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oapa@oregonapa.org

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- Regular members belong to national APA and the Oregon Chapter, thus getting benefits of both national and state membership. Dues for regular APA membership are pro-rated by income.
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Mail: APA Membership
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Phone: (312) 431-9100

Internet: membership@planning.org

OAPA Executive Director: Patricia Zepp
Phone: (503) 657-6087, oapa@oregonapa.org

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Managing Editor: Ric Stephens
Associate Editor: Constance Beaumont
Associate Editor: Colleen Greer Acres, Ph.D., AICP
Publication Designer: Becky Steckler, AICP

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Cover graphic by Ric Stephens, Managing Editor.
President’s Message

By Brian Campbell, FAICP, OAPA President

I hope this issue of the OPJ finds all of you enjoying a very happy holiday season at the end of what has been an active year for Oregon APA.

We had a successful conference in Bend in May, sponsored Dr. Jackson’s very well attended series of talks on the relationship between health and planning around the state in June, and just held a sold out Legal Issues Seminar this month, which included a celebration of Ed Sullivan’s storied career as a land use lawyer.

Next year looks even more ambitious. If you haven’t already done so, please reserve May 29 – 31 on your calendar for Oregon’s Vision Turns 40, our annual conference which this year will feature several special events, including a gala celebration on the evening of May 29th. That is the day in 1973 that Governor Tom McCall signed Senate Bill 100 into law, and we intend to celebrate in style. Governor Kitzhaber has been invited to speak, and there will be a number of other features to make it a very special evening for our profession. If you feel inspired to help out, Becki Steckler is heading up the planning for that event. And to make that day even more special, national APA has agreed to co-host a Daniel Burnham Big Ideas Forum that afternoon. Watch for details about that event as well in the next issue of OPJ.

February is elections month for us. The Board has just sent out a notice asking for nominations for two at-large Board positions, and for President-elect. The President-elect overlaps with the last year of my current term as President, which ends March 31, 2014. At that time the President-elect turns into the President and serves a two year term. The organization is continually in need of good candidates, so please step up if you have the interest.

Speaking of great volunteers, our Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee (LPAC) has completed its annual Legislative Agenda, which should be posted on our website by the time you read this. Please take a look at it and if you have any comments or concerns, please contact LPAC Chair Jeannine Rustad, or any Board member. We always need more people to be involved in this effort, especially as we get into the legislative session. LPAC is also now creating a policy sub-committee to review various state initiatives not already covered by the committee. Yet another opportunity to get involved, and contribute to your profession.

And finally, we are re-activating the Women in Planning Committee, chaired by Jennifer Taylor Shih. She will also be looking for volunteers to begin discussing ideas for enhancing the diversity of our organization and the profession generally.

Have a great New Year!
The Changing Face of Main Street

By Monique G. Lopez, M.A., M.C.R.P.

The year 2011 marked a major demographic milestone: it was the first year that white births were not the majority in the United States. According to the US Census Bureau, non-Hispanic whites (including Hispanics, blacks, Asians, and others identified as mixed race) accounted for 50.4% of births. Oregon has not escaped this demographic shift and nowhere is it more deeply felt than in the City of Woodburn.

Located in Marion County along the I-5 corridor between Salem and Portland, the City of Woodburn is a community shaped by a history centered on transportation, agriculture, and migration. Aside from The Woodburn Company Stores — an outlet mall that attracted over four million visitors in 2011 — Woodburn is most notable for its active retirement community, beautiful historic neighborhood, and diverse population. Indeed, an influx of Latino families over the past 20 to 30 years has brought some of Woodburn’s greatest opportunities for economic growth and its greatest challenges at integrating a younger population focused on jobs and families into an established Anglo community with an increasing retirement population.

This demographic change is most visible in downtown Woodburn. Like many downtowns throughout the state, Woodburn’s downtown has suffered over the past three or so decades from disinvestment and the impact of strip or large format retail development outside the downtown core. Over the last 10 years, downtown Woodburn has seen a surge of activity attributable primarily to a growth in Latino businesses. Today about 90% of the businesses in downtown Woodburn are Latino-owned. Main Streets throughout the United States are beginning to reflect these demographic trends. As the Latino community begins to migrate and grow, potential placemaking conflicts often emerge as people with different histories, identities, and perspectives to current residents move to rural America. This article documents the story of the changes and tensions taking place in one historic downtown — Woodburn, Oregon. Through the understanding of these placemaking issues in downtown Woodburn, it provides understanding to placemaking issues that may emerge in similar communities (i.e., demographics, size, historic downtown, etc.) throughout Oregon and across the country.
The City of Woodburn finds itself at a crossroads—like many small, rural communities experiencing change, responding to the needs and desires of diverse City residents and business owners. Through the determination of the future of the downtown, it is a reflection of the identity the City chooses to embrace—whether it is Anglo, Latino, or a hybrid.

Placemaking challenges in Woodburn, Oregon

Woodburn is Oregon’s largest Latino majority city and it is culturally and politically the heart of the Latino presence in Oregon. Latinos began arriving in Woodburn in the 1950s and 1960s, but in 2000 became the majority in Woodburn. Latinos are participating in regeneration of historic Main Streets throughout rural America because they are some of the first to invest in many struggling downtowns. One long term Woodburn resident highlights the Latino businesses’ contributions to the downtown,

“As the Mexican businesses have come in and become more established, I think it has really improved the safety, tone, and the livability of the surrounding neighborhood a lot because you are by and large dealing with a family trade, especially on the weekends. I’m always startled that anyone would find it threatening or scary downtown. The crowds you have is so family oriented and there are people with little kids either shopping or going out for dinner. I think it adds a lot to the downtown and it is nice to have some of that vitality going on downtown.”

The 1970s were a difficult time for Woodburn, particularly for the downtown. The newly constructed interstate system pulled many businesses away from downtown and into the periphery. In the late 1970s and 80s, many businesses moved from downtown to strip mall developments along Highway 99. Business owners moved their businesses to Highway 99 because they could occupy a newer building and they did not have to deal with illegal activity that was increasing in downtown, primarily the selling and using of drugs and prostitution. An earthquake in 1993 made many buildings downtown unsafe—those business owners with the means to move elsewhere did so. By the early 1990s Latino business owners took advantage of the low rents and started moving into downtown. One long term resident recalls what some Woodburn community members thought of the transition,

“That kind of caused an undercurrent of resentment in the non-Hispanic community. Our little PIX Theater became a furniture store with placards all over the front. You know that is a piece of our little history. We want to go see movies. Well the theatre ran for a while but just Latino movies. Then it closed down and became a furniture store [with a Hispanic business owner]. That in itself was kind of a focal point for a lot of non-Hispanics. It seemed like the PIX Theater was being stabbed economically and culturally.”

By the early to mid-2000s the City began to transition to include a wider variety of Latino businesses, such as grocery stores, bakeries, clothing stores, and hair salons. With the Latino entrepreneur anchoring the reinvestment downtown, the physical landscape began to change. The cultural and economic transformation of downtown can be seen in the colors of the buildings, signage on the façades, and installation of culturally significant structures. As a result, not all in the community
openly identify with or accept the changing space. While all parties are interested in the same end goal of improving downtown, there are conflicting viewpoints on the concept of place that have yet to be resolved. One community member expresses this point, “It’s [Woodburn has] come a long way, but it’s still going through a social migration. It’s the hub of a social migration; it’s a visual for that social migration… It’s a community that has struggled to serve both cultural backgrounds successfully… Both cultures want Woodburn to be successful, they just have varying philosophies on how that comes about.”

Conflicting Vision for Downtown

No one can ignore that the culture is shifting as Latino businesses came to dominate downtown Woodburn spaces. With these changes, some locals struggle with a sense of identity and place. Some long-time Anglo residents, and those that retired to Woodburn from primarily Anglo communities, may feel that they are losing their heritage as Latino businesses move into downtown. The loss that they are experiencing is due to what environmental psychologist term “place attachment” (Hayden 1997, 112).

In Woodburn, through the participation in the Main Street Program, there is currently a challenge in defining which cultural heritage to display in the built environment. Urban spaces house “public pasts” of many different groups that have their roots in the community and therefore, coming to a consensus about what is important to preserve can be a particular challenge (Abramson, Manzo, and Hou 2006, 344). Trying to balance the historic character and various cultures of a place is difficult to do because a sense of place is also a part of the experiences and aspirations of the people who live there (Yeoh and Kong 1996, 52). An Oregon Main Street staff member echoes this point,
“We are trying to balance the wonderful historic character of downtown buildings with the vibrant Mexican culture that has and wants its own unique identity. So we are working to blend those two pieces to create something special in Woodburn that is a point of pride for the community and a draw for visitors.”

Latino business owners and Anglo neighborhood community members who reside in the historic homes that surround the downtown were originally working together on the Main Street program efforts downtown. However, over time, many Latino business owners dropped out of the process and today the Main Street Program in Woodburn is primarily directed by the Anglo residents of the downtown neighborhood association. One of the main reasons Latino business owners became less involved is because they would like to see more immediate results (i.e., coordinating events to bring more customers downtown to shop in their stores) instead of going through a process of developing a nonprofit to restore downtown to a previous “historic” look. As a result, they started their own downtown business organization. A staff member from the Oregon Main Street Program notes the differences of vision for the downtown and cultural perspectives as a point of disagreement between two groups,

“By last fall, they were starting to experience some growing pains. There is a real desire for the diverse community members to work together, but I think it was becoming apparent that there are different visions of what the downtown can and should be. This is partly a natural evolution for any beginning Main Street effort but is particularly noticeable in Woodburn. The Anglos are very interested in seeing building improvements that are more preservation oriented than is currently happening. And they wanted to see a greater variety of businesses coming downtown. In addition, they don’t feel welcomed by many of the businesses. There have been these manifestations of cultural clashes that we need to work on and address.”

In Woodburn there is a constant struggle between “nostalgic articulations” of honoring the past and being able to reflect the current community in the built environment. A sense of nostalgia is a yearning to return to a lost period and place (Chase and Shaw 1989). Nostalgia requires some apprehension of the deficiency of the present and is likely when social change is rapid enough to be detectable in one lifetime. In conjunction with these conditions there needs to be available evidences of the past (i.e., artifacts, images and texts, etc.) to remind people of how things used to be (Yeoh and Kong 1996, 57).

In Woodburn the conditions for nostalgia are present. The rapid social change over the past two decades with the increase of the Latino population and the transformation of the downtown provide visual and economic reminders of how much Woodburn has changed. The beautiful historic buildings along Front Street are in a sense “artifacts” that remind people of how the downtown used to be and serve as a symbol of a past before the Latino community began to (re)necgate the space in a very visible manner. The nostalgic images of a place informs the vision of the present and therefore concludes that the place is in decline by the new changes that are manifested in space (May 1996, 199; Yeoh and Kong 1996, 58). Digging deeper into this clash, a community resident when asked about this conflict highlighted this placemaking struggle,

“There is an undercurrent of racism every time that you talk about downtown. It is hard to get over it. You’ve got people who envision a nice downtown and what they really mean is to see a ‘white’ downtown. Some of these people would rather see these buildings empty, but pretty. They don’t see that there is a successful Latino business in them… A healthy downtown cannot be made up of empty buildings, no matter how attractive they are.”

Additionally, there are different symbols in the built environment that individuals identify with or do not. These symbols are intimately linked to how individuals feel and interact with the built environment. For example, during the planning for the development of the plaza in downtown Woodburn there was a conflict in the community
over which cultural style the plaza should reflect. One element that makes the plaza unique is the palm trees that line the center sidewalk. During the planning process, palm trees were a point of community discussion. Some non-Latino community members expressed that Woodburn’s heritage does not include palm trees. Instead they advocated for what some community members termed the “Settelmier house look,” which signifies the landscape that is present at the historical Victorian home of Woodburn’s founder. Instead, as one residence noted, “They incorporated what the Hispanics value from their home, the plaza.” Therefore, a community conflict regarding the type of trees was really about what culture and heritage should be reflected in the space downtown.

**Conclusion**

Cheng (2010, 466) reminds us that “Main Street was never neutral territory, a blank slate upon which a harmonious future can be drawn.” As the City of Woodburn and other cities experiencing similar changes, decisions about placemaking, which include which vision for downtown will be pursued, in these diverse communities are complex and especially challenging for planners. There are variations of three potential paths that a City can pursue.

The first path is to choose traditional assimilation efforts by transforming the downtown to a “1950s Norman Rockwell” downtown. However, this can result in either pushing out Latino businesses or forcing them to change in the name of “assimilation.” Cultural cloning is a product of the assimilations model of integration which positions immigrants as outsiders, and requires them to change to reflect and reproduce “sameness” in social structures and cultural identities (Maldonado and Licona 2007, 130). “Cultural cloning” is the reproduction of sameness. They further define cultural cloning “as a set of practices that pursue and perpetuate the reproduction of sameness, turn difference into inequality,” and therefore “preclude the engagement of, and benefit from, immigrant knowledge and capital” (Maldanado and Licona 2007, 130). Therefore, if the community chooses to go this route they will greatly miss out on the immigrants’ rich cultural knowledge and capital, which is a potential asset to both Latinos and non-Latinos in Woodburn.

In the second path, the City could move towards the other side of the spectrum and transform the downtown into a “Little Mexico,” a kitsch cultural tourism location. However, these types of places “spectacle sites” can have negative ramifications. In a spectacle site, “minoritized” space is a show and an attraction for tourists, which is often advertised through guidebooks and vacation packages to attract visitors (Laguerre 1999, 102). Additionally, the images that are chosen to represent the space may not correspond to actual representation of what residents of Woodburn consider the main feature of downtown; instead it is a display for outsiders. This approach may be advantageous for cities to pursue in the short term because it can bring in money from the outside benefiting the entire local economy. However, in the long term this can be detrimental to immigrant communities because the economic health of a city can depend upon a place remaining the same instead of changing over time (Laguerre 1999, 102). This can disempowered a community by making a neighborhood a stage in which residents and merchants become merely actors in a spectacle for tourists instead of a place for empowerment and expression of identity which is linked to culture and the diversity within the community (Laguerre 1999, 102). The exoticism of the “other” is ultimately detrimental because, as Trabalzi and Sandoval assert, “Assimilation through exoticization of the immigrant is a policy that is not conducive of equal treatment and leads to further marginalization of the immigrants” (Trabalzi and Sandoval 2010, 76). If the community of Woodburn were to choose to completely intentionally or unintentionally exoticize the downtown, it would not lead to the empowerment of Latinos and celebration of Latino heritage, but further marginalize the non-Latino community.

The third path a City could choose is a two-way integration or a hybrid approach. Integration is not a one-way process but a two-way process
that involves change for both immigrants and members of the receiving community (Maldanado and Licona 2007, 131) A two-way process of integration is necessary because if it is not pursued then one group’s story and identity is denied in public space. The type of integration (one-way or two-way) is manifest in the built environment and the built environment is a reflection of whose story is being told. Places are continually engaged in a process of change that all residents can influence. Places are recorders of social and cultural change, a “collective memory.” A person’s interaction with a particular place also creates a person’s own identity and the values which they hold (Abramson, Manzo, Hou 2006, 344). The manner in which people respond to these collective memories becomes a part of the local culture and ideology; thus, “cultures develop in places and are passed on in places” (Yeoh 1996, 56).

Monique G. López is a recent graduate of the University of Oregon earning a Masters degree in Community and Regional Planning. As a project manager with the Community Service Center she led a team to research Latino business needs and contributions in downtown Woodburn. For her exit project she focused on the placemaking challenges taking place in downtown Woodburn, which this article is a small excerpt. To view both reports, please visit moniqueglopez.squarespace.com.

Works Cited


Land Use Pioneers

By Ron Eber

Participants at OAPA’s Legal Issues Workshop on December 7th were treated to some very special presentations by four planners who were “there at the creation” of the Oregon Land Use Program.

2014 marks the 40th anniversary of the historic 1973 adoption of Senate Bill (SB) 100. The OAPA planning conferences in 2014 will celebrate and feature presentations about the founding and implementation of Oregon’s unique and pioneering land use program.

The panel of land use pioneers (pictured below) featured Henry Richmond, founder with Tom McCall of 1000 Friend of Oregon; Steve Schell, member of the first Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC); Ed Sullivan, sage observer and dean of Oregon land use law; and Arnold Cogan, the first Director of the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). On this day, they were able to briefly present their observations on the passage and early development of the land use program, how they thought it was working and their hopes for its future. However, in the future, their contributions need to be better documented so that their experience and wisdom can benefit all those concerned about the wise use of land in Oregon.

Arnold Cogan provided a historical perspective...
L A N D U S E P I O N E R S

on why Governor McCall’s believed there was a need for a statewide land use program and on how the LCDC/DLCD “People and Land” workshops involved thousands of Oregonians in the development of the Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. Steve Schell was pleased that the program was working to protect rural resource lands, the Willamette Greenway, and important coastal resources, but that it was also important to make sure the program worked administratively and minimized as much as possible impediments to its administration, i.e. complexity and NIMBYism.

Ed Sullivan highlighted the important statutes that provide a framework for the fair administration of the land use program that emerged from many decisions from the Oregon Courts, i.e. due process, quasi-judicial decisions, notice, impartial reviews, state agency compliance, application of state laws, interpretation of local codes and statutes and future plan amendments, etc. These include ORS 197.646, 197.763, 197.796, 197.610 – 625, 197.180, 197.015 (10) the definition of a “land use decision” subject to review by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) under 197.805 – 860, and 215.416 and 227.173 – which establish local review and decision procedures for such land use decisions.

Finally, Henry Richmond pointed out that citizens and planners cannot be complacent about its long term survival. Contrary to popular belief, it was hard for the Legislature to adopt SB 100 to establish the program, harder still to get local governments to develop and adopt comprehensive plans and land use regulations to implement the statewide goals and despite broad based citizen support, it continues to be politically difficult to get full and fair application and implementation of local plans and regulations in the face of continuing opposition to land use planning. He also pointed out that the land use program has survived multiple attacks by initiatives to repeal and weaken the state’s role in land use planning as well as legislative attempts to do the same.

After 40 years, eternal vigilance remains needed to protect the land use program and the gains that so many dedicated citizens and planners worked so hard to put in place, administer and defend.
Fall Leadership Meetings and Federal Policy Briefing Update

By Philip Farrington, AICP — Region V Commissioner— American Institute of Certified Planners

On the cusp of brilliant colors and a snap of cool autumn air in our ever-collegial capital, Washington, D.C., the APA board and AICP commission held its annual Fall Leadership Meetings and Federal Policy & Program Briefing. Oh who am I kidding: D.C. is the epitome of partisan gridlock, it rained, and most of our time was spent inside fluorescent-lit conference rooms. Nonetheless, there is much good work being advanced by APA and AICP, and the D.C. policy conference is always informative — if not a wellspring of great news for planning.

AICP Certification/CM

The Great Recession continues to affect all professional associations, reflecting larger employment trends in the public and private sectors, although APA and AICP membership remains strong. Although the number of applicants sitting for the May 2012 AICP exam was down from a year ago, the number sitting for the November 2011 exam was up from the prior year.

One of the key changes approved recently by the Commission for Planning Accreditation Board is a requirement that collegiate planning schools/programs must report and publicly post the percentage of AICP exam take and pass rates for graduates within 5 years of graduation. This helps bolster the credential further, and provide a metric to gauge progression from the academic to professional environment.

The Commission also continues to work on methods of better engaging university faculty, with Brian Campbell and I both serving on a task force exploring options to that end. APA’s program of allowing each planning school/program to have a single APA membership that covers all faculty is one method underway. In conjunction with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, APA/AICP will be conducting a survey to determine how the academy and the profession can be better allied.

APA staff has been getting good marks from AICP members and providers concerning their efforts to streamline and simplify processes to record CM credits and enter offerings eligible for credit.

APA continues to offer extensive options for getting CM credits in person and through distance learning. APA will also continue allowing AICP members to claim CM credits from CD-ROM materials through the end of 2013, as technology moves to on-line streaming formats. The national planning conference in Chicago next April received more than 900 proposals for conference sessions; over 100 more than ever received before.
Advanced Specialty Certification

The roll-out of AICP’s Advanced Specialty Certifications continues for Certified Environmental Planning and Certified Transportation Planning, with the next round of exams coming up in May 2013. The Commission is taking steps to add an Urban Design ASC, targeting an exam to be administered in May 2014. Considerable preparatory work is underway in consultation with the Urban Design and Preservation Division.

Community Planning Assistance Teams

The Commission continues its CPAT program, offering pro bono planning services to communities in need across the nation. The most recent completed project was in Maricopa, AZ and projects in Wakulla County, FL and Dubuque County, IA are underway this Fall.

The next deadline for communities to apply is December 5, so if you know of an Oregon community that could take advantage of this program, check out the APA website for details. We are also on the prowl for more planners to submit for the pool of prospective team members. There are gaps in economic development, urban design, and natural hazards expertise, so if you have such talents please submit an application to participate on a CPAT project.

Federal Policy Briefing

This mini-conference is always fascinating but, as it has been in recent years, filled with dour news of fiscal cliffs and otherwise potential cutbacks to programs that support local communities. A stirring presentation from former Minnesota Congressman James Oberstar was a great lead in to the Planner’s Day on the Hill that concluded the conference.

But that fact is that funding for transit systems, regional planning, and long-standing programs that provide real progress to our communities is in peril. As usual, APA is playing defense on proposed additional cuts to funding for programs such as the TIGER grant program, Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and Community Development Block Grants, as well as the proposed elimination of the American Community Survey. For example, APA’s proposal to Congress is that CDBG funding be kept at a level that in real dollar terms is equivalent to that allocated when the program first started in the Ford Administration more than 30 years ago. If you looked at its inflation-adjusted numbers, CDBG funding should be 3-4 times what is being called for modestly now by APA.

In talking with representatives of the Oregon delegation, I was able to point to local examples where these programs are making a meaningful positive difference. We are fortunate that our representatives in Congress “get” the value of planning and these programs. But the future of such important programs will largely unfold in the next few months following the national election and congressional action (we hope) to address looming sequestration, and avoid the fiscal cliff and recession redux.

If any Oregon APA members have questions or would like to discuss any of the above further, please contact me at 541/912-9281 or pfarrington@peacehealth.org.
2012 APA Federal Policy and Program Briefing

By Damian Syrnyk, AICP

The American Planning Association (APA) held its 2012 Federal Policy and Program briefing September 30 to October 2, 2012 in Arlington Virginia. The briefing was APA’s opportunity to brief its members and leadership not only on APA’s legislative priorities, but also on legislative and budget activity at the Federal level. This year’s program focused on a number of key pieces of legislation and issues that will require attention and resolution after the start of the 113th Congress in January.

Budget

The session “Building the Recovery and Navigating the Fiscal Cliff” focused on the next session of Congress addressing serious budget considerations, including how the retention or elimination of tax breaks will affect the Federal budget and funding for support for Federal programs that planning. The session presenter Jared Bernstein is a Senior Fellow with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities - http://www.cbpp.org. You can learn more about Jared Bernstein at his blog http://jaredbernsteinblog.com/. The Federal Budget also played a large part in the session “Changes & Challenges in Housing and Community Development Policy.” This session included several speakers who all reinforced the message that Federal funding for housing and housing programs is at risk of being further reduced or eliminated. The take home message for planners is that we need to continue to advocate for keeping such programs funded and working. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is supporting these efforts with their new publication Evidence Matters, available in print and online at www.huduser.org/portal/evidence.html. Evidence Matters highlights successful efforts at evidence-based community development.

Transportation

You may have missed it in the news, but Congress passed a transportation bill this year! Congress passed MAP-21, which includes about $800 million for transportation improvements including funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The bill is not easy to navigate, so for more information, I recommend Advocacy Advances website devoted to navigating MAP-21 - http://www.advocacyadvance.org/MAP21. APA’s blog “Policy News for Planners” has more posts that break down and provide direction on digesting MAP-21 in easier pieces - http://blogs.planning.org/policy.

Data! Data! Data!

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives voted to eliminate funding for the American Community Survey (ACS) - http://blogs.planning.org/policy/2012/06/18/congress-takes-a-closer-look-at-the-american-community-
survey/. Monday’s panel on “Threats and New Horizons in Federal Data” tackled this issue, and reminded the attendees about other data sources that (a) we planners use every day and take for granted and (b) might be next on the chopping block. APA has taken on this issue as a legislative priority - http://www.planning.org/policy/. You can also learn more about supporting efforts to retain federal data programs, including the ACS through the Census Project - http://www.thecensusproject.org/.

In addition to highlighting issues brimming at the Federal level, APA informed the leadership of the efforts of its own Legislative Committee to identify legislative priorities for APA at the Federal level - http://www.planning.org/policy/priorities/. APA is also using a blog instead of emails to update the membership on its legislative activities, action alerts, and new issues coming our way. Please visit http://blogs.planning.org/policy/ to learn more about the issues APA is tracking and how you can get involved.

Damian Syrnyk, AICP, is a Senior Planner for the City of Bend Community Development Department. Damian serves as the Vice President for the OAPA Board and on the Chapter’s Conference, Legislative and Policy Affairs, and Professional Development Committees.
Planning Board Games

By Ric Stephens, Editor, Oregon Planners’ Journal

You might think the title of this article is about local city politics, but the topic is a different source of entertainment. The public interest in city planning continues to increase and has a parallel pop cultural trend in board games.

A board game is a game that involves counters or pieces moved or placed on a pre-marked surface or “board”, according to a set of rules. [Wikipedia]

Here are five brief examples in chronological order that include urban planning as a theme:

**Monopoly, 1903**

In many ways Monopoly is the quintessential planning board game. It is a purely capitalist, real estate acquisition game with an emphasis on economic, competitive exclusion: forcing other players into bankruptcy. Local government is viewed as a relatively random influence from “Chance” cards, and utilities are “privatized”. Although the current game goal is real estate domination, the original 1903 concept was to explain tax theory and critique private land monopolies. For a fascinating look at the history of Monopoly, visit http://landlordsgame.info/.

The traditional version of Monopoly is based on Atlantic City locations, and today, Monopoly has hundreds of variations and global translations including Monopoly City and Monopoly City Streets with more emphasis on urban planning elements.

**City Planning, 1975**

This board game introduces historic planning concepts to children in a three-dimensional way.

"City Planning presents a series of games designed to show the great number of rules for
living together and how these rules determine
the form of human settlements. The games are
intended to explain the sets of “rules” from which
communities, from simple hunting cultures to the
modern city, develop, and to provide a method
of teaching the basics of City Planning.” [Van
Nostrand Reinhold]

The game includes directions for making
buildings out of construction paper, and the idea
of planning cities with these buildings has been
extensively development by the CUBE’s Box City
program since 1969: http://www.cubekc.org/

**SimCity, 1989**

The electronic ‘board’ game that is the closest
simulation of urban planning is SimCity
first introduced in 1989. The objective is to
develop and manage a city with economic and
social indicators as the measure of success. It
is somewhat reflective of economic, social and
environmental urban trilogy especially in the
newer versions that include environmental
disasters and urban resiliency. However, the
foundations of greenfield development and
auto-dependency reflect more of a 20th century
planning model. One of the more recent SimCity
spinoffs is SimCity Society which introduces
increased social-engineering elements in the
gaming strategy. SimCity is the only game to
have collaborated with the American Planning
Association in development of the player’s guide.
A website devoted to all things SimCity is at
http://www.simcity.com/en_US.

**Gridlock, 2006**

Transportation planning is explored in the board
game Gridlock. The social dynamics of traffic

SimCity 3000 by Will Wright, 1999

Gridlock by Jim Deacove, 2006
congestion are central in this game. A reinvented version might consider multi-modal and multi-functional streetscapes as solutions options.

Gridlock is more challenging, with vehicle breakdowns, time pressure, and no stop signs. “The special quality of this board game is that it is cooperative. All the players must work together to free up the traffic jam; otherwise, nobody will get anywhere. Sort of like real life!” [Family Pastimes: Urban Village, 2007]

“Urban Village” is your chance to figure out urban planning. One observer calls Schudlich’s game “Jane Jacobs meets Sim City.” It’s an opportunity to develop a hybrid Detroit community, based on the less-than-perfect socioeconomic conditions provided. Fred Goodman, a University of Michigan professor of education emeritus specializing in game design, defines Urban Village as “a cross between pin the tail on the donkey and playing school,” he says. “You’re playing city planner, and you can get dizzy trying for the best fit because it’s harder than you think. But this inspires you to think about the inconsistencies of your own set of assumptions, revealing your own values and biases.” [excerpted from “Mack Avenue: The Game” by Rebecca Mazzei.

For the downloadable game pieces and instructions, visit http://www2.metrotimes.com/editorial/story.asp?id=10281

City RAIN, 2010

A new electronic board game that focuses on urban sustainability, City RAIN starts with an existing City that must be restructured to become more environmentally-responsible. The original concept is from the Brazilian game design company Mother Gaia and was named Cidade Verde [Green City]. Ovolo Entertainment describes City RAIN as “an award winning strategic urban planning puzzle game”.

As a member of the Rescue And Intervention
Non-profit (RAIN) organization, your job is simple. You must rescue cities on the WEPA blacklist before they are punished by the world for being destructive to our irreplaceable natural resources. Ultimately, you must help reorganize cities so that they will become environmentally friendly and inspiring places to live. But it won’t be easy. You will be constantly challenged by Bane Industries, one of the last corporations in the world that refuses to submit to WEPA environmental standards for process and production. [Ovolo Entertainment]

City RAIN has a demo version that may be downloaded from Ovolo Games at http://www.ovologames.com/cityrain/

Future urban planning games will undoubtedly incorporate 3D simulations of environmental, social and economic issues facing our emerging communities. Many planners are already using games for scenario development, and planning can (and should) be—dare we say—fun!

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Ric Stephens is the Principal for Stephens Planning & Design LLC and an adjunct faculty member of the University of Oregon Planning, Public Policy and Management Department.
Eco-City Indicators

Created by “Green Cities” Students, compiled by David McKay [Excerpt from Eco-Cities—A Global Survey 2011 by Simon Joss, Daniel Tomozeiu and Robert Cowley]

Efforts to render cities environmentally and socially sustainable are not new. Urban planning and regeneration over the last one hundred years or so have been significantly influenced by attempts to redress the perceived detrimental effects of large-scale urbanization, such as environmental degradation, social inequalities and urban sprawl. The Garden City, the New Town and the Techno-City are 19th and 20th century exemplars of such attempts to reinvent the city in the (post)industrial era. More recently, these efforts have culminated in a new phenomenon — the so-called eco-city.

The term can be traced back to the mid-1970s, when it was first coined in the context of the rising environmental movement. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, it remained mainly an innovative concept, with practical examples few and far between. The United Nations Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), and the resulting sustainable development program (Agenda 21), formed the background to a first wave of practical eco-city initiatives. Curitiba (Brazil), Waitakere (New Zealand) and Schwabach (Germany) are examples of the first-generation eco-cities.

While there is no current U.S. national program to designate “eco-cities,” there are numerous city indicators that reflect efforts to become more sustainable, resilient and regenerative. Students in the University of Oregon “Green Cities” course identified a series of broad categories and specific implementation actions for eco-cities:

Energy

- Biogas production at landfills
- Distributed generation for homes and businesses
- Energy efficiency measures for all buildings
- Energy generation in a closed-loop design
- Minimize light pollution through efficient lighting
- Passive energy use: solar thermal and heat exchange designs
- Renewable energy generation
- Renewable energy specific to region/climate
- Smart grid demand management and modernized grid technology

Transportation

- Access by proximity
- Auto free streets once a week
- Bike paths
- Bike share programs
• Connectivity between modes
• Diverse access from any location
• Easily navigable streets
• Equitable transportation supporting multi-modal systems
• Infrastructure reflecting an overall energy and development strategy
• Integrated bike lanes with streets
• Multi-use lanes
• Pedestrian friendly and encouraging: wide sidewalks for comfortable and safe walking
• Public transport: buses, streetcars, trains, light rail
• Rapid and leisurely transit options
• Refitted bicycle-only streets
• Regional connectivity between cities
• Safe walking routes for school kids
• Slow speed limits in pedestrian areas

Public Spaces
• Community artwork
• Encouraging beauty and creativity
• Green corridors for ecological diversity
• Green space for public gathering
• Interconnected green spaces via paths, trails
• Local public art
• Parks with native vegetation, easily accessible
• Public educational/social spaces

• Public theater and shows
• Seasonal festivals
• Thematic and unique structures
• Visual sense of place: public art, statues, sculptures, public parks, fountains

Nature
• Access to inexpensive vet care
• Animal well-being: ethical treatment of animals used for food, working animals and animal companions
• Biophilic design incorporating local vegetation to entice native birds, insects and wildlife into the city
• Ecological sensitive growth
• Green roofs and walls
• Integrated wildness
• Spay and neuter policies
• Tree and forest space cultivation

Food
• Community gardens
• Farmer’s markets with local foods
• Health in all policies
• Rooftop gardens
• School gardens
• Supporting alternative diets: vegetarians, vegans, and others
• Urban agriculture
**Water**

- Bioswales for rainwater management
- Clean drinking water
- Permeable street/walking surfaces
- Public awareness of water conservation
- Rainwater collection for household use
- Recycling of waste and grey water: used for toilets, laundry, gardening, etc
- Sight and sound of water as therapeutic
- Swimmable lakes, ponds, rivers, streams
- Water conservation policies by neighborhood/district

**Waste Management**

- City wide recycling and composting program with curb pickup
- Closed loop waste systems
- Recycling incentive programs
- Zero waste goals

**Land Use**

- Development and utilization of underground space for parking
- Green “complete streets”: safe, multi-modal, with low-impact design
- Growth boundaries
- Incentives for low impact design
- Increased density in development
- Integrate hazard awareness and vulnerability reduction into urban design and management

**Neighborhoods**

- Access to living wages
- Equitable housing, dispersed distribution of low income affordable housing
- Intelligent land use with integrated community development
- Jobs-housing balance
- Measuring diversity—how long people stay
- Micro downtowns/polycentric design
- Mixed use development
- Twenty minute communities
- Urban cultural preservation

**Education**

- Increased outreach and interpretive opportunities for citizens
- Open city meetings and educational seminars
- Organized volunteer opportunities for green maintenance
- Social awareness of ongoing sustainability practices/efforts
- Sustainability advisors: information centers that citizens can go to talk to experts on sustainability and find out how they can “go green” in their everyday lives
- Sustainable education integrated in public schools

**Measurable goals for green infrastructure**

**Prioritize brown-field and abandoned spaces reclamation over green-field development**
Governance

- Authentic public engagement and building community efficacy
- Broad political participation
- Community engagement
- General city policies that incent or mandate the above design indicators
- Incentives/Taxation that mitigates negative environmental consumption practices
- Intergenerational equity as political principle
- Laws that place burden of responsibility on cars/automobiles to drive safely
- Positive leaders
- Social/environmental justice
- Transparent governance

The challenge to cities in Oregon and worldwide is how to become more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable while also seeking to be more healthy and vibrant. How does your city measure up?

Contributors: Sarah Bagley, Angel Barclay, Jason Barney, Ryan Bax, Abbey Beal, Christopher Becker, Sarah Bethel, David Buchanan, Gweneth Buckley, April Buzby, Jeremy Card, Geoffrey Chabre, Amy Combs, Laura Corbin, Sunnye Diaz, Molly Ehlers, Benjamin Farrell, Dannielle Faust, Zeta Fernando, Kiah Frohnauer, Tzvetan Gatchev, Jordan Grace, Mark Gregory, Casey Hagerman, Nicholas Hall, Angelina Hellar, Christopher Henry, Roanel Herrera, Paul Hicks, Jacob Hinkle, Theresa Huang, Matthew Kauffman, Sarra Khliifi, Anna Kindt, Kelsey Kopec, Gayat Lakshminarasimhan, Robert Larson, Joseph Laskin, Samantha Lawrence, Francis Lewington, Alayna Linde, Daniel Marmor, Paul McAndrew, Chase McVeigh-Walker, Kacey Messier, Kyle Meyer, Michael Miller, Jason Moore, Meghan Nelson, Edgar Norris, Jenny Ordonez Nieto, Shelby Ostwald, Anna Pasterz, Brittany Porter, Benjamin Protzman, Stephen Rafuse, Rex Reede, Jon Reha, Jeffrey Resnick, Elizabeth Sanner, Cameron Schaefer, Kyra Schneider, Jacob Sembler, Tristan Sewell, Haley Smith, Clayton Stilwell, Michael Straubal, Moorea Strueby, Qianyu Sui, Elizabeth Sweeney, Conor Teal, Emily Terhune, Drew Thompson, Gail Tinkham, Adam Tirella, Lily Tong, Jet Townsend, Nathan Trautman, Mason Trinca, Alexandra Velasco, Jamie Wai, Holly Williams, Weiyang You, Megan Younge

David McKay is a University of Oregon MPA candidate 2013 dmckay2@uoregon.edu. Ric Stephens is the course instructor for PPPM 445/545 “Green Cities” ric@uoregon.edu.
Resilient Urban Planning as a Component of National Security: A Case Study of Singapore

By Zeta Fernando

Resilient urban planning is specifically vital to national security, because it fosters a city’s ability to resist devastation and regenerate once danger has passed. Cities that emphasize resilient urban planning will be able to withstand the effects of natural disasters and their aftermaths.

This means that a city’s urban design should include, among other necessities, strong yet safe infrastructure, easily navigable and efficient transportation, and an abundant storage of clean water and food. Resilient cities should also be able to cope with a shortage of natural resources, which is known as exceeding “carrying capacity.” Carrying capacity simply means that a population has reached the limits of its environmental resources. This is a limitation many communities will face, or are facing today. Resilient cities should be able to sustain themselves so that they will be able to conserve resources for other cities and the environment.

Resiliency is particularly important for many cities in Oregon that may be threatened by global climate change and tsunami threats. There are many cities in the United States that have already enacted policies to safeguard their populations from these threats, but looking at cities that may have already reached carrying capacity can be a good case study for comparison. Singapore is one of those cities.

Singapore’s Resilient Urban Planning

Singapore’s greatest example of resilient national security can be traced back to its very first day as an independent state in 1965. The country of Malaysia had just been formed a couple of years earlier, which included the small island of Singapore. But due to political differences, Singapore found itself forcibly separated and isolated. Its major resources, such as clean water, had come from a Malaysian pipeline. Additionally, Malaysia and Indonesia sought to undermine Singapore’s independence by trading elsewhere. Because of the sudden lack of resources, Singapore had effectively reached its carrying capacity.
With slums dotting the landscape and resources depleting fast, the first priority of the newly independent state was to ensure the well-being of its people. "Well-being" referred to public security, water and sanitation, healthcare, education, job opportunities and housing for all Singaporeans. Later, public transport and public recreation spaces were given importance too. The fact that the government established well-being as a top priority is proof that Singapore had the resilience of its city and people in mind from the beginning.

As a country that occupies many small islands at just 274 mi² total, just 0.3% of Oregon, it is susceptible to tsunamis such as the devastating Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004. Fortunately for Singapore, it was protected from this tsunami threat by the island of Sumatra. But the threat of a closer, more powerful tsunami is still large. To mitigate this threat, Singapore has been planning for its carrying capacity through mixed-use environments, water conservation and networked transportation since its birth as an independent state. This makes it an ideal case study for long established strategies for integrating resiliency into city planning. Outlined below are only a few examples of Singapore's many achievements in resilience planning.

**Living Spaces**

Land uses in Singapore were distributed so that a majority of the island's land (68%) would be used for commerce, industry, infrastructure, utilities and transport, while the remaining land (32%) would be allocated to housing and community. This required very dense housing. The government designed Housing Development Board flats, dense buildings in which a majority of Singaporeans live today. The HDB flats are situated in very mixed-use environments; they are close to markets and food centers, schools, libraries, places of worship, shopping and entertainment complexes, community centers and parks. In terms of resiliency, they help to distribute resources evenly around the country, so that no one area has all the food or shopping centers or recreation spaces. These environments are spread around the island of Singapore and connected in a multi-tiered transportation network, which will be discussed below. The combined density and close proximity of food, recreation and people creates a more vibrant atmosphere, and has fostered a unique Singaporean identity. Mixed-use development has allowed Singapore to keep its structured zones vibrant and beneficial to the diverse community.

**Water Conservation**

Singapore has a trade agreement with the State of Johor from Malaysia, where it receives water from a pipeline. However, the government has implemented a water management system to strive for independence in water rights. This system is based on a holistic approach to water conservation that emphasizes the relationship between water and other natural resources. Some techniques Singapore has implemented include: desalination of seawater, sanitation and reuse of wastewater and innovative stormwater management. Designated catchment areas are placed far away from pollution-causing activities. There are also small rainwater catchment systems installed across the urban landscape on high rise buildings. These produce gray water for toilet cisterns and laundry. Through this massive undertaking in water conservation, Singapore has managed to replenish its own water supply constantly, sustaining itself rather than fully relying on other countries for aid.

Figure 2. An advertisement promoting the four different water sources in Singapore.

Transportation

Being a small island nation, organized transportation is essential for Singapore’s survival. It has recently begun establishing extended-transit oriented development by creating a three-tier system of transportation hierarchy: heavy rail, light rail and “people movers”, which are smaller, more frequent light rail systems. Park connectors allow the public to travel between parks by foot, bicycle and rollerblades. These new integrated activity hubs spatially distribute business sectors. In order to encourage use of public transportation, there is a heavy tax on roads and parking spaces. Driving is discouraged, which results in more conservation of fossil fuel resources. The resilience of transportation networks is clearly evident, because the whole country can live and work and move efficiently, all while conserving space and resources.

Applying Singapore’s Example to Oregon

Can Oregon apply Singapore’s resilience planning concepts to its own government? As mentioned earlier, Singapore’s landmass is equal to just under 0.3% of Oregon’s landmass. Another important difference is that Oregon is home to about three million people, whereas Singapore is home to about five million. Oregon does not need to densify its living spaces into high-rise apartments, but it is worth noting that employing denser, mixed-use environments has minimized Singaporeans people’s impacts on their environment, and has fostered a more cohesive environment. Thanks to Oregon’s urban growth boundary, sprawl is not a large threat here. But Oregon, or perhaps just the Willamette Valley, could feasibly integrate Singapore’s mixed-use strategies by connecting its suburban towns with shopping centers, food markets, recreational activities and other community-oriented centers.

One similarity Oregon and Singapore share is the threat from tsunami devastation, and the need for resilient urban landscapes that will be able to withstand destruction and grow again. Many of Oregon’s cities use a natural groundwater supply as its main source for water, but this is not an indefinite source. Given our abundance of rain, it would be a wise to implement rainwater catchment systems at small scales in our neighborhoods, like the catchment devices on Singapore’s high-rise apartments, to spread awareness about water conservation. If more people can design, build and own personal rainwater catchment devices, they will be able to recognize the importance of conservation for when a natural disaster strikes.

For transportation, Oregon has already integrated many new light rail services around the Portland-Metro area. Singapore’s extended transit-oriented development is unnecessary, given our large space and small population. But in order to integrate more mixed-use development around the state, it would be a beneficial systems-approach to incorporate transit nodes with our community-oriented centers to create more accessibility.

Even with very different circumstances, Singapore and Oregon still face similar threats to their urban planning. But it is always beneficial to look to others for a source of inspiration. Diverse circumstances promote more creativity in solutions, which will ultimately result in a wide range of stronger resilient planning strategies.

Citations


Streamlining Urban Growth Management: Proposed Legislation on UGBs for the 2013 Oregon Legislature

By Damian Syrnyk, AICP

Governor John Kitzhaber’s Natural Resources Office (GNRO) has initiated an effort to streamline planning for urbanization and growth management in Oregon.

You will find enclosed in this article a request from Oregon APA to review these proposed concepts and to provide any feedback to LPAC Chair Jeannine Rustad.

In 2011, GNRO convened an “urban design team” of experienced land use practitioners to develop potential reforms to Oregon’s system for managing urban growth. This team worked with the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to design changes that would achieve the following outcomes:

- Encourage continued improvement in urban efficiency, and assist cities to create well-functioning communities that are desirable places to live and work;

- Make it easier to carry out planned development within existing urban areas;

- Reduce the time and expense of urban growth boundary (UGB) amendments, and make amendments more predictable, particularly for smaller cities;

- Focus state and local planning on areas that are growing most rapidly, and;

- Continue to conserve important farm and forest lands.

Between January and June of this year, the design team came up with potential concepts in four (4) main areas: residential and employment land expansions for small cities, residential expansions for large cities, employment land expansion concepts, and a final concept centered around governance, public facilities, and annexation. In July, GNRO convened a larger Urban Growth Advisory Committee (UGAC) that included 44 individuals representing 25 different stakeholder interests. The UGAC was charged with reviewing these draft concepts and providing direction and input to develop legislative concepts for the 2013 session of the Oregon Legislature. The UGAC has met eight (8) times between July and October and has reviewed, discussed, debated, and provided input on the following concepts:

- Population forecasting. This concept would create a simplified, faster and less expensive way to prepare and adopt population forecasts for growth management purposes. The Population Research Center at Portland State University would be responsible for preparing population forecasts for the state, counties, and cities on a regular schedule. Forecasts would be updated every three or four years, and their development would not be considered a land use decision and appealable to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). A separate core group began work on this concept in June of 2011, and was convened...
by DLCD, the Association of Oregon Counties, and the League of Oregon Cities, and their work was coordinated with that of the Design Team.

- **Small Cities.** This concept would apply to cities with a population of under 10,000 and outside of the Metro region. It addresses UGB amendments for residential land and/or employment land. This concept outlines a simple path for small cities to use in estimating land need, evaluating areas outside of the current UGB, and then establishing how land needs are met with a UGB expansion.

- **Residential Lands.** This concept applies to cities with a population of 10,000 or more and outside of the Metro region. The proposal outlines a new standard path for amending a UGB for residential lands, and addresses forecasting housing demand, the buildable lands inventory, housing mix, and translating this work into a land need for housing.

- **Employment Lands.** This proposal would also apply to cities with a population of 10,000 or more and located outside of the Metro region. It outlines several potential paths for planning for employment land, including: a new standard path for employment lands; a path for planning through an industrial reserve; area-wide large-lot inventory of industrial lands, and; a dynamic siting progress for new employment-intensive uses (e.g. Really Big Fish).

- **Governance.** This concept is still in the works with the goal of having a legislative concept developed by Legislative Counsel by late November 2012. The intent is to address issues regarding annexation, urban service coordination, and public facility planning that would help facilitate the planning described under the above paths.

The Population Forecasting concept is moving ahead and is already in Legislative Counsel for bill drafting. For more information on this concept, please visit the Natural Resources Office website at: http://www.oregon.gov/gov/GNRO/docs/Current%20Initiatives/Population%20Forecasting%20Concept%20summary_2012_9_24.pdf.

You can also learn more through the League of Oregon Cities website: this is one of the League’s legislative priorities for the upcoming 2013 Legislative Session: http://www.orcities.org/Legislative/tabid/4719/language/en-US/Default.aspx.

For the other concepts, you can view the latest draft concepts at the Governor’s Natural Resources website: http://www.oregon.gov/gov/GNRO/Pages/Growth-Management-Program.aspx. Here, you will find the list of concepts with the latest versions identified as Version 2 or Version 3.

The Oregon APA Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee will be tracking this and other land use legislation during the 2013 Legislative session. Please send any comments to LPAC Chair Jeannine Rustad at jeanniner@ci.hillsboro.or.us. For more information on the UGAC, please visit their website at http://www.oregon.gov/gov/GNRO/Pages/Growth-Management-Program.aspx.

**Damian Syrnyk, AICP, is a Senior Planner for the City of Bend Community Development Department. His work for the city includes adoption of a coordinated population forecast, continued work to update the city’s general plan with respect to housing, and completion of a water public facility plan. Damian serves as the Vice President for the OAPA Board and as Conference Committee Chair.**
Zone Noir

By Michael Young, Winner, Dark & Stormy Planning Prose Contest

My hands slipped neatly under the pillow in search of something cool, my bristly cheek was scraping across the cotton when it hit me like an irate phone call, hotter than a cell tower application on a school site and as persistent as the Coastal Commission—my old pal the Sun.

I pushed aside the covers and sought something familiar, then realized I’d never had a morning here before. Last night the Plan Commission said “nix” to her tentative map, but there wasn’t anything “tentative” about her later on in her accessory unit. My head pounded like a code compliance complaint as my system wrestled with those Dry Erase Marker fumes from my presentation last night. “Long hearing,” they said “Big agenda.” What did they know? The exotic aroma of trendy java arose from that secondary use next door, sweet as a consent item and just about as common. Five years, seven jobs, and a file cabinet full of discretionary applications later, I was still adrift like an “intern” at a staff meeting, careening between land uses and seeking the right dwelling unit.

Last one left me, dropped me like an unpermitted use. Said I didn’t have the “density” she needed. Wanted more “square footage.” “Hold it doll!” I said. “You’re seeking a variance from life and your entire situation is self generated! No can do, sweet cheeks! Application denied.” Didn’t understand. Never do. Didn’t read the staff report, just jumped ahead to the “conditions” and sought relief. Always an angle. Begging for “exceptions.” Incomplete application. Me – the one flag lot in the cosmic subdivision. “Planner” it says, painted in 96 point shadow box Times New Roman gold relief right on the glass. If I’m a planner, where’s my specific plan?

As I sat up I soaked in the viewshed, her blond hair cascading across her neck and flowing onto the sheets like a stand of tall grasses in a fuel mod zone, her shoulders, waist and hips sculpted like contour grading, and her gams – long and smooth like a pair of collector streets. She had it all. But she was “rural residential” and I was “central business district” and there was no provision for a mixed use in my life. I’d granted a temporary variance last night, though. We lit up the master suite like a special signage district. But my buddy the Sun had just been appointed to my zoning board and he’d said we were nonconforming. Sorry, precious. Not right here and not right now. You can file an appeal doll face, but I gotta notify ya, I make the final determination, and I ain’t in the habit of modifying my general plan.

Then I started to sweat. Was she a legal nonconforming use? Too late. She had already received my design review permit, and I was not a part of her title report. Case closed. Slip the file in the jacket, shove it in the cabinet and walk away.
Sustainable Urban Development: How Different can Portland Afford to be?

By Robert Cowley, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of West

While visiting Portland recently, I was amused to observe that as much as two-thirds of the news space in that week’s Portland Tribune related directly to sustainability: topics ranged from cycle helmets and the planned Lloyd Ecodistrict to composting. Should I interpret this emphasis as deliberate counter-cultural provocation? I am inclined instead to see it as reflecting a deep embedment of the goal of sustainability within the city’s collective consciousness.

The momentum proudly established by Portland’s ‘pathbreaking’ (Rutland & Aylett, 2008) 1993 Carbon Dioxide Reduction Strategy has clearly been maintained. Sustainability is, accordingly, at the heart of the 2012 Portland Plan – yet the claim that this is a “different kind of plan” (Portland City Council, 2012:1) raises the question of what exactly it differs from.

I work in a team which collates information about significant internationally reported sustainable urban development (SUD) initiatives. We use ‘eco-city’ as a generic term to cover a spectrum of projects, ranging from ‘retro-fits’ (which would include Portland’s ongoing efforts) through to entire ‘new-build’ cities, such as Tangshan Caofeidian in China. In 2011 we counted 178 such initiatives around the world (Joss et al., 2011). In this respect, Portland may well depart from the norm for US cities – but is simultaneously part of a much wider global pattern.

The growth of the ‘eco-city’ phenomenon has accelerated markedly in recent years: less than a third of our survey cases were launched before 2005. National schemes have partly facilitated this process; the French government, for example, recently announced 13 ÉcoCité initiatives. The global outlook therefore appears bright: increasingly, SUD is moving from the fringe into mainstream policy-making, is integrated across political levels, and implemented with the willing participation of local authorities and publics. Yet this mainstreaming is also characterized by other measurable shifts in conceptual and practical focus (see Joss et al., forthcoming), each of which raises specific questions about the future of SUD. I remain unconvinced that Portland is bucking all these trends.

First, we note the increasing prevalence of the ‘carbon agenda’, focused on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. This has been described elsewhere as having to a large extent “overwritten” the debates over sustainability in the 1990s (Bulkeley et al., 2012:113). It might be welcomed as demonstrating widespread agreement on a practical realization of the otherwise nebulous goals of sustainability, potentially allowing progress to be measured consistently, and thus facilitating accountability and international comparability. Alternatively, though, could it amount to a narrowing of focus which diverts attention away from more difficult political and economic questions? Could
earlier socially radical models of sustainability have been sidelined by ones “organized within the horizons of a capitalist order that is beyond dispute” (Swyngedouw, 2010:219)? On this view, current mainstream SUD serves to obscure the underlying structural causes of non-sustainability.

Second, public-private partnerships (PPPs) appear to play an increasingly central role in SUD. The wider trend towards the delivery of urban development through PPPs has often been aligned with the ‘neoliberalization’ of the city (see, for example: Jessop, 2002; Crouch 2011). Democracy is threatened if “[o]ligarchic institutions like public-private partnerships … and quasi-public agencies are increasingly making decisions … formerly made by officials directly elected by the public” (Purcell, 2008:27). It is difficult to reconcile this possibility with the idea that ‘procedural equity’ is a central principle of sustainability (Haughton, 1999:236).

We also observe the growing involvement of international engineering and consultancy firms, pointing to a globalization of the processes of SUD. If such firms contribute to the definition of urban sustainability – in particular, through the use of sustainability indicators (Joss et al., 2012) – we see risks that definitions will exhibit technological determinism, or be shaped by commercial considerations. The focus on IT-related innovation, in the rise of the so-called ‘smart city’, is unlikely to mitigate these risks. The foregrounding of commercially driven technological ‘fixes’ may be closely related, finally, to a growing consensual acceptance of a ‘green growth’ or ‘ecological modernization’ outlook, which assumes that “with relatively minor technical and regulatory reforms, business as usual is possible under existing capitalist structures” (Haughton, 2007, p.282).

Of course, it would be somewhat eccentric – even by Portland’s standards – if its 2012 Plan amounted to a revolutionary manifesto. Portland nevertheless stands out from the crowd in its assertion that “[a]dvancing equity must be at the core of our plans for the future” (Portland City Council, 2012:4). But if, elsewhere, the ‘environmental’ pillar of sustainability is increasingly subsumed within the ‘economic’, with both prioritised over the ‘social’, it seems unclear whether Portland’s defiant stance will remain a tenable one in a time of global economic crisis.

Robert Cowley is a doctoral researcher working in the International Eco-Cities Initiative at the University of Westminster, London, UK: www.westminster.ac.uk/ecocities

References


Oregon Planners Invited to International Planning Meeting

From February 13 to 15, 2013, the International Academic Association on Planning, Law and Property Rights (PLPR) will hold its eighth annual conference at Smith Memorial Student Union at Portland State University. This is only the second time this organization has met outside Europe. Information on the organization and conference may be found at www.plpr2013.org/aboutus.html.

The conference will include the presentation of approximately 120 papers on, of course, planning, law and property rights from many different perspectives and from many different places around the world. More importantly, the conference will evaluate the Oregon planning program, which will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2013. Chapter members are invited to suggest ideas for this “roundtable” portion of the program, so that the program will contain a robust evaluation of the Oregon program.

Conference registration is set at $275, with a $50 discount if registration is completed by January 11, 2013. In addition, a gala conference dinner will be held on February 14th at the Governor Hotel, with the opportunity for meeting the presenters and gaining many different perspectives of planning and its impacts on property. The dinner is available for $80. Payment details for both registration and the dinner may be found at www.plpr2013.org/registration.html.

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association is a sponsor and supporter of this conference. Ric Stephens, a Chapter board member, operates the conference website. CM credits for the conference are now pending and CLE credits for Oregon lawyers are also anticipated.

Oregon planners should consider participating in this conference, which provides, stimulating programs and an intellectual feast, particularly placing the Oregon planning program in perspective from a world standpoint.

Provided by Edward J. Sullivan, co-chair of the PLPR 2013 Host Committee.

Call for Entries 2013 Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association Awards

Each year, the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association honors outstanding efforts in planning and planning leadership. We invite you to participate in the celebration of the best in plans and planning by nominating projects and people you think deserving of such recognition. Categories for submittals include:

- Professional Achievement in Planning
- Special Achievement in Planning
- Distinguished Leadership by a Professional Planner
- Distinguished Leadership by a Community Planner
- Distinguished Leadership by an Elected Official
- Betty Niven Award for Distinguished Leadership in Affordable Housing Advocacy
- Student Achievement in Planning
- Professional Achievement in Journalism

Application packets and instructions are available at www.oregonapa.org. Nominations must be received no later than March 1, 2013. If you have questions about any of the awards, contact Awards Committee Chair Stacy Humphrey, AICP at stacy.humphrey@greshamoregon.gov or 503.618.2202.