for the planning grant. New York Governor Kathy Hochul has also committed \$1 billion to the effort.

“We’d ultimately like to have a tree-lined boulevard on grade level and vehicular traffic below grade,” Barber-Geter says. “Our

Black residents that were here for more than 50 years want the Humboldt Parkway back to what it was.”

Rico Quirindongo, AIA, acting director of Seattle’s Office



I-345 has created pollution and depressed land values in Dallas, critics say. As the highway reaches the end of its lifespan, the city solicited resident input this year for a new plan.

of Planning and Community Development, sees the funding opportunity as a way to address a variety of local issues.

“Reconnect South Park is a community-led initiative aiming to address the many harms caused by [highway] SR-99 and create more opportunities for South Park residents,” he says. “If the highway were removed, it would free up 40 acres of much-needed land for affordable housing, grid reconnection, green space, small businesses, and other [uses].”

The program also supports climate action, Quirindongo says. Grants can be used for environmental studies, public transportation, linear parks and trails, and capping and lids (a type of deck bridge over a highway that can be turned into green space), among other planning, technical, and construction activities.

“As we enter ever deeper into a climate crisis, it is more critical than ever that we work to create urban environments where it is easy and pleasant to walk, bike, stroll, or take public transportation,” says Quirindongo.

Challenges remain

Could Reconnecting Communities really make a difference?

“Yes. We believe the USDOT genuinely sees the Reconnecting Communities program as a way to begin to repair the damage done to Black and brown communities by transportation projects, policies, and programs,” says Andrea Ostrodka, AICP, Toole Design Group’s transit practice lead and Central Florida office director.

However, financial limitations could slow progress. As it now stands, the pilot program is meant to supplement funding from larger sources, like the Federal Highway Administration’s National Highway Performance Program. (While the deadline for the pilot’s cycle has passed, there will be four other opportunities to apply.)

Another challenge is ensuring that the pilot and broader infrastructure law do not fund the same inequities it aims to undo, like “new and expanded roadways, bigger intersections, and projects that continue down the wrong path,” Ostrodka warns. Planners and other place makers will be instrumental in ensuring their correct application.

Byron Nicholas is a transportation planner in New Jersey and the founder of Black + Urban, a digital safe space for Black urban planners, designers, and forward thinkers. Learn more at blackandurban.com.

Naomi Doerner Navigates Mobility Justice

IN 2016, Naomi Doerner co-founded the Untokening, a national collective of leaders of color working to advance mobility justice and equity. Soon after, she made history as Seattle's—and the country's—first-ever transportation equity manager, signaling a broader shift.

"Mobility justice is now being applied and used as a rubric for making decisions, ensuring that the communities at the center of injustice are at the center of creating justice," she says.

Doerner, now the principal and director of equity, diversity, and inclusion at Nelson\Nygaard, recently joined host Courtney Kashima, AICP, on APA's *People Behind the Plans* podcast to discuss her childhood navigating Chicago's bus system and how planners can spark change now. This interview has been edited for length and clarity. —*Sophia Burns*

KASHIMA: How did you first get into this work?

DOERNER: I don't think I had a choice. We took public transit everywhere when I was young. I always saw transportation through the eyes of someone who lived at an intersection: being American but also the daughter of an undocumented immigrant from Honduras. Growing up in Chicago, I was a translator of transportation systems. Ultimately, this led me to grad school. I was very interested in continuing to explore the question of "why" around transit disparities through public policy. So, rather than going the technical planning route, I went the more public policy route so I could continue to be that navigator, but in a different way.

KASHIMA: How do you define mobility justice?

DOERNER: The ability to choose and say, "This is how I want to move, and I can do that freely in every single sense of the word," without having one's



HEAR THE FULL STORY

Want more on mobility justice, the Untokening, and Naomi Doerner's career path? Scan the QR code below or go to planning.org/podcasts for *People Behind the Plans*, APA's podcast series about the work and lives of urban designers.



Q&A

choice determined for them. Mobility justice for my mother

would have meant she could choose how she was going to get around. She wouldn't have had to worry about being delayed and losing her job or waiting outside in the cold for too long.

KASHIMA: How did your role as Seattle's transportation equity manager come about?

DOERNER: Community advocacy. While Seattle did fund the position, the community was already doing that advocacy for years. My role was to navigate

this discussion about how Seattle spent its resources and bring in community voices to help us understand the experiences of people.

KASHIMA: Tell us about the Untokening.

DOERNER: The Untokening is a multicultural collective of leaders of color who come together to share their own experiences working in transportation and help communities they identify with achieve mobility justice. In 2017, we published our *Principles of Mobility Justice*. We've already learned about people in Mexico City, Colombia, and South Africa who are adapting them for their use. It's also a space where we talk about our identities. It's very healing for folks to come to gatherings and talk about not just experiences, but strategies, and not be looked at strangely.

KASHIMA: What are some "easy things" we can do to advance mobility justice?

DOERNER: Can't we just hire people from communities that we're working in? I know that we have hiring processes, but all that is policy, and it can be changed.

Sophia Burns is APA's content associate.

HOUSING

Creative, Affordable, and Not a Moment Too Soon

As Boise's population balloons, a local nonprofit boosts the housing market with innovative materials and financing. By Erika Bolstad

RILEY ROMAIZKO and her fiancé Julien Rivera were among the first to buy a shipping container home at Caritas Commons, a cluster of single-family houses built for limited-income residents in Boise, Idaho. “I could never find even an old, ugly, moldy house at this price range in our market,” she says. “It’s just such an extreme shortage.”

Romazko’s mother was working at indieDwell, a company that specializes in recycling shipping containers into dwellings. Romazko was intrigued by the prospect of living in one, especially if it were affordable.

That’s when she discovered LEAP, a Boise nonprofit that builds affordable homes. Caritas Commons was one of LEAP’s first communities built with a housing trust, which keeps the home prices lower for not just the first buyers, but subsequent owners, says Zeb Moers, the nonprofit’s outreach manager.

This use of alternative construction techniques and materials, along with creative means of land ownership, financing, and siting homes, may help more people live in one of the country’s fastest-growing areas. Boise lacks 13,000 homes necessary to meet demand, according to an analysis by Up For Growth looking

at how the nation’s housing shortage ballooned from 2012 to 2019.

Idaho has seen an influx of people fleeing more expensive



markets in search of relative bargains, as well as remote workers eager for a mountain lifestyle who arrive with Silicon Valley salaries to spend on housing. A July survey by Apartment List shows rents in the city grew an eye-popping 47.4 percent from March 2020 through June 2022.

'Innovative as we can'

LEAP is phasing out shipping containers, and future homes at Caritas will be built with more traditional construction techniques. But the materials are only a part of what makes their approach affordable, Moers says.

Other apartments they built have solar panels on the roof to

keep utility costs low for residents. Older adults and people with disabilities get priority placement.

LEAP is also administering a pilot program to see whether it makes sense to incorporate more types of housing into the city’s portfolio, including tiny homes on wheels and ADUs.

Currently, tiny homes aren’t allowed in Boise, but 55 people applied for six spots in the pilot program, Moers says, proving there’s a demand. ADUs, meanwhile, are allowed, but as with all construction right now, building standalone units has become cost prohibitive. LEAP hopes to make the process more affordable by using one builder for all of the pilot ADUs, and similar designs and materials throughout. The pilot program will also look for ways to provide low-cost financing and fee waivers to ADU owners who rent their units at an affordable rate for 10 years.

A model for affordability

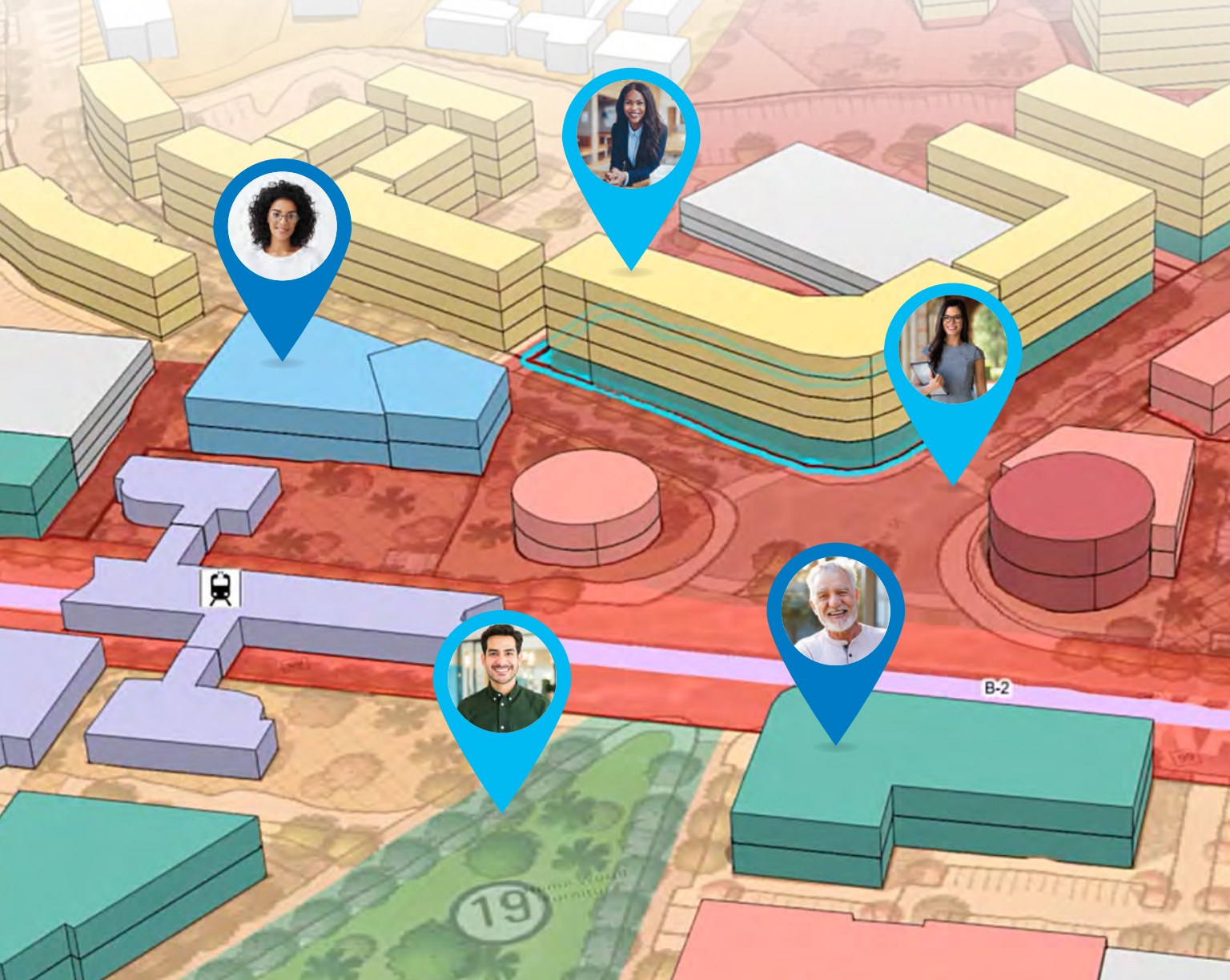
Romazko and Rivera bought their four-bedroom, two-bath-room home for \$212,000 in March. If they do someday decide to sell the house, they’ll recoup their down payment and a portion of other investments they put into the property. That will keep the home affordable for future homebuyers.

Romazko says she wants others to benefit from the approach that got her and her fiancé into a home. It is “a great concept for this area,” she says.

Erika Bolstad is a Stateline staff writer. This was reprinted with permission from Stateline (bit.ly/pewstateline), an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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MAPPED THE UNITED STATES OF ZONING

A new resource from Cornell University's Legal Constructs Lab has an ambitious mission: to compile every zoning code in the U.S. into one user-friendly map to support reform. Led by Professor Sara Bronin, the National Zoning Atlas covers or is analyzing 12 states so far, including California, Hawaii, Illinois, New York, and Texas. Compare the codes and join the effort at zoningatlas.org.

PLANNERS PLAYLIST AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



GovLove celebrates the public sector, one person, policy, and profession at a time. From city managers to interns, guests dig into local issues and the innovative solutions they're exploring in municipalities across the country. Learn more at elgl.org/govlove.



NOW STREAMING

Transit Off the Rails

END OF THE LINE, from documentary filmmaker Emmett Adler, charts New York's troubled Metropolitan Transit Authority from 2016 through 2021.

Carrying as many as 9 million trips per day—or about a third of all public transit in the U.S.—New York's subway, bus, and commuter service once represented the apex of mass transit. But the MTA has long since struggled: The film's opening sequences depict a system in distress due to outdated infrastructure and signalization technology, climate-related impacts, service delays, and chronic underinvestment.

So in 2017, the MTA hired international transit superstar Andy Byford. Within 100 days, his team released an impressive, well-received, and ambitious strategy: the \$50 billion *Fast Forward Plan*. Unfortunately, it's possible to get the planning right, only to find that the politics, public perceptions, and devilish details are trickier in practice.



Top: An entrance to the Times Square station, which during the COVID-19 lockdown stopped running 24 hours for the first time in its history. Above: Bill de Blasio, New York City's former mayor, rides the L train.

The film mostly focuses on debates over whether to close and rebuild the crucial L-train tunnel between Manhattan and Brooklyn. Infighting between the mayor and governor turned transit policy

into a battle of egos, and fierce warfare at the local level complicated even small changes. Once again, progress ground to a halt.

By 2020, Byford was out. Then came the COVID pandemic. The film shifts to focus on MTA's essential workers, including more than 130 who died in the virus's first wave.

While the film isn't an uplifting story of a plan implemented and problem solved, it's nonetheless important for planners—and anyone who cares about the future of our cities—to confront.

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

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Let's talk planning...

Hikers enjoy the Berkshire Mountains in 2020. Rural Massachusetts saw an influx of both visitors and new residents during the first year of the pandemic, providing a glimpse of the patterns climate migration could take.

TARA DONNE/THE NEW YORK TIMES





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CLIMATE

WHERE WEATHER ISN'T THE ONLY HAZARD

For one rural town, the pandemic previewed climate migration. Now, with state funding, they're learning to incorporate those observations into resilience planning. *By Joanna Nadeau, AICP*

INLAND AND RURAL communities face increasing climate impacts: stormwater and riverine flooding, water supply issues, and changes to growing seasons, to name a few. These non-metropolitan areas account for 72 percent of the country's land area and one-fifth of its population. While larger cities like New York and Boston are investing in climate adaptation and mitigation projects, many smaller communities do not have access to the same resources.

A unique program in Massachusetts is changing that trend. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program has awarded more than \$65 million since its inception, bringing climate resilience into reach for many rural, inland towns: more than 95 percent of the commonwealth's municipalities have participated thus far. This program helps communities prepare for potential impacts to infrastructure, services, and natural resources while considering the changing needs of their residents—and their potential movements around the region.

For these inland towns, climate adaptation may require preparing for an influx of new residents fleeing the impacts of sea level rise and storm-surge flooding in coastal communities. This anticipated trend of climate migration could stress infrastructure, housing, public services, and facilities in inland communities in Massachusetts and across the country.

The last few years provided a glimpse of what to expect. At the beginning of the pandemic, rural Massachusetts saw an influx of people as towns known for their scenic nature, tourism, and cultural amenities became safe havens for nearby urbanites. Town administrators in Egremont (pop. 1,372), for example, noted an increase in visitors and year-round residents. While local businesses benefited from the additional customers, the population increase caused new conflicts from visitors unfamiliar with farming activities, stressed an oversaturated housing market, put additional demand on limited resources, and threatened to overwhelm parks and trails.

Armed with these observations and funding from MVP and FEMA, Egremont completed a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) update and Community Resilience Plan in 2022. Together, these plans identify the potential impacts of climate change and migration.

Rural resilience challenges

Egremont used MVP funding to obtain technical support for its HMP update, which includes a focus on

climate vulnerability and adaptation solutions. This combination plan identifies extreme storms, flooding, and elevated temperatures as the major climate-driven weather vulnerabilities.

Climate change is already felt by local farmers and businesses: Flooding and wetter springs erode and destroy agricultural fields, while seasonal shifts have made it more energy-intensive to create favorable skiing conditions in the nearby Berkshire Mountains.

Looking ahead, forest-based economic activity will also be affected. Hardwoods will migrate to higher elevations and likely outcompete spruce-fir forests, changing available timber supplies. Hiking and autumn “leaf-peeping,” like skiing, are closely tied to the state of the forest and the seasonal climate, as are the conditions of roads and open spaces used for recreational access. As profits fall and work opportunities decline in response to forestry, agriculture, and recreation changes, laborers, business owners, and town finances will suffer.

Egremont’s businesses are beginning to test resilience and adaptation strategies, like offering alternative outdoor recreation activities at local ski resorts during the off-season and expanding to less weather-dependent agricultural products like beer. The town is also considering how best to assist local farmers in adapting to flooding and drought, including through improved stormwater management practices.

Answer These Questions to Prepare for Climate Migrants

Which local business sectors and enterprises are vulnerable to climate change?

How can local businesses shift their services or industries to options less dependent on weather?

How will local infrastructure be stressed by increased population?

What is our financial and staff capacity to manage increasing resident demands, maintenance needs, and emergency response activities?

How can the community creatively increase infrastructure and workforce capacity?

How is the town managing impacts to natural resources, parks, and roadways from increased recreational usage?

Are local recreational opportunities sufficient for current and future demands, or should new open space areas be developed?

What are the strengths and vulnerabilities of our water system, roadways, energy, wastewater, and waste management infrastructure?

Are we prepared for power outages and associated infrastructure disruptions?

What emergency response capacity do we have in place, including and beyond emergency police, medical, and fire services? How many residents can we currently serve?

Are shelters in vulnerable locations, and do they have backup energy, cooling, and heating?

How are we reaching new people with emergency communications?

Does our community have a diversity of housing options and prices?

How prepared is the town for increased development pressure and housing demands?

Preparing for more people

Preparing for the direct impacts of changing and hazardous weather patterns is only half the charge. These impacts may be exacerbated by a quickly increasing population, which causes its own issues that the HMP update identifies and addresses.

Egremont is concerned that drought-stressed water supplies may be exhausted as economic growth increases water demand. Development pressure driven by increased housing demand may also lead to the loss of open space, threatening the town’s resilience. Forests and natural areas in Egremont, noted for their recreational and economic benefits, also help manage stormwater runoff and riverine flooding and reduce heat impacts, each an important function in the face of a changing climate. As they are used

more heavily or lost to development, these services may be threatened.

The town is currently reviewing land-use regulations and policies as part of updates to both their master plan and open space and recreation plan. Solutions may include directing higher density development to central areas and identifying important open space parcels to protect.

Local workforce, emergency response services, and infrastructure could also buckle under increased demand without additional support. “Small rural communities, if they haven’t done so already, should start thinking about the effects climate change migration will have on their operating costs and plan for increases to solid waste and park maintenance expenses, to name just a few,” says Juliette Haas, director of Egremont’s board of health.

Egremont leaders and community members have started to develop adaptation and preparedness strategies. The town hopes to increase medical training for volunteer emergency responders and improve local neighborhood networks. They also intend to expand partnerships with groups like Greenagers, a youth conservation and agricultural education organization, to assist with trash removal and trail maintenance. Meanwhile, local businesses are exploring possibilities for new workforce housing on existing developed properties.

Resilience planning is critical for small towns with limited resources. Programs like MVP that provide technical assistance and funding will be essential as towns like Egremont prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Joanna Nadeau, AICP, is an environmental planner and sustainability/resiliency specialist with Weston & Sampson, based in Massachusetts. She can be reached at nadeau.joanna@wseinc.com.

TECH

FOR BETTER STREETS, SEEING IS BELIEVING

A new Twitter account is using AI to transform real streets into pedestrian paradises—and going viral. *By Lindsay Nieman*



A pedestrian option for traffic-congested Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica, California.

IT'S SO IMPORTANT to realize you are planning a place for people to live, not just drive,” says Zach Katz.

A Brooklyn-based musician and safe streets activist, his “armchair interest in urbanism” led him to Amsterdam, where he lived last year, absorbing the biking culture and infrastructure. Now, back in the U.S., Katz is bringing those lessons to Twitter with @betterstreetsai. Using the artificial intelligence platform DALL-E, he transforms images of real roadways into pedestrian friendly renderings, complete with bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and green spaces.

It didn’t take long for these designs to go viral: In less than a month, his account @betterstreetsai amassed over 15,000 followers. Katz attributes the reception to a simple fact: urbanism has gone mainstream. “The sheer amount of people who want better streets in their city is amazing,” he says.

As his follower count climbed ever higher, *Planning* caught up with Katz to discuss his work, the power of AI, and how to change minds. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

PLANNING: What does the term “better streets” mean to you?

KATZ: Streets designed for people instead of cars. Nearly all streets in the U.S. are dedicated almost entirely to the movement and

storage of cars. This is horrible for the safety, mobility, health, and well-being of everyone, even those who drive. A “better street” is a street that prioritizes the safety, movement, and happiness of people. Pedestrian promenades.

Arterials with wide, smooth, well-lit, separated bike paths. The Netherlands really has this down—planners should just copy what works there. It’s a style of planning that’s so wildly different from the way the U.S. has operated.

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PLANNING: You use DALL-E 2 for your renderings. How does it work?

KATZ: Right now, it's in beta, with a waitlist to

renderings was a roadblock. So, when I finally got access to DALL-E, after a few days of playing with it, I thought, "what if I used this to



Sustainable transit ousts Phoenix's East McDowell Road.

join. It works by uploading a picture, erasing the part you want to replace, then typing in a prompt for what you want to replace it with. This sounds simple—and it is, compared to the "old-fashioned" way of making a rendering—but there's some skill involved in knowing exactly what to erase and how to prompt it to yield good results. It helps to have a clear vision.

PLANNING: What inspired you to use it for this purpose?

KATZ: There's a street in my neighborhood—Irving Avenue in Bushwick, Brooklyn—that I've always thought needed a protected bike lane or to be completely pedestrianized. I was even thinking about launching a campaign last fall, but the need to pay someone to make

transform Irving?"

That was kind of a mind-blowing moment, when I realized how well it could do that.

PLANNING: What role should AI play in urban design?

KATZ: Whatever it takes to plan better streets! AI's speed, creativity,



Washington Avenue gets housing and bikes in Philly.

and affordability will save time for planners, which in turn will save cities money, allowing them to transform more streets faster.

PLANNING: To some, car-free streets seem

impossible. How does this visual approach work to change their minds?

KATZ: Not only is it effective for changing minds, but, in my opinion, it's the most effective. "Seeing is believing" is a cliché for a reason. Most people don't know what a protected bike lane is. But if you show them a picture of what it would look like, they're like, "wow, that looks amazing. I would love that."

PLANNING: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

KATZ: We just launched a new platform called transformyour.city, which is a way for anyone, anywhere to advocate for a better street in their city. Check that

out. And if you'd like to join the team, message [@betterstreetsai](https://twitter.com/betterstreetsai) on Twitter.

Lindsay Nieman is APA's senior editor. Ralph Jassen, APA's website manager, and Ella Dixon, APA's social media specialist, also contributed to this story.

HOW-TO

4 TIPS FOR REGULATING SHORT-TERM RENTALS

How data can help municipalities maintain control. *By Nick Del Pego*



Cities can recoup revenue by using data to track short-term rental bookings.

UNLIKE HOTELS, SHORT-TERM rentals (STRs) remained resilient throughout the pandemic—and in many locations, even grew in number. Currently, of the 86 million single-family residential homes in the U.S., 1.3 million are estimated to be available as STRs on any given night.

But also unlike hotels, STRs can pop up in residential neighborhoods, impact rural areas not zoned for commercial business, and contribute to housing scarcity. And with an average of 5 to 10 people staying at an STR (multiplied several times over), the stress on local infrastructure can be significant: more trash, reduced parking, and greater wear and tear of streets.

Ensuring that communities collect locally mandated STR or hotel taxes is a necessary step toward the ability to support fire departments, schools, and other necessary services. However, it can be difficult to identify STR addresses—and whether owners of the

properties, which are often businesses, have the necessary permits and are paying their fair share.

Understanding each situation requires leveraging data, just as rental platforms do. Otherwise, mandated revenue might not be recouped, and resources could be stretched thin. To better forecast the ways tourism might impact local infrastructure and residents, start with these data-driven best practices.

1 PLAN AHEAD WITH DATA. Local governments need to be able to assess their specific situations, including where issues may occur, to put plans in place. That requires past, current, and future public data on bookings: where, when, and how many people will be in the area for the next three to six months. This information can create a basis for creating policy decisions, enforcing compliance, and protecting residential areas.

2 CREATE A PERMIT THRESHOLD— and reassess it as conditions change. Consider Placer County, a mountain community near Lake Tahoe, California. When the pandemic led to an increase in tourists there, officials saw a jump in second-home ownership that reduced workforce housing. The county decided to create a permit threshold by putting a moratorium on new STR permits.

3 REGULATE THROUGH ZONING. Distance or zoning restrictions can be effective in limiting STR saturation to avoid over-taxing local resources, including housing stock. For instance, counties can look at the distance between STRs or the percentage in certain districts. They can also set neighborhood density limitations. The city of La Quinta, California, for instance, only allows STRs in certain neighborhoods, which helps create more affordable micro housing markets.

4 INVEST IN DATA MANAGEMENT. Rentalscape, AirDNA, and other applications are emerging that allow users to easily access real-time public data from STR companies. Rentalscape—the platform created by my company, Deckard Technologies—matches STR listing data with parcel data to determine owner information and exact addresses. When Placer County started using Rentalscape, they discovered that some properties on the county border had been mislocated by a major STR company. Officials were able to work with the platform to reapportion tax revenue and divert dollars to the appropriate county coffers.

Nick Del Pego is a mathematician, U.S. SpecOps veteran, seasoned corporate senior leader, avid outdoorsman, father, and CEO of Deckard Technologies. His joint mission with Deckard is to provide software, analytics, and insights for communities to create tax equity and fairness. He can be reached at nrd@deckard.com.



Single and multifamily homes nestle together along Palouse Street, the spine of the historic housing district.

By embracing its past, a small city in eastern Washington forges

ZONING'S FUTURE



Walla Walla's zoning reform offers a model for flexibility and affordability even big cities can follow.

By PATRICK SISSON *Photographs by CELESTE NOCHÉ*

**ON A SWELTERING
JULY DAY, ELIZABETH
CHAMBERLAIN, AICP,
SHARES HER VISION FOR
THE FUTURE OF WALLA
WALLA, WASHINGTON, BY
REVISITING ITS PAST.**

We explore Palouse Street, the spine of the city's historic housing district. The diversity of architecture, from purple-shuttered Victorian mansions with clapboard siding to sleek Prairie Style homes with low-pitched roofs, is complemented by a cornucopia of towering trees. The branches of scarlet oaks, conifers, catalpas, and even a giant pecan tree cross overhead to cast shadows on the sidewalk.

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain conducts the tour from an air-conditioned SUV to avoid wilting in the 104-degree weather. But she doesn't recite historical facts or highlight architectural features; she points out clusters of multiple mailboxes, side staircases, and smaller cottages set between the stately homes.

Settled, built, and even subdivided before the era of zoning, Palouse and the city's other historic boulevards offer former single-family homes—including mansions—split into apartments. This housing diversity happened organically, she explains, and it has only made the street more attractive to residents.



So when allies across the planning department and the city council, including then-Development Services Director Chamberlain, began their successful bid for zoning reform in 2017, they used that messaging to help gain consensus: The city needed a lot more Palouse Streets.

"Everyone would like to live in these old historical neighborhoods where you just happen to see mansions across from multifamily apartments, rows of duplexes, and single-family homes," says Riley Clubb, the software developer and former city council member who helped push Walla Walla's zoning reform. He even distributed blue baseball caps sporting the phrase, "Make Housing Diverse Again."

Clockwise from above: Downtown Walla Walla supports a culinary and arts community; Deputy City Manager Elizabeth Chamberlain; a single-family home converted into a multifamily complex on South Palouse Street; a fourplex on West Alder Street.



A seventh-generation resident, he says housing diversity, affordability, and availability are the issues that will make the city stronger or weaker, depending on how they're handled right now. "Success for me personally would be if the fourteenth generation is able to live here happily if they want, or at least has the choice," he says.

In 2018, Walla Walla officially approved zoning reform that streamlines accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations, promotes multifamily housing, and effectively upzones the entire community. It came at a pivotal point for the city—and hundreds like it.

Growing smarter, not just larger

Tucked in a valley amid the rolling Palouse hills and striking Blue Mountains of eastern Washington, Walla Walla is, like so many urban centers its size, in a state of flux. A small but growing rural city encircled by some of the nation's richest wheatfields, orchards, and vineyards, it's also an established center of tourism and a draw for retirees and remote workers.

As Gustavo Reyna describes it from a bench under City Hall's columned entrance, Walla Walla is transitioning from a classic rural town into a more complex, forward-thinking place. The walkable downtown, the community, the restaurants, the architecture, and the wine convinced the city council member and his wife to relocate from Boulder, Colorado, five years ago (he's still holding on to the bottle he bought the night he decided to move).

But outside the quaint nostalgia of Walla Walla's early 20th-century downtown (which was recently named to the National Historic Register), strips like Ninth and Isaacs Avenues boast 1970s-style subdivisions, strip malls, and sprawl, with single-family homes stretching across huge lots. Even charming, small-town life can't escape the housing and affordability challenges that plague much of the country.

The median price of a home in Walla Walla has jumped from just under \$300,000 in 2019 to \$489,000 today, while rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by \$300 in that same time period. Twenty-eight percent of the area's renters put half their income or more into housing, and the affordable unit count falls about 3,700 units





Clockwise from above: This ADU tucked behind a single-family home was built so the owner's mother could have a separate living space after selling her Victorian home across town; mailboxes show the prevalence of multifamily housing; Walla Walla's downtown was recently named to the National Register of Historic Places; Senior Planner Jon Maland helped simplify the zoning code; agricultural fields surround the northern part of the city.

short of where it needs to be—a big gap for a city of just about 33,000 people.

That population, predicted to hit nearly 40,000 by 2038, isn't quite skyrocketing. But steady pressure without an outlet will strain resources and push away those who can't keep up. "When you're a certain size and you do see [the population increase] just one or two percent every year, it does, as you know, add up over time," says Senior Planner Jon Maland, AICP.

With prime agricultural land encircling the town and providing a barrier to expansion, Walla Walla's planners knew the town needed to grow smarter, not just larger. They saw the next comprehensive plan update, mandated by the state's Growth Management Act, as an opportunity to encourage denser development, create more diverse neighborhoods, and even spur commerce and mixed-use development.

"It's about how we maintain the character of the city, what makes Walla Walla the great community that it is, while making sure that we grow responsibly," says Chamberlain.

To do so, Maland says, they needed to address the unnecessary complexity of the existing zoning code. During a chat in his office, he pulls out bound stacks of decades-old zoning maps and thumbs through different neighborhoods. Most streets had three different residential zoning designations, he explains, and for no apparent reason. They all ended up with the same result: four to seven single-family homes per acre.

"Same lot size and same housing product, your typical suburbia," he says.

The answer was Neighborhood Residential (RN), a near-universal residential zoning designation that allows builders to go as dense as 75 units per acre, given that they still meet existing standards like landscaping, height, setbacks, parking, and lot coverage. Property owners can create duplexes, fourplexes, cottage homes, and even tiny homes with some relaxed parking requirements.

And then there are the ADU regulation amendments. The maximum size in Walla Walla is now 800 square feet, without limits in relation to the principal dwelling unit. Owner-occupancy requirements have been scrapped, approval is ministerial and doesn't require special permits, and ADUs can even be attached to duplexes.

The city, Chamberlain says, simply doesn't need to dictate what is done with each lot.

Planners, property owners, and even developers see the change as an excellent way to add density, and in the case of the latter, profitably build homes for different income levels. Deb Flagan, vice president of Hayden Homes, a regional builder based in Redmond, Oregon, that works in roughly 65 municipalities



in the state, says her company has built about 20 homes a year in Walla Walla for decades, mainly traditional 2,000-square-foot, single-family models. In 2017, the firm realized that, based on its calculations, it couldn't meet a standard internal metric for construction: homes that a family making the median area income could purchase.

The new zoning standards, she says, "give us flexibility now to actually bring in different types of homes. Now we can build what communities are asking for and serve a very diverse population."

The vision slowly takes shape

Walla Walla planners saw the affordability and accessibility challenge coming as developers favored subdivisions with large lots. Other cities

at the time were experimenting with zoning changes, including Minneapolis and Olympia, Washington. Melissa Shumake, AICP, a former Walla Walla city planner, came up with the RN designation after reading about a similar concept from Strong Towns, a nonprofit advocating progressive planning ideas.

“The housing problem is pretty broad,” says Riley Clubb, the former council member. The city faces a growing homelessness crisis, and in 2015 built the Sleep Center, a complex of 36 small shelters. But there’s also an immense and much broader issue of basic inaffordability, where very middle-class households can’t afford to buy. The city’s bright spots—high quality of life, vibrant downtown, and the community benefit of a small town—have become catalysts for tourism, short-term rentals, and a growing wine industry.

“When I was 15, if you used the term Walla Walla and tourism in the same sentence, you’d be laughed out of the room,” says Clubb.

Walla Walla also boasts a significant young adult population, in part because of a trio of colleges, including Whitman College and Walla Walla University. Thirty percent of the population is under 35 per the 2020 census—a good demographic sign compared to many aging rural communities, but also a symbol of the failures of

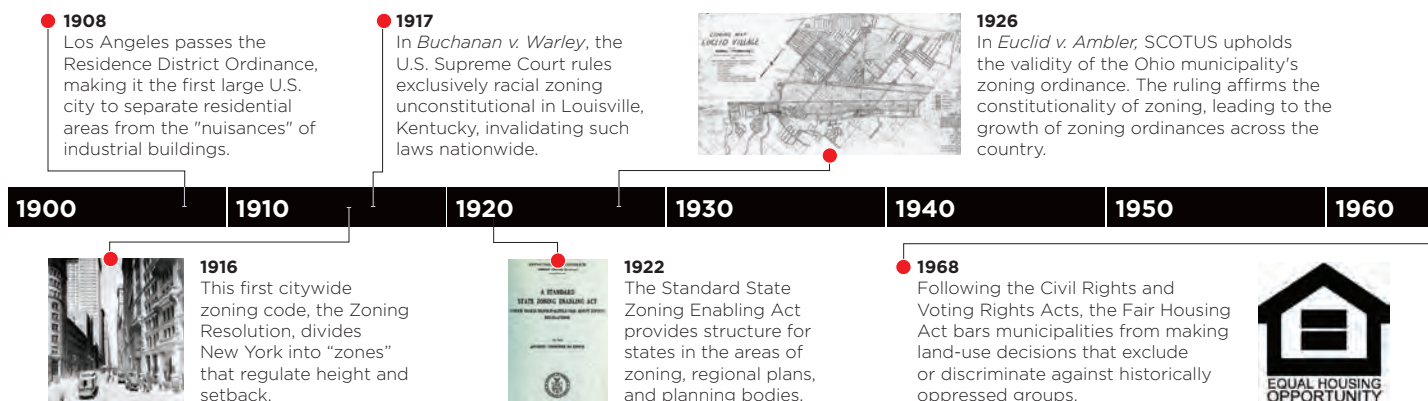
An older apartment next to a recently constructed multi-unit building on Birch Street.

TIMELINE CREDITS FROM LEFT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS; CITY OF EUCLID, OHIO; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; COURTESY FAIR SHARE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT; SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT; OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE; CELESTE NOCHÉ.



A Peek at Zoning History in America: Putting Together the Pieces

Federal, state, and municipal decisions pertaining to land use have shaped communities since the early 20th century. Despite the dispersed nature of zoning regulations in the U.S., many of these early rules and rulings have had a national influence, while others have been repealed and rethought. Here is a noncomprehensive look.



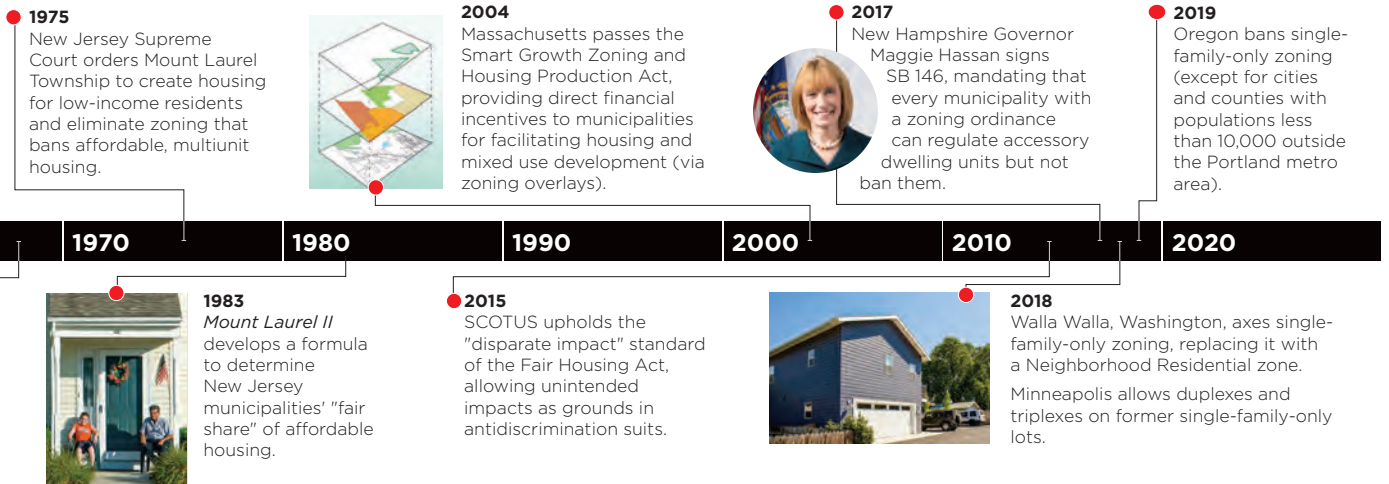


the housing market. Young adults wanted to stay, but affordable starter homes and available apartments were nonexistent, says Gustavo Reyna; he believes that percentage would be higher with more housing options.

To get the city on board, the planning department began conducting significant outreach in 2017, working with council members like Clubb and engaging with residents for much of 2018 at community meetings, farmers markets, and planning commission meetings. They also created a stakeholder advisory group, connecting with professionals like real estate agents, homebuilders, and representatives at Whitman College. They didn't pose yes or no questions, Maland says, but instead showed their thinking.

"We gave people examples of apartment buildings and structures in a typical residential neighborhood and examples that Walla Walla already had," he says. "We said, 'We're looking at a policy of permitting what we already have in our established neighborhoods.'" Notably, Walla Walla hasn't seen the kind of pushback that forced other cities experimenting with zoning reform, like Minneapolis, to rescind some of the more aggressive changes.

Results since the passage of the plan in 2018 have been limited due to the pandemic.



So far, the numbers aren't showing a dramatic change. In 2018, the city issued permits for 121 single-family homes and four ADUs; this year, through August 19, the city issued permits for 29 single-family homes, 14 duplexes, and a single ADU.

But developers have begun investing in new types of projects, including apartment complexes and conversions of motels into affordable housing. Slowly, case studies burgeoning around town suggest the planning department's vision is taking shape.

Just south of Walla Walla High School, Herbert Estates by StoneCrest Builders contains a mix of one- and two-story, slate-roofed duplexes, with 18 units covering 11 standard lots. The mixture of home types has created "a great place for young families to start," says Elizabeth Chamberlain. "We're trying to show people that this kind of building still fits," she adds.

At 131 and 133 Sonoma Place, crisscrossing roof lines offer a bit of mid-century modern style to a twin townhouse development on the city's northeast side that showcases the potential of infill projects under the new standards. They're not necessarily adding to the affordable stock, as one of the sleekly appointed three-bedroom units sold for \$447,000, but it does show how independent builders can take advantage of the new plan's potential.

Another forthcoming project—the Harvey Ranch development by Hayden Homes on the city's northern edge—just broke ground, with basics like water pipes and roads taking shape. Chamberlain sees so much more happening there: denser, more walkable streets, homes hitting the \$350,000 range (which will impact the affordability deficit), enough residents to support more nearby commerce and mixed-use development, and a virtuous cycle of density and commercial opportunities that creates a core of activity on what is now the city's edge.

Meanwhile, planners and city council members haven't stopped advocating for new policies that promote housing in Walla Walla. Reyna hopes to expand the city's historic preservation funding to restore older homes and commercial spaces and preserve classic architecture. The city is also looking into expanding the state





Clockwise from above: Townhomes on Sonoma Place; Delmont Street duplex; more duplexes under construction; a bird's eye view of Walla Walla; Council Member Gustavo Reyna, who supports local zoning reform efforts.



multifamily tax incentive, which municipalities have some leeway in dispensing, to help leverage existing public lands to add more apartments. Clubb has even started work on a community land-trust model, finalizing nonprofit status and seeking to begin fundraising for new projects. As his campaign hats argue, it's time to embrace housing diversity.

"Is this really what we want, the cookie-cutter model, where everything looks the same?" asks Clubb. "We're not all the exact same, right? Why would we expect our housing and neighborhoods to look exactly the same?"

Patrick Sisson is a Los Angeles-based writer and reporter focused on the tech, trends, and policies that shape cities.

Planner Politicians

Combining vision, policy
prowess, systems thinking,
and a deep understanding
of communities,
five planners take their
expertise to elected office.

As told to PETE SAUNDERS



Raman motivated
Angelenos in her
first election through
inclusive community
engagement—and
received a record
number of votes.

SHAYAN ASGHARNIA/AUGUST



Nithya Raman

LOS ANGELES COUNCIL MEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

I'm a planner first and foremost, and a politician as a means to an end.

WHEN I WAS living in India, I learned that one of the country's largest slums—home to about 100,000 residents in Delhi—was slated for demolition. It received very little coverage locally, especially from English-language news outlets. That made me want to learn more about cities and, more broadly, urban planning. After I received my master's degree from MIT, I worked mostly in the nonprofit space in India and the U.S., but I have almost always been involved in urban poverty and homelessness.

Now, I'm in politics because I care about Los Angeles. For the last year and a half, I've been a council member representing the city's Fourth District. The focus here is housing and its connection to land use; that's the realm of urban planning I live in. I do end up wearing my zoning hat on occasion, when our council is reviewing development projects, but the real issues are policies related to housing, renters, shelters, homelessness, and urban poverty.

A lot of people responding to the crisis of homelessness focus on getting people indoors, and we're doing that, too. But we didn't get here by accident. Our challenges today demand that we look at our land use past; my planning education has taught me to look at that history very closely. The prescription for what ails us is thinking of how to undo our historical decisions around a lack of affordable housing. Unless we get to the root causes of housing insecurity, we won't be able to solve the problem.

We need more housing supply. But there is skepticism about the ability of developers to make that happen, and it's been hard for Angelenos to trust that the city council has the right tools. Planners can help develop a more sophisticated understanding of which tools are available. At the local level, they can help shape the realm of what is actually possible for city leaders to do.

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Bobby Powell, AICP

**FLORIDA STATE SENATOR,
THIRTIETH DISTRICT, AND
MINORITY LEADER PRO TEMPORE**

*We can build understanding
and consensus.*

WAS BORN AND raised in Riviera Beach, Florida, where you could find a lot of liquor stores on a lot of corners. Things that are associated with negativity in the built environment often end up in distressed communities. While at Florida A&M University studying public relations, I went to an urban planning interest meeting and saw the connection between what they

Senator Bobby Powell asks a question about a bill during a legislative session in Tallahassee, Florida.

talked about—climate change, the built environment, health, social policy issues—and planning. I looked around and saw very few people who looked like me. So when I found the planning masters program at Florida State University, I took advantage of it.

After working as a planner, I became a legislative aide for State Representative Mack Bernard. When he declined to run again, I chose to run for the newly created Eighty-Eighth District. After a couple of terms, I ran for the state senate in 2016, and now, here I am. I still practice planning at the firm Urban Design Studio, too.

My district encompasses some of the wealthiest and poorest people in the state of Florida. I represent the town of Palm Beach, where Mar-a-Lago is located, as well as some areas with increased poverty levels, like West Palm Beach, my hometown of Riviera Beach, and more. Across the district, our most pressing issue is housing. Most people can't afford to live in Palm Beach County—or even the state of Florida. Rents are increasing almost exponentially. Transportation is also a big issue, as people struggle with ways to get around, but more than anything, it's housing, housing, housing.

Planning created the push for me to address these issues through politics. I studied housing and community development at FSU, and I bring that knowledge to the political process. The focus on community engagement and public participation also helps what I do. My background gave me the skills to engage with residents, listen to what they say, and develop strategies. I can cut out the noise and understand the points residents want to make. That's why I believe there should be more planners in office: Our focus on the built environment can cut through the gridlock we find ourselves in today.

Ultimately, we must create better opportunities for residents to participate in the public process. Lots of people don't know about the street widening in their neighborhood until they see the steamroller coming down the street. We need to make sure their voices are heard at the beginning of the conversation, not the end.





Daniel La Spata

**CHICAGO ALDERMAN,
FIRST WARD**

My planning education comes in handy every single day.

I MOVED TO CHICAGO 23 years ago from a town of 15,000—South Plainfield, New Jersey—for college. Here, I gained a growing awareness of inequality and how neighborhoods developed.

That went even further when I got involved with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association. I spent the next 11 years getting grassroots experience on issues like housing affordability before finally going to graduate school to study urban planning at the University of Illinois—Chicago. My express purpose was

to combine my neighborhood experience with an urban planning education so I could ultimately run for alderman in 2018.

My district, the First Ward, covers Logan Square, Humboldt Park, West Town, and Wicker Park. They're all facing challenges—but in the best sense of the word. We're seeing lots of development interest and energy coming toward this area. There's commercial energy for new development, but a desire to keep longtime businesses; there's residential energy for new homes, but interest in preservation and affordability, too. We're trying to find a way to channel all of that in a way that is equitable to all members of our community. That's the real challenge.

An avid cyclist, Alderman La Spata advocates for safe, sustainable transportation options throughout Chicago.

Housing is our first and foremost issue. The most immediate thing I hear from residents is, "Will I be able to remain in my community long-term?" I'd argue that Chicago has never had more tools at its disposal to address this, but we still struggle with their implementation.

Every elected official has a vision of the community they represent, but few understand how planners can be a partner to implement that vision. We need to challenge the perception of what planners can and should do, instead of pigeonholing them into focusing on the next building or the next development project. Planners can help elected officials and their constituents achieve their visions.



Henry Cisneros

**FORMER SAN ANTONIO MAYOR,
FORMER SECRETARY OF THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Planning gives you the perspective of future orientation.

WHEN I WAS about 19, the head of the student union asked me to attend a conference in New York because I was already thinking in the way others were about cities. I had never been there—or even been on a plane. I spent a week with urban leaders who described the work of Mayor John Lindsay and Daniel Patrick Moynihan; he called himself an urbanist, a term I'd never heard before. I immediately changed my major to government and pursued a master's in urban planning at Texas A&M. That led to another master's in

public administration at Harvard and a doctorate in public administration from George Washington University, with an urban administration and urban finance emphasis.

As mayor in 1983, I established *San Antonio: Target '90*. My administration wanted to speak to the city about its future in 12 different areas: transportation, infrastructure, international trade, economic development, and much more. We engaged the community and set goals that we could reach by the year 1990. Later, when I was asked by President Bill Clinton to become the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, workforce housing became a particular focus for me. I ended up creating a company with the goal of developing more.

During my tenure as mayor, we also expanded the airport,



Top: Henry Cisneros in his office in San Antonio; above: the official portrait from his time as HUD secretary.

doubled the size of the convention center, built a 65,000-seat domed stadium, and improved the San Antonio River. I fell in love with the infrastructure aspect of public life, and that's defined the last two decades for me. Cities are the engine of our economy: As goes metropolitan America, so goes the nation. We need to be investing in the mechanisms like infrastructure that allow that economic engine to function.

Overall, a planning education was one of the best preparations for my career. Planning provides a rational basis for explaining the process, and I find that's the most underutilized skill of political leaders: the willingness to stop and explain, the ability to break things down into their component pieces. That's what planners are taught to do.

Debra Stark, FAICP
PHOENIX COUNCIL MEMBER,
THIRD DISTRICT

We can bring constituents together to solve problems.

RIGHT OUT OF college, I joined Volunteers in Service to America, an anti-poverty program, and was assigned to a regional planning office. It sparked my interest in planning: I got my master's at Arizona State

University and never looked back. I've worked for years as a planner across the Phoenix area, including as the planning and development director of both Phoenix and Maricopa County.

But I was always interested in politics, even in high school. Originally, my focus was at the national level, but working with local government representatives, I saw how much they were involved in the day-to-day lives

In 2020, Council Member Stark was named one of Phoenix's exceptional women by the Phoenix Arts & Culture and Women's Commissions.

of constituents. I did much of that in my planning roles and wanted to continue that work. I was appointed to the Phoenix city council in 2016 and elected by voters in 2017 and 2021.

My district is largely middle class with a mix of income levels, a mix of racial and ethnic groups, and a strong sense of community. It's also the middle-aged, more developed part of Phoenix, and we're seeing problems associated with that: water lines are hurting, roads need repair. But right now, affordable housing is most relevant. A lot of Californians are moving here, and they have more money to play with. It's pushed the market upward. We need to find ways to make housing easier to build—I think we can improve our zoning ordinance and regulations to address affordable housing.

Phoenix is also one of the nation's leaders in traffic and pedestrian fatalities. Our roads were built for fast travel and don't fully take pedestrians or bikes into account. We've embarked on a Vision Zero program, and the city council just approved a roadway safety plan.

Overall, I've been lucky in my career: Most of the elected officials I've worked with value what planners can bring to a city. Because we're particularly skilled in public participation and engagement, we can help elected officials do their jobs more effectively.

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





In October 2012, Hurricane Sandy slammed into New York City and the Eastern Seaboard, cutting a wide swath of destruction and leaving many in the dark.

POWER FAILURE

Ten years and billions of dollars after Hurricane Sandy, those most vulnerable to disasters and climate change are still most at risk. What can planners do about it?

By DONOVAN FINN and
THADDEUS PAWLOWSKI

Photograph by
IWAN BAAN/GETTY IMAGES

TEN YEARS AGO, Hurricane Sandy crashed into the nation's largest city and forever changed the way many New Yorkers see the future. But after billions of dollars spent on a recovery process that is now considered officially complete, many households and business still struggle to find a new normal, to say nothing of actually recovering.

As for resilience against future hazard events? Unfortunately, New York may be no better prepared for climate-induced disasters than it was a decade ago. Reflecting on these realities, this somber anniversary presents a valuable opportunity to think carefully about what changes the planning profession as a whole must make to prepare for an uncertain future disrupted by climate change.

Sandy should have been a wakeup call for New York City. And the alarm sounded again during Hurricane Ida in September 2021 when 13 New Yorkers drowned in basement apartments during a brief but powerful thunderstorm. Despite many laudable Sandy recovery success stories, Ida showed that larger

issues of social vulnerability and environmental injustice are simply outpacing the city's ability to address them, leaving the poorest residents most at risk from climate-induced hazards.

The failure to harness the full potential of planning in a moment of crisis after Sandy has many drivers. Some were unique to New York, including the scale and complexity of the challenge: 51 square miles flooded, tens of thousands of buildings damaged, and more than \$15 billion in federal recovery funds to administer. But there are other causes for the lack of progress in a city that, by most metrics, should be a leader in climate solutions. There were certainly successes, but there were also many missteps, delays, and sometimes outright failures.

What can planners elsewhere learn from New York's experience? As longtime observers and participants in the city's planning efforts, we understand how complex this challenge was. Thad is a veteran of the NYC Office of Emergency Management and Department of City Planning, as well as the post-Sandy Housing Recovery Office. Donovan has spent his career as an academic studying how communities including New York respond to challenges like disaster recovery and climate change adaptation. We are optimistic that the profession will lead on making cities more resilient. But the decade since Sandy provides a useful lens for identifying some daunting constraints on planners' ability to effectively confront societal risks from extreme events.

FEDERAL FUNDING IS indispensable for local recovery planning, but much of what localities can do is constrained by convoluted federal regulations that hamper both immediate rebuilding and the implementation of long-term resilience measures. FEMA and HUD are "hamstrung by rules that often make little sense, even to the officials in charge," as the *New York Times* noted earlier this year. Former HUD official Holly Leicht published a well-circulated white paper in 2017 after spearheading the agency's Sandy regional recovery efforts for three years. She compared disaster recovery to the challenge of "building the plane while it's in flight" and advocated no fewer than

Reimagining the systems that create and perpetuate inequitable risks is a task for which planners are uniquely qualified.

41 recommendations to refine the federal recovery apparatus. Five years later, little progress has been made.

Perhaps most salient after Sandy, most federal programs are designed primarily with single-family homeowners in mind. But New York is a city of more than 60 percent renters, and only a quarter of its 3.6 million homes are in standalone or two-unit buildings. While New York's recovery programs also focused on other housing types, significant pressure from local officials meant that efforts largely converged on one easily quantifiable mission: Make every homeowner whole. The \$2.2 billion HUD-funded Build It Back (BIB) program, though agonizingly slow, ultimately repaired, rebuilt, or elevated thousands of homes in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens.

THE FOCUS ON single-family homes brings up a larger issue that transcends New York's specific housing typologies, though. Even if every homeowner can ultimately return to their own house, does that mean the community has recovered? BIB's managerial, house-by-house approach—as shaped by federal guidance—effectively sidelined the opportunity for more holistic community-wide planning. For instance, an effort to elevate the below-grade bungalow communities in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, in their entirety was deemed to be outside HUD's funding mandate. So, each modest home was elevated individually at ultimately greater total cost and without the attendant co-benefits of improved infrastructure.

Taking the longer view, a focus on protecting every single structure at all costs is fiscally unsustainable. It is also inequitable. As damages increase—and they have, according to NOAA—

SANDY ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

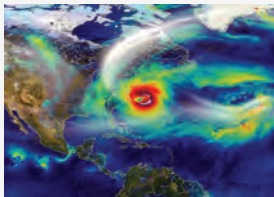
The Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes and the Columbia Climate School are hosting the Sandy+10 conference in October 2022.

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A SUPERSTORM AND ITS LASTING IMPACTS

Lessons from the response remain relevant a decade later. By Linda McIntyre, AICP

Described by *National Geographic* as a “raging freak of nature,” Hurricane Sandy’s size and strength were unprecedented. The tropical cyclone formed in the Caribbean on October 22, 2012, and combined with another, unusually cold storm system before reaching the U.S. coast. Sandy also struck during the full moon phase, which caused very high tides, magnifying its power.



When it made landfall in New Jersey, just north of Atlantic City (after already causing loss of life and property in the Caribbean) on the evening of October 29, it carried with it sustained winds of 80 miles per hour. As it tracked west-northwest over the next few days, it left behind a wide swath of damage and destruction.

Its size was unparalleled: The diameter of its wind field was more than 1,100 miles, with the strongest winds forming a circle about 900 miles in diameter. By contrast, NASA charted the wind circle of Hurricane Katrina—another extremely large and destructive storm—at about 300 miles in diameter. At landfall, Sandy covered an estimated 1.8 million square miles.



While Sandy raised water levels along the entire

U.S. Eastern seaboard, the highest surges were recorded in the New York City metro area, including New Jersey and Long Island. At the Battery in Lower Manhattan, for example—home to the Financial District and extensive transportation infrastructure—the storm tide was more than 14 feet above the mean lower low water level, exceeding the previous, 1992 record by more than four feet.



DAMAGE

Storm impacts were widespread: FEMA issued disaster declarations for Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Sandy is the fourth most costly U.S. tropical cyclone on record, with both insured and uninsured losses estimated at \$81.9 billion in 2022 dollars. More than 650,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, and about

8.5 million U.S. customers lost power.

Estimates of deaths vary, but the CDC put the U.S. total at 117, including 53 in New York and 34 in New Jersey. The Obama Administration estimated a total of at least 159 direct and indirect deaths.



FEDERAL RESPONSE

Federal funding for response and recovery from natural disasters such as hurricanes is governed primarily by the Stafford Act, established in 1988. Sandy triggered some changes in the federal approach that have salience for planners.

In January 2013, Congress approved the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, along with a supplemental appropriation. The “Sandy Supplemental” provided \$15.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding to affected states.

New York and New Jersey received \$4.5 and \$4.2 billion respectively, and the state storm recovery offices that both states established to manage their allocations remain in place today. While CDBG-DR funds typically go to states, New York City also got its own direct allocation of \$4.2 billion.

Beyond providing money to affected state and local

governments, the legislative package was intended to streamline FEMA’s existing response and recovery programs and give the agency more flexibility to administer them.

POLICY AND DESIGN EXPERTISE

In August 2013, the Obama administration released the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy (HSRS), developed by the Hurricane Sandy Recovery Task Force chaired by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. The strategy emphasized collaboration, innovation, and community participation as well as a focus on enhancing resilience rather than simply rebuilding in place and in kind.

One example was the HUD-led Rebuild by Design competition, which leveraged \$3.5 million from the



Rockefeller Foundation to facilitate a participatory planning process to allocate \$1 billion for resilience projects. Another outgrowth of the HSRS was the Sandy Regional Infrastructure Resilience Coordination Group, comprising representatives from federal, state, and local governments to better align federal projects with community needs and increase efficiency.

Linda McIntyre is a New York-based planner and freelance writer.

is focusing on single-family homeowners, who typically have lifelines like savings and insurance, the best use of scarce public resources? Or should investment instead focus on those in the most tenuous housing circumstances and address inequitable planning decisions from the past?

While BIB was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per unit for homeowner recovery, 60,000 low-income residents living in some of the 400 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) buildings damaged by Sandy waited years for essential services to be restored. In Red Hook, Brooklyn, the waterfront was aggressively rebuilt and emerged as one of the city's most rapidly gentrifying hotspots. Meanwhile, the nearby NYCHA Red Hook Houses relied on polluting temporary boilers for years, until post-Sandy construction finally began in summer 2020. The first step was to swiftly cut down hundreds of pollution-filtering, century-old shade trees.

While city efforts contributed to soaring home values for the upwardly mobile, mere blocks away, lifeline services, housing security, and even the quality of the public realm have consistently declined. And because federal recovery funds could not be used to address NYCHA buildings' underlying issues like deferred maintenance, the recovery process perpetuated an unjust status quo rather than fixing inequalities.

To avoid these challenges after future disasters, planners need to take principled stands with federal and local policymakers and help them understand what planners already know: Rebuilding in place without thinking about the broader implications of such decisions can be dangerous, especially for economically vulnerable residents who are most harmed when disasters strike. Luckily, reimagining the systems that create and perpetuate these inequitable risks is a task for which planners are uniquely qualified.

AT THE SAME TIME, planners also need to recognize the profession's past mistakes, like urban renewal. Engaging in concerted dialogue with communities can help mitigate perceptions that planners are imposing these changes on residents, but New York City's historical paucity of effective participatory planning made this

A public housing resident navigates a dark stairwell in a Brooklyn complex that still lacked power two weeks after Hurricane Sandy. New York City Housing Authority buildings damaged by Sandy sat in disrepair for years, while residents also waited for essential services to be restored.



challenge even more difficult after Sandy.

Efforts like the city's Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency and the state's NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program attempted to facilitate engaged recovery efforts while still acting quickly and efficiently. Of course, that balance is never easy and some residents faulted the city and state for not doing enough. At the same time, planners were understandably hesitant to ask recently traumatized residents to further contemplate a frightening future of sea level rise and storm risk.

More successful were programs like the Sandy Neighborhood Design HelpDesk, a city and nonprofit partnership that provided recovery counseling to over 500 residents in late 2013.

But while this well-received effort had more direct benefits, it was resource-intensive and logistically challenging. Other times, opportunities were squandered by more powerful forces. A yearslong community planning process for the \$1.45 billion East Side Coastal Resiliency project was initially viewed as a rare success story, but in 2018 Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration secretly and unceremoniously revamped the plan in favor of one they argued was more feasible, generating lacerating pushback.

ULTIMATELY, PLANNERS ENGAGING in disaster recovery will need to find new, better, and more context-appropriate ways to engage diverse publics and advocate for recovery solutions that make sense logistically and financially while foregrounding justice and equity. This means not only improving participation, but also focusing on hyperlocal contexts. Federal disaster recovery programs are designed to work everywhere, and as a result, they often don't work particularly well anywhere. Even at the municipal scale, few policies can effectively address fine-grained nuances that vary from block to block.

Recovery resources typically flow from Congress and ultimately to city agencies, who then seek community input at the end of the line. But the planners tasked with implementing Sandy recovery projects often lacked nuanced understanding of the neighborhoods that needed recovery assistance the most. To successfully address these challenges in the context of rapid climate change requires a paradigm shift in the distribution of power and resources.

Recovery funds, for example, could instead flow directly to community-based organizations

To successfully address the threats of climate change, post-disaster planning requires a paradigm shift in the distribution of power and resources.

EQUITY IN RECOVERY RATES

Writing in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, planning researchers found that income, race, and ethnicity were critical determinants of higher losses and slower recovery rates in communities affected by hurricanes Andrew (1992) and Ike (2008).

READ

bit.ly/3pWFjYj

to manage recovery in close partnership with municipalities. In a post-Sandy model worth emulating, the nonprofit New Jersey Future hired local recovery planning managers who worked for two years as adjunct staff for six small, low-resourced coastal communities.

Neighborhoods would be even better equipped to shape their own recovery if they had civic planning expertise and strong social capital before a disaster. That means working closely with vulnerable communities on resilience now. The NYC Department of City Planning's HUD-funded, post-Sandy Resilient Neighborhoods program was a notable innovation in that regard, especially for a city that has historically mostly equated planning with zoning.

Going further, diversifying the planning profession—racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically—is also imperative for building a more effective and empathetic planning workforce to confront these daunting challenges.

With climate change accelerating and its effects becoming more pernicious, disaster recovery has become increasingly central to the work of planners. After Sandy, New York's planners were primarily tasked by elected officials with helping communities rebuild and with protecting the status quo. But subsequent challenges like Hurricane Ida, the COVID pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and anti-Asian hate crimes have exposed how the crises in housing, energy, transportation, food security, policing, racism, genderism, and sexism are intertwined with the climate crisis.

There can be no real recovery from these events, and no future urban resilience, unless planning acknowledges and addresses past inequities. Lessons learned from the Sandy recovery process will not be enough to instantaneously overcome centuries of structural racism and entrenched economic and social inequality that shape disaster vulnerability. But over time, they can help planners refocus their efforts on the people who need recovery resources the most.

Donovan Finn is an assistant professor at Stony Brook University, where he directs the undergraduate major in Environmental Design, Policy, and Planning. Thaddeus Pawlowski is the managing director of Columbia University's Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes.



LIVING SHORELINE AT WEST POND

Jamaica Bay, Queens, New York

WHAT LOOKS LIKE A FUTURISTIC road network is actually a view of a newly created living shoreline in the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Gateway National Recreation Area. An intricate web of 200,000 native grasses and shrubs, along with sand, biodegradable oyster shell bags, recycled trees, and other natural materials were installed in 2021 to create nine acres of wetland and upland marine habitat, providing protection from extreme weather and climate change while enhancing biodiversity. The \$4 million project restored 2,400 linear feet of shoreline that had been damaged during Hurricane Sandy and came about through partnerships among the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the National Park Service, and the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, among others.

New sand and native plantings act as wave attenuators, safeguarding vital freshwater wetlands while creating a new, much-needed tidal wetland. (Got a climate win-win that makes your Community Green? Tell us about it: Email mstromberg@planning.org.)



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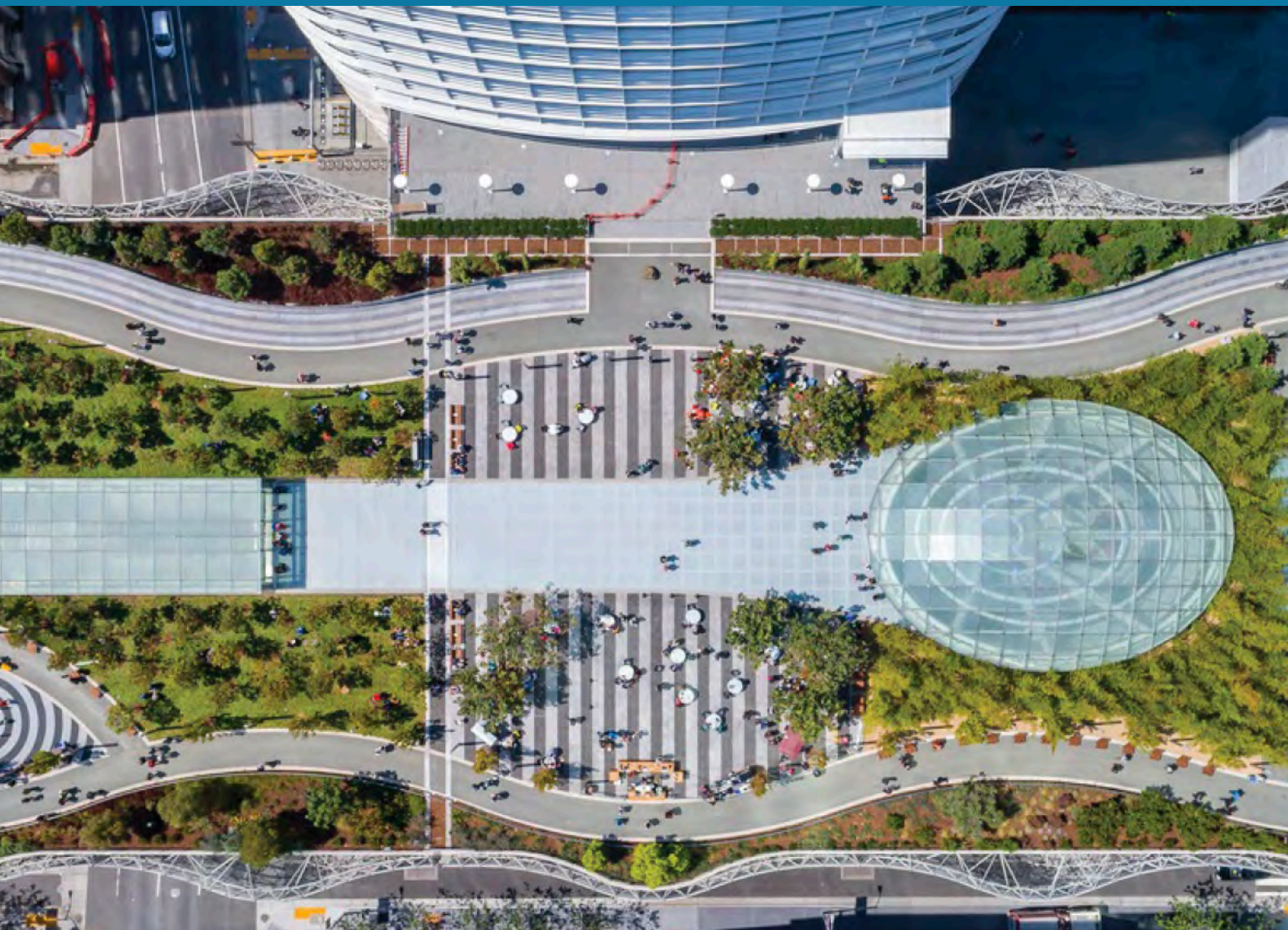
Land Value Capture in the United States

Funding Infrastructure and Local Government Services

Gerald Korngold

| Policy Focus Report

| Lincoln Institute of Land Policy



“Land value capture is essential for municipalities to address public concerns about mobility, resiliency, and equity.”

– **BRIAN GOLDEN**, Former Director, Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)

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