

# Does Planning Need the Plan?

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From modern city planning's inception in the mid-nineteenth century, the Plan was its centerpiece. After World War II the plan's fortunes ebbed. Plans and comprehensive planning were subject to powerful critiques. In spite of eloquent defenses, practice and theory shifted from plan to process. Urban planners were advised to perform "middle-range" rather than comprehensive tasks. Theorists focused, first, on decisions and, later, on discourse and communicative action. Paradoxically, this situation has existed alongside the fact that many important recent advances have been the result of plans. Why is this tendency not being researched more? Why is contemporary planning theory generally quiet about the plan? Why are planners themselves shying away from general plans in favor of quicker fixes? This article compares plan-based and non-plan-based planning by looking at both practice and theory in historical and transatlantic perspective.

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## The Plan is Dead?

For a century the Plan was the centerpiece of modern city planning. It maintained that status in Europe and North America from modern planning's inception in the mid-nineteenth century. After World War II, however, the plan's fortunes began to ebb. Plans and comprehensive planning were subjected to critiques that led practitioners and scholars to question their value (Meyerson and Banfield 1955; Altshuler 1965). In spite of elegant plans and eloquent defenses (Philadelphia City Planning Commission 1960; Kent 1964), planning practice and theory shifted from plan to process (Lindblom 1959, Davidoff and Reiner 1962). Urban planners were advised to perform "middle-range" rather than comprehensive tasks (Meyerson 1956). Thus, since the early 1960s, the plan has not occupied center stage. More attention has been given to process (Davidoff 1965; Dyckman 1969; Faludi 1973a; Godschalk 1974; Burchell and Sternlieb 1978; Forester 1980; Alexander 1984; Faludi 1987; Friedmann 1987; Forester 1989; Krumholz and Forester 1990). Even Teitz's thorough appraisal of the state of planning in the United States in the 1990s—which he referred to as the "golden age of [North] American planning"—scarcely mentions the plan itself (Teitz 1996).

Why the decline? The attack on the idea of comprehensive planning and its main instrument, the plan, was part of the general attack on instrumental rationality in the social sciences and professions. Critiques were also launched on several fronts against the main tools of the plan—zoning and land use regulation. Neotraditionalists and new urbanists, conflict resolvers and dispute settlers, and conservative politicians introduced their own alternatives to planning. Recent planning scholarship, exemplified by Innes (1995), Campbell and Fainstein (1996), Healey (1996), Mandelbaum, Mazza, and Burchell (1996), the journal *Planning Theory*, and the planning theory symposium in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (Stiftel 1995), has continued to concentrate on process and discourse.<sup>1</sup> These thinkers have ushered in a micro-focus, increasingly fine-grained, that holds sway over theory and education today. The paradox of this situation is that many important advances during the same period have resulted from plans.

## Reviving the Plan

In the midst of the sea-change from plans to process, exceptional plans made their presence felt. Perhaps the first to get much attention in the United States were the 1971 Urban Design Plan and the 1983 Downtown Plan (also an urban design plan) for San Francisco. Large “urban pieces”—a term in use in Europe—such as the designs for Battery Park City in New York and the Docklands in London followed.<sup>2</sup> The plan for the new town of Seaside, Florida became new urbanism’s first emblem. Portland, Oregon prepared an ambitious plan that took public participation seriously, giving citizen involvement a new dimension. The Regional Plan Association published its third plan for the New York metropolitan region, titled *A Region at Risk*, in 1996. A draft plan for Washington, DC, *Extending the Legacy*, was released in 1996 by the National Capital Planning Commission. It proposes to update L’Enfant’s and McMillan’s visions for the capital.

National institutions latched on to physical planning. The American Institute of Architects formed Urban Design Assistance Teams. The American Planning Association followed with Community Planning Teams. Meanwhile the National Endowment for the Arts weighed in with the Mayors Institute on City Design. The 1992 New Jersey State Plan and the 1994 San Diego Regional Growth Management Strategy provided new visions for their jurisdictions and new models for state and regional planning. These two plans also redefined the relations between planning and governance. New Jersey invented a plan preparation process called “cross-acceptance,” a collaborative and iterative model for negotiation. In San Diego, local planners wrote their regional plan. These two plans held out the promise that planning, by redesigning governing institutions, could be a path to real democratic reform. San Diego and New Jersey thus set a new agenda for planning and research.

In Europe, map- and design-based plans had yielded to policy-based plans in the sixties and seventies, as they had in North America. In the 1980s, strategies and frameworks became popular. In the midst of this shift, a similar blip on the radar screen of physical plans appeared. An example was the plan that guided the renovation of Bologna, Italy in the 1960s. In renewing Bologna, its planners created new modes of grassroots planning and participative democracy. The Bologna plan was seminal in Italy and Europe (Campos Venuti 1978). Aldo Rossi (1966), among others, called attention to the roles of architecture in the building of the city, and of physical design in guiding its planning and politics. In Madrid and Barcelona,

grassroots movements led to citizen-based city plans. Architects crafted Madrid’s 1985 General Plan, which guided the restoration of its historic center and the provision of infrastructure and services in the periphery (Ayuntamiento de Madrid 1985). The transformation of Barcelona in the 1980s and 1990s was guided by its 1976 Plan General Metropolitano de Barcelona (Bohigas 1985). The Thames River Gateway Strategy signaled a departure from the rule-based norms common in Britain (Thames Gateway Task Force 1994). Although these plans were the exemplars, after 1980 the entire continent witnessed a resurgence of physical plans and strategies.

Is the revival due to the centering influence of the plan, always and again at planning’s heart? In some cases, the plan has proved to be an effective instrument of urban policy and a spark for urban change. It still serves its traditional functions of guiding urban facilities and setting parameters for zoning and other legal controls on real property. It is serving newer purposes as well. Physical plans put forth graphic images of the future that can rally stakeholders to act. Citizens and interest groups like to back a plan that lets them “see” what they will get. Politicians like to back a consensus plan that deals with thorny issues they often find too risky to tackle themselves. By bringing a ready-made consensus to political bodies, planners do political work. Plans serve as “single-text negotiating documents,” to use the language of dispute resolution. Around a well-written plan diverse interests can negotiate and agree on policy. In these ways, plans have begun to breathe life again into the comprehensive planning ideal (Innes 1996). This article explores the new claims put forward for the plan, by comparing plan-based and non-plan-based planning, looking at both practice and theory in historical perspective.

## On the Origins of Modern City Planning

Planning historians customarily attribute the origins of modern planning to Haussmann’s plan for Paris at the middle of the nineteenth century (Choay 1969). Alternatively, the beginning is pegged to the late nineteenth century, with the rise of the movements for tenement improvement and civic hygiene in Germany, Britain, and the United States. This chronology relegates Haussmann and his imitators to placing monuments and laying out boulevards (Hall 1988). The first *comprehensive* city plan dealing with the concerns that claim contemporary planners’ attention—housing, environment, traffic, social and health conditions, urban design, density, infrastructure, etc.—was drafted by the Catalonian civil engineer Ildefons

Cerdà for Barcelona in 1859. He based his plan on a theory of urbanization (Cerdà 1867).

Other plans ensued, which shaped the fledgling profession. Letchworth Garden City, the 1893 Columbian Exposition's Great White City, Daniel Burnham's and Edward Bennett's 1909 Plan for Chicago, Arturo Soria's Lineal City of 1882 for an extension of Madrid, Walter Burley Griffin's 1912 plan for Canberra, and Otto Wagner's 1893 extension plan for Vienna were some of the most prominent.<sup>3</sup> The 1929-1930 *Plan for New York and Environs* by the Regional Plan Association and the 1944 *Greater London Plan* by Patrick Abercrombie were landmarks of the plan movement. Postwar plans such as Copenhagen's famous Finger Plan and Holland's Green Heart and Randstad extended the tradition. In the early 1960s, Ed Bacon's plan for Philadelphia got him on the cover of *Time* magazine. Thirty years later its vision has largely been implemented, bringing lasting improvements to the City of Brotherly Love.

Plan-based utopian treatises also exercised influence. Camillo Sitte's *The Art of Building Cities* (1889); Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities* (1898); Tony Garnier's *Industrial City* (1917); Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* (1925), *Radiant City* (1933), and *A Contemporary City of 3 Million Inhabitants* (1922); and Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City* (1935) are a few noteworthy examples.

These seminal thinkers showed in no uncertain terms what they thought the future city should look like. Their plans did not rely on mere words or abstract theories. Even Cerdà's theory was empirical, based on over ten years of detailed data gathering and comparative analysis. The pioneers adopted the stance boldly stated by Daniel Burnham in 1907, in what has nearly become a mantra for planners (from Hall 1988, 174):

Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.

In this article, the word plan refers to a two-dimensional representation of the layout of the physical form of the city. Two-dimensional diagrams are abetted by three-dimensional models and illustrations portraying ground-level and bird's eye views. (A North American testament to the influence of dramatic drawings is the effect of Hugh Ferriss's renderings for the landmark 1916 zoning plan for New York City.) My use of the term "plan," unless noted otherwise, refers to a general, comprehensive, master structure, or

strategic plan, rather than a sectoral or functional plans such as for transport or housing, or a site-specific plan for an area or project. Subtle analyses by Faludi and van der Valk (1994) and Mazza (1995), among many others, noted differences among types of plans.

The images in those historic plans are etched in our minds. They are icons of the profession. The plan assumed heroic status, and the creators of plans became legends. They played starring roles in building the profession and institution of city planning. The pioneers did not separate practice from theory. "Survey before plan" and "garden cities" were concepts at the core of planning theory a century ago. Practitioners and theorists, process and substance were one and the same.

## Words and Plans

In the 1920s, governments in the United States took what became the first steps in moving away from the plan and towards zoning as a determinant of urban and suburban growth. The 1926 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company* (272 U.S. 365, 71 L.Ed. 303, 47 S.Ct. 114) and the 1924 United States Department of Commerce Standard State Zoning Enabling Act shifted the emphasis away from plans, designs, and urban form to zoning, laws, and land use. It was prophetic that the Department of Commerce released the Standard State Zoning document before its Standard City Planning Enabling Act of 1928. Lawyers and planners were to replace designers and engineers as the leading professionals shaping urban growth policy. Walker's influential text (1941) reflected this shift from designs to words.

As World War II erupted, national planning efforts around the world took a turn at churning out matériel for their armies and navies. As soldiers and sailors returned home after the war, the priorities of national planning and programs continued to supersede those of local planning, as they had during the war and the depression before it. Service men and women and their baby boom offspring needed homes and schools. As the Marshall Plan was helping war-torn Europe to rebuild its cities and infrastructure, another part of America's production capacity was channelled to building highways and suburbs, and rebuilding "blighted" cities by clearing slums.

National planning, because of its scale, was less sensitive to design and place than was its local-scale kin. It opted for replicable programs and contributed to the specialization of planning. Federal highway and urban renewal programs foreshadowed the hold over cities and their planning that national programs in the

United States were to exert from the fifties onward. Those programs ensured the ascendancy of specialists and the fall of generalists, despite pleas such as Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and Ian McHarg's *Design With Nature* (1969). Segmentation occurred in other areas as well. Instead of an ecological view of the environment, in the United States there appeared separate programs (not plans) for clean air, clean water, endangered species, coasts, flood zones, waste, etcetera. Fragmentation of this sort fueled the need for coordination, the coordination innate in synthetic comprehensive plans.

As planning became segmented into subdisciplines, work on housing, transportation, urban design, land use, environment, community development, and economic development became separated, in offices and curricula around the country. Planning and public policy suffered a "sectoralization" (Wildavsky 1979). As in other professions, specialists carved out niches, generated jargon, and ventured little past the walls they had erected. Technicians fashioned large-scale models that matched instrumental rationality and general systems theory to the large-scale national programs put in place by new national agencies. Such models were subjected to scathing critiques on technical (Lee 1973) and ethical and epistemological grounds (Tribe 1972).

A new player made the planning scene in the decades after World War II, often at center stage. The private real estate developer emerged as a formidable force to which localities could mostly only react. Tract homes in large residential subdivisions formed a patchwork suburban quilt, dotted by shopping malls. Standardized site plan and floor plan layouts, national building codes, and easy financing enabled developers to mass produce a panoply of "ticky tacky little boxes" that subverted the traditional subdivision, which until then had been craft-made. New tools such as Planned Unit Developments further proliferated large-scale projects. New subdivisions spread over the landscape like an intractable tract home rash. Where developers overmatched localities' powers, control over local destinies was wrested from the cities and towns.

In sum, planning and general plans gave way to developers' site plans, highway engineers' concrete cloverleaves and asphalt ribbons, federal officials' urban renewal, environmental regulations and impact reports, and lawyers' codes. Texts such as Kevin Lynch's *Site Planning* (1962) and Norman Williams's *American Land Planning Law* (1974) influenced entire generations. Kent's *The Urban General Plan* (1964) receded from view. Supreme Court decisions and federal programs stirred planners' interest more than new general plans did.

The plans that were produced stood apart from previous physical plans. They were policy plans replete with goals, objectives, policies, criteria, standards, and programs; graphs, charts, projections, and matrices. They were generally devoid of graphic images or proposals for urban form. Again, the Regional Plan Association produced the archetype, in its 1968 *Second Regional Plan* for New York's metro area. Such plans, more often than not, "gathered dust on the shelves," a now well-worn expression that entered our lexicon around that time.

Critiques notwithstanding, it seemed in the 1960's that nothing could stop the bureaucratic machinery or the "federal bulldozer" (Anderson 1964), well oiled by then-fresh ideas. Planning employed systems paradigms and quantitative methods that treated politics, institutions, and other factors as exogenous. Planning's new technocracy applied principles of hierarchy and conformity (plan-program-budget; plan-regulation-permit; national-state-regional-local) in a linear sequence. Some theorists followed suit (McLaughlin 1969; Chadwick 1971). Other theorists of the time elided the plan (Dyckman 1969, Godschalk 1974). The plan was satirized by writers such as Brian Berry, whose "Notes on an Expedition to Planland" referred to planners as "priests" in service of "Planland's chief god, Plan" (Berry 1978, 201). Leading practitioners opted for functional plans (Jacobs 1978) or for equity planning at the expense of the master plan (Krumholz 1978).

At about the same time, a "quiet revolution" of state planning gave new roles to planning and state government. State planning reinforced general plans and other local instruments, in addition to inserting the new figure of state plans (Bosselman and Callies 1972). State laws often specified plans that were laden with goals, objectives, criteria, and standards with which subordinate levels of government had to comply. Creativity, negotiation, and design-based physical plans, though not explicitly excluded, did not appear in this programmatic approach. It took the innovations of conflict resolution and new urbanism to change planners' thinking, largely by providing new images of how to conduct planning.

Planning theory of this era, though fertile, was in a muddle about just what it and planning were (Alexander 1984). Dichotomous debates ran through theory: content versus context, rational versus political, comprehensive versus incremental, substance versus process. One thing was clear. Theory and practice were distinct and acknowledged as such. Theory was not linked to practice (Innes de Neufville 1983). Out of these debates emerged empirical theorists who closely examined practice (Bolan 1980, Forester 1980,

Susskind 1981, Baum 1983, Healey 1983, Mazza 1987a and 1987b, and Hoch 1994). They had been foreshadowed by Castells (1978).

Practitioners, for their part, took cues from urban conditions, not theories. One of these conditions was that of government itself. The involvement of more levels of government, the explosion of regulatory permits, the proliferation of programs, the splintering of agencies into professional subdisciplines, and the inclusion of new stakeholders created a planning panorama that would have been unfamiliar just a short time before. Coordination became paramount (Bosselman, Feurer, and Siemon 1976).

Coordination was not a new idea. As early as 1911 Patrick Abercrombie had signaled the "necessity for cooperation" (Abercrombie 1911). Early coordinating attempts followed the hierarchical model endemic in federal practice. Later, the "quiet revolution" of state intervention in land use and growth management did not break that mold. Florida epitomized state planning in the 1970s and 1980s. Florida laws mandated "consistency" among local, regional, and state plans. Extensive and detailed rules and regulations were specified. Little room was left for variation or interpretation, which stifled local planning (Boswell and Stiftel 1996). The laws did not allow for the negotiation of differences. Coordination was procedural, its criteria prescribed from above. In this way American planning resembled earlier efforts in Europe, where administrative practices in highly centralized governments followed hierarchical norms, as in France, Italy and Spain. However, the consistency doctrine was soon to reach its limits (DiMento 1980).

Consistency and other rigid approaches clashed with the complexity and pace of change in cities and their administration. Moreover, evolving lifestyles demanded flexibility and mobility. Planners adjusted to these developments by questioning planning's domain. Was coordination enough? More generally, was process enough? Some urged a return to physical planning and urban design (Jacobs and Appleyard 1987). Others urged a fuller accounting of politics (Low 1991). Davidoff's critique (1965), urging representation of under-represented interests, began to take root in institutional settings (Clavel 1986, Krumholz and Forester 1990). Processes opened up to include interests that had been ignored. Citizens and organized interest groups (neighborhood and civic associations, environmental organizations, and developers' lobbies, for example) were brought in. Planning codes were rewritten to mandate public participation, as were the laws governing environmental impact statements and endangered species protection.

Bringing in new stakeholders had the foreseeable result of increasing conflict. Introducing new interests (and thus conflicts) made politics more relevant, and gave planning a higher profile. Planning was front page news. Planners occupied (and increasingly occupy) seats in Congress and state legislatures, mayor and council posts, city and county manager positions, and university leadership. These advances were not led by planning theory. Planners responded to local situations with local knowledge. In their confrontations with new realities, planners *invented* (Innes, Gruber, Neuman, and Thompson 1994). Their ingenuity paid off.

Coordination moved from mandated top-down consistency and strict compliance to voluntary mutual acceptance of plans via comparison and negotiation, called "cross-acceptance" (New Jersey State Legislature 1986). The image governing coordination was no longer simply top-down or bottom-up, but back and forth. Iterative back-and-forth multilogues entailed successive rounds of multilateral negotiations and fine tuning. Consensus building was the new watchword (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987; Ozawa 1991). As consensual practices developed, planners accepted the notion of not getting unanimous or definitive consensus. A generous take on consensus allowed for the inevitable differences, natural diversity, and incongruity intrinsic to pluralist societies. Planners began to take a more pragmatic approach (Blanco 1994). Back and forth interaction mirrored networked forms of territorial and institutional structure that planning engaged (Alexander 1965, Powell 1990, Saxenian 1994, Neuman 1996a). For example, in light of the New Jersey state planning experience, Florida statutes were altered to allow for "cross-acceptance." Collaboration, cooperation, and consensus became the new 3-C, replacing "comprehensive, continuous, and coordinated."

The stress placed on process from about 1960 until the advent of neotraditionalism came at the expense of place. How to plan, not what to plan, occupied planners' imaginations. Plans were filled with words and numbers rather than maps and designs. It became difficult to envision the future of the place being planned through the haze of statistical data and quantitative analysis. Implementation surfaced as a serious issue (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). The plan-implementation dichotomy was born in the depths of quantitative plans. How do you implement a matrix? Policy plans did not fare better. How to implement a vague goal or policy? Another consequence of replacing place with process was the detachment of fields once strongly allied to city and

regional planning. These fields study the objects of planning: geography, urban and rural sociology, regional science, architecture, and urban history. As planning became wrapped up in process and removed from the city, it nonetheless attempted to hold on to its comprehensive ideal. By this time, though, the ideal had been almost wholly abstracted from its context. Planning was no longer acting on cities; it was acting on other agents and agencies.

### “Oh, Great—Another Paradigm Shift”

As planning for places becomes salient once again, we can discern several plan archetypes now prominent in practice. One archetype is the traditional physical plan, as is apparent when one compares new urbanists' plans to those of earlier civic designers (Nolen 1916; Hegemann and Peets 1922). Another is the strategic plan, a vogue in business schools and board rooms (Porter 1980; 1985), which has now crossed to the public sector (Bryson 1988). Public sector strategic plans pursue restructuring, privatization, government as business, and customer service (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Spatial strategy in the public sector is often transformed into city marketing (Kearns and Philo 1993). A third archetype comprises environmental and community plans that engage a wide range of interests and stakeholders. Examples include Habitat Conservation Plans to preserve endangered species, and local plans by community development corporations in inner cities. Common to all three types is the exercise of leadership through a “vision that can be shared,” to borrow an Anne Firth Murray (1995) phrase from another context.

We know from experience that some plans have little effect. Worse, some backfire and cause disasters (Hall 1980). The critiques of plans are familiar: Plans become marginal when not connected to power. Plans restrict development and impinge on the “free” market. Plans are too general and future-oriented to deal with daily concerns. Plans take too long to prepare, and by the time they are adopted they have been overtaken by events. Plans attempt to accomplish too much and end up doing little or nothing. These points have had a long history of debate, and the debate has been revived (Blanco 1994; Lucy 1994; Innes 1996; Multari 1996; Bhatia and Dyett 1997; Healey et al. 1997; Sedway 1997).

Recently, theorists have tended to pick up on the discursive (Dryzek 1990) and the communicative (Healey 1996) aspects of planning and politics. Offshoots pointed to the significance of story telling

(Throgmorton 1996) and metaphors (Lakoff 1996). Others attributed action in the politico-planning sphere to the influence of civic culture (Putnam 1993), institutional culture (Douglas 1986, Bellah et al. 1991), political culture (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990), and planning culture (Mangada 1989). At the same time, the popular writers and consultants have bombarded us with “visioning,” “reinventing,” “rethinking,” “re-engineering,” “restructuring,” and “downsizing.” As the world changed, behemoths were dismantled and hierarchies became outmoded. In planning, a wide range of techniques and theories have competed to fill the cracks thus created. In general they are variations of “coordination without hierarchy” (Chisholm 1989) in the “network society” (Castells 1996). Baum (1996) noted at least four distinct formulations for planning theory. Amidst this cacophony the announcement of a single new paradigm becomes tenuous (Innes 1995).

### The Evolution of Three Planning Classics

Another way to chart the course of plans is to analyze how seminal texts have changed over time. Here let us examine three North American texts. Researchers in other nations could trace the evolution in their own settings. The books examined here are the several editions of the International City Management Association “Green Book,” currently *The Practice of Local Government Planning*; Stuart Chapin, Jr.'s *Urban Land Use Planning*; and *City Planning*, edited by John Nolen.

*City Planning*, published in 1916 by the National Municipal League, became American planning's benchmark. A second edition appeared in 1929. It was a precursor to the ICMA series. The book's sole purpose was to explain how to prepare a city plan, the *sine qua non* of planning then, as its subtitle, “A Series of Papers Presenting the Essential Elements of a City Plan,” made clear. Frederick Law Olmsted captured the prevailing attitude in the introduction. “The complexity of the subject and the absence of definite limitations on its scope add to the strength of its appeal to the imagination” (Nolen 1916, 2). The plan ruled planning and was the sole topic of its principle text.

ICMA's first two editions of the planning green book, then titled *Local Planning Administration*, kept the plan as the organizing principle (Segoe 1941; Menhinick 1948). The 1959 edition, edited by Mary McLean, picked up much of the earlier editors' language in its introductory chapter. Yet a close reading of the text and a review of its structure expose a shift from the focus on the plan to a dual focus on plan and process.

McLean closed the first chapter with "These are the major problems, then, with which this book will be concerned: the way in which a city organizes and the steps it takes to develop a comprehensive plan, and equally or more important, the procedures it establishes to carry that plan into realization" (McLean 1959, 22). Subsequent editions departed further from the general plan as the organizing principle of city planning, each devoting only one chapter to it.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps no other single text better reflects the segmentation and scientization of planning and the decline of the design-based master plan than does Stuart Chapin's landmark *Urban Land Use Planning*. It changed the way planning was practiced in the United States, by shifting the core of planning from design to land use. This meant a move from the "complex unity" of the city to land units segmented into categories: built or unbuilt, served by infrastructure or not, type and intensity of use, etcetera. Chapin's underlying rationale used land use suitability as the guide for calculating land use supply and matching it with demand. Even as the book acknowledged that land use planning is one part of comprehensive planning, it nevertheless stressed quantitative analysis over design synthesis. Successive versions of the book became more quantified (Chapin 1957; 1965; Chapin and Kaiser 1979; Kaiser, Godschalk, and Chapin 1995). In part its success derived from the fact that a land use basis (as opposed to a whole-city basis) fit more neatly into the way North American institutions dealt with real property (deeds, laws, zoning). Moreover, the increasing quantification of Chapin's land use models fit well with the increasing quantification of the social sciences and allied professions. This gospel spread far and wide because its methodology was universal and replicable. Dividing land into uses and other categories of analysis lent itself handily to various control technologies being used in the governance of land, as was evident in the titles of planning's main legal texts in use in the United States after 1970 (Hagman 1971; Rohan 1977; Mandelker and Cunningham 1979). With the land use control model, planning employed a divide and conquer mentality decidedly distinct from the order and build mindset of previous physical plans.

## The Power of the Dream

At the Olympic games, athletes refer to attaining their dreams. At the 1996 Atlanta games a theme song was "The Power of the Dream." In addition to visualizing their performances before they compete, world class athletes create powerful mental images of winning. These images inspire them to exercise at extraor-

dinary levels and to reach almost superhuman levels of focus, commitment, and discipline. Persuasive plans, too, possess the power of the dream. Images and visions, including those in plans, can stir minds, arouse hopes, and inspire action (Boulding 1956; Burnette 1973; Hall 1988; Lyndon and Moore 1994; Neuman 1996b).

The pictorial nature that images, designs, and maps afford plans endows them with qualities that other instruments of public policy often lack. The plan stands as an important part of our discipline's intellectual heritage precisely because of these qualities. Why has so little been written recently about these advantages of plans? (For an insightful exception, see Black 1997.)

Images in planning, however, are not limited to plans, nor is their creation the exclusive province of planning. One of the most evocative images to take hold of our profession lately is that of the "edge city" (Garreau 1991).<sup>5</sup> The image has taken hold precisely because it readily captures a phenomenon that planners have had difficulty conveying to those outside the profession: "net of mixed beads," "poly-centric metropolitan regions," "dispersed sheets," "galaxy of settlements," and so on.

Taken together, plans and images form a research agenda for analysts and an action agenda for practitioners. A framework for such an agenda appears below. Using these criteria, we can evaluate the new praxis that is bequeathing plans qualitatively different from their predecessors. Valuable work has already begun. Careful studies of plan-led development (Healey 1990; Healey et al. 1997) and plan-led planning doctrine (Faludi and van der Valk 1994) suggest that plans have had significant influence. For example, the difference between strategic plans that foster change and regulatory plans that preserve the status quo (Mazza 1995) points to fundamental implications.

### Plans Chart Collective Hope.

Plans help connect people to places by bringing people together to shape a common destiny for their places and themselves. In so doing, plans link past, present, and future into a willed history. A plan is a history, the story of a place. In addition, as territorial animals, humans need to control their home place for their survival and well-being. The plan ought to be the principal means of asserting control, since it is the only territorially based means that deals with the unity of place. We need to better understand the connection of people to place to plan, if we want plans to respond to the needs of residents rather than to regulations (Boyer 1994; Hayden 1995; Schama 1995; Violich 1997).

### **Plans Use Images of Place to Portray Collective Hopes.**

Pictures, metaphors, stories, designs, and maps paint images in the mind's eye. Kenneth Boulding showed that we change our mind about something when we change our image of it (Boulding 1956). Images enhance a plan's capacity to change people's minds, converting plans into political change agents. Using images also enables planners to exploit powerful media networks. We live in a popular culture where images reign and determine fortunes. The more we know about the way all sorts of images work in plans and planning, the more we will succeed (Lynch 1981; Neuman 1996a).

### **Plans are the Loci of Conflict.**

Comprehensive plans bring peoples, disciplines, urban functions, problems, interests, and ideas together in institutional settings. Plans become focal points of conflict when these collide. Conflict is a necessary part of planning and of politics. Without conflict, plans and planning become apolitical and thus are rendered meaningless. Plans can be used to set agendas and resolve conflicts, because they are ideal "single texts" that the participants in plan-making rely on to make decisions (Moore 1986; Forester 1989). If plan making is truly pluralist and participative and not just a "staff prepare—others respond" *pro forma* ritual, then it can build community as it builds upon the social, intellectual, and political capital in a community (Neuman 1991; Putnam 1993; Gruber 1994).

### **Plans Are Powerful Because They Are Built Into the Power Structure.**

Plans derive their greatest authority in current practice by being inextricably entrenched in governing institutions. Plans are both "constitutive" and "regulative" (Griffin 1995). Yet, do they attain the full potential for change that emanates from this powerful position?<sup>6</sup> Plan makers, it is clear, should be savvy about politics and institutions (Christensen 1993). Moreover, they need to be knowledgeable about and critical of institutional power, and be able to "speak truth to power" (Wildavsky 1979). Although the profession has long recognized the primacy of politics, practitioners often still grapple on the sidelines in political contests. Thus, periodic criticisms still resound, even as they repeat the essential message (Meyerson and Banfield 1955; Altshuler 1965; Wildavsky 1973; Forester 1989). How can research really aid planners in these undertakings? Can front-line planners be engaged more effectively in research design?

### **Plans Have Built the Profession and Institutions of Planning.**

Plans have also been used to design and redesign institutions of government (Castells 1969; 1978; 1983; New Jersey State Planning Commission 1992; San Diego Association of Governments 1994; Neuman 1996a). This transcendental quality of plans stems from their relation to constitutions (Haar 1955; Baer 1994; 1996). Indeed, in nearly every *Federalist Paper*, the authors Alexander, Jay, and Madison called the Constitution of the United States a plan. A better understanding of this contribution by plans can reap benefits to our governments, our communities, our profession, and ourselves.

### **Powerlines: Lines on Maps Decide "Who Gets What, When, and How."**

City plans and zoning codes have a distinctive feature: maps with lines that mark boundaries. This characteristic is often overlooked by researchers, despite its importance. Timid practitioners try to skirt the drawing of lines, because they arouse controversy and passion. If Harold Laswell had studied city planning, he might have added "where" to the title of his seminal article "Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How" (Laswell 1936). Fear of drawing lines that are legally binding and fear of presenting maps in public arenas are skeletons in the planning closet. Yet the conflict occasioned in governing urban development by plans and zoning is an indicator of consequential planning. As any planner or politician knows, conflict comes to a head when the lines are drawn. Lines that have this effect appear not only in plan and zoning maps, but also in site plans, transportation and utility plans, process flow diagrams, and organizational charts. Who wins and who loses, who sits at the table, and how the game is played are gauged by planners' lines. Are planners afraid to draw lines because they are conflict avoiders (consensus seekers) by nature? Or are they afraid that, finally, plans and zoning will gain them status in accord with their true place in the urban realm?

Does planning need the plan? Or can planning go plan-less, naked and exposed? If the latter, why not call our profession "ning" and leave out "plan" entirely? As it is, planning is blessed with an active verb for its name, a characteristic it shares with other professions that nurture and bring things into being: nursing, engineering, design. City planners bring cities to life and life to cities, and have done so for centuries using plans. The recent diversification of tools used by planners has enriched our profession. To be most effective,



and to be used with the soundest legal basis, they need to be linked to a general plan. After all, the plan did give planning its name.

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

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### NOTES

1. For exceptions, see, for example, Healey, Khakee, Motte, and Needham (1997). Much of Healey's work has centered on plan-making. See also Blanco (1994) and Innes (1995).
2. See also the 1974 vision by Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard for the San Diego metropolitan area (Lynch and Appleyard 1974) and the 1978 Urban Design Component of the City of San Diego's *Progress Guide and General Plan*, which was based on their work. In New York City, Jonathan Barnett, Jaquelin Robertson and Richard Weinstein and other urban designers in the Department of City Planning and the Offices of Midtown and Lower Manhattan Planning and Development put in place ideas that are now seeing the light of day in Times Square, Battery Park City, and elsewhere. For the London Docklands, see Brownill (1990), Ogden (1992), and Cox (1995).
3. For spectacular color plates of the originals, and for provocative text about these and other plans, see the exhibit catalogue *La ville, art et architecture en Europe 1870-1993*, published by the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1994.
4. The general plan chapter in each edition is, nonetheless, positive and assertive. A historical footnote: The Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon, then an employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), as was the author, Howard Menhinick, played a vital role in the second edition. "Herbert A. Simon reviewed the original text, outlined needed changes, deletions, and additions and participated throughout in the revision and preparation for press" (Menhinick 1948, vii).
5. Did Garreau borrow this term from Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968)?
6. There are down sides to institutional entrenchment. See Boyer (1983) and Rabinow (1989) for Foucauldian, and Forester (1980) for Habermasian critiques that pinpoint the role of planning in perpetuating the interests of the leaders of societal institutions.

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