City Planning versus Urban Planning: Resolving a Profession’s Bifurcated Heritage

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Abstract
Planning as a profession in the United States has a bifurcated heritage of design-oriented physical planning and policy-oriented socioeconomic planning. This fundamental dichotomy continues to divide the profession into two distinct interests and two distinct approaches to urban issues, a tension that is especially problematic today, given the dominance of a design orientation in urban development and the dominance of a policy orientation in the planning profession. The author reviews this dual heritage and its underlying attitudes and concludes by making five recommendations that can assist the planning profession to recapture its unique role, to strengthen its ability to address contemporary urban issues, and to become a stronger player vis-à-vis architects and civil engineers in guiding the future of American cities.

Keywords
placemaking, planning education, planning profession, policy planning, urban design

“People like planning,” wrote Sam Bass Warner Jr. They “like thinking about the lands, houses, stores, parks, and roads of their communities; they like imagining the future, thinking about proposals for betterment” (Warner 2000, 231). When Ann Markusen strikes up a conversation with a seatmate on an airplane and identifies herself as a planner, the response often is, “Oh, you should come to my town. We sure could use some of that around here” (Markusen 2000, 261). Though the planning of cities has been largely seen as a good thing, the planners of cities, at least in the US context, have not always fared so well, since their efforts are often judged by the resulting character of the physical, designed city that people can directly see and experience, and in which planners today often appear to play a marginal role. New urbanist Andres Duany, for example, has lamented the “common cry of outrage as a new, seemingly random building project takes shape.” “This should come as no surprise,” he adds. “Most municipal planners are entirely reactive in their approach to development; often their only role is to interpret the codes” (2000, 224).

In 2008–2010, the Knight Foundation (2010), in collaboration with Gallup, surveyed 43,000 people in twenty-six cities where Knight Ridder had newspapers to ask what attaches people emotionally to a community and what attracts people to a place and keeps them there. This “Soul of the Community” survey, subtitled “Why people love where they live and why it matters,” found that the same factors in virtually every city led to strong emotional bonds between people and their community. “The usual suspects—jobs, the economy, and safety—were not among the top drivers. Rather, people consistently gave higher ratings for elements that related directly to their daily quality of life: an area’s physical beauty, opportunities for socializing, and a community’s openness to all people.”

Similarly, in 2012, the American Planning Association (APA) surveyed 1,308 American adults about their views toward their city and toward planning. When respondents were asked about their priorities for an “ideal community,” the top priorities were locally owned business nearby, being able to stay in the same neighborhood while aging, availability of sidewalks, and energy-efficient homes. On the other hand, when asked what they wanted local planners to spend their time on, the top responses were job creation, safety, and schools—somewhat different from the respondents’ own priorities for their ideal community. Job creation, safety, and schools are obviously important, but these surveys suggest a disconnect between the tangible, place-oriented qualities people value most about their communities and the rather abstract things they think planners should do. This article posits that as the planning profession in the United States has distanced itself from grappling directly with the designed city, it has also distanced itself from the public consciousness about the quality of the urban environment. The gap has been filled largely by architects, civil engineers, and community activists.

In her urban design how-to book for planners, Urban Design Reclaimed, Emily Talen (2009, xiii) recollects her first planning job, in California: “I worked in the ‘advanced planning’ section of the City of Santa Barbara for about six years . . . My

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first project was an analysis of what the appropriate parking requirements for a bed and breakfast inn should be in an ‘R-O’ zone. Santa Barbara is the kind of place that obsesses about such things, but you have to admit the town is worth it.” Many people interested in the quality of place would agree that Santa Barbara is “worth it,” but why would one be less likely to say that about the city of Santa Ana? The love affair with Santa Fe, New Mexico, is legion, but why no love affair with Santa Fe Springs, California? What happened to those other cities that led people to disregard them? Can only cities or quarters with wealthy residents be well planned?

The answer lies partly in the trajectory away from placemaking that the American planning profession has followed over many years, as differentiated from the European planning traditions of Städtebau, urbanisme, and stadsontwerp that have continually retained a strong role in forging the designed city, as has planning in Santa Barbara and Santa Fe. The question that interests me, as a planner teaching in a school of architecture, is where is the American planning profession when it comes to discussions of what makes a great place? In too many cases, the discussions regarding place are led by other disciplines in a realm where planning should take the lead.

Exacerbating the problem, it appears, is that the planning profession in the United States has long been dogged by a bifurcated heritage, the two arms of which have often worked against each other: physical planning that at least sometimes relates to urban design and placemaking on one hand and policy planning on the other hand that has no necessary relation to the city as physical, experiential, or aesthetic place. And despite a continuing outpouring of writings elucidating the gap (e.g., Anselin, Nasar, and Talen 2011; Banerjee 2011; Campa nellia 2011; Cuthbert 2006; Gunder 2011; Steiner 2011; Szold 2000), the tension within the profession appears unabated. In this article, I cite arguments going back over sixty years debating the role of planning in the city, and without knowing the publication date, one might imagine these things could still be said today. The unresolved issue of this bifurcated heritage has taken its toll both on the planning profession and on the cities and regions the profession is dedicated to serve. For example, Alexander Cuthbert (2006, 246) has dismissed planning as “a mongrel discipline, ritually bred from elementary articles derived from social science, economics, architecture, urban geography, law, engineering, etc. . . . To this day, the architectural profession has significantly more power and authority than does planning”. Writing in the magazine Planning, Thomas Campanella in 2011 noted “a swelling perception, especially among young scholars and practitioners, that planning is a diffuse and ineffective field, and that it has been largely unsuccessful over the last half century in its own game: bringing about more just, sustainable, healthful, efficient, and beautiful cities.”

**Bifurcation of a Profession**

Susan Fainstein (2010, 58) noted that until the mid-twentieth century, “planning devoted itself to producing the desired object . . . It was taken for granted that the function of planning was to impose a consciously chosen pattern of development upon the urban terrain.” However, as Thomas Campanella (2011, 15) has noted regarding the transformation of urban form in the mid-twentieth century, “planners in the postwar period aided and abetted some of the most egregious acts of urban vandalism in American history. Like their architect colleagues, postwar planners had drunk the Corbusian Kool-Aid and were too intoxicated to see the terrible harm they were causing.” Following the social unrest of the 1960s and a growing consensus about the failures of urban renewal, many American planners began advocating a shift from physical planning to policy formulation. Alex Krieger (2006, 27) noted that “if the architect and urban designer were hell-bent on producing visions of a better tomorrow . . . then the role of the planner must be dedicated to determining need and rational process, not seeking the often dubious vision.”

Already in 1957, Harvey Perloff had attempted to redefine planning as a broader field diverging from the design of the city. Planning, he said (p. 12), was originally concerned chiefly with aesthetics, but it later assumed control over land uses to support the efficient functioning of the city and eventually became a key element in efficient governmental procedures. Planning further evolved to address welfare considerations and stress the human element, eventually encompassing many socioeconomic and political realms to guide the functioning and development of the urban community. And for Israel Stollman (2000, 105), “The key to the profession’s growth was the acquisition of official responsibilities: zoning and subdivision regulations in the 1920s . . . public works programs in the 1930s . . . urban renewal in the 1950s,” all in accordance with a comprehensive plan. “But zoning and subdivision controls had originally to do largely with urban economics—protecting the value of land for those who owned it—and had little to do with issues relating to quality.” Leonard Ortolano (2000, 153) noted that for decades after zoning was introduced in the 1920s, zoning ordinances allowed development in floodplains and wetlands. Even growth management programs in the 1960s and 1970s dealt primarily with the timing of development, with little to say about the quality of that development once it took place or the about resulting character of the city.

Three of the most influential writings in the history of American planning, all appearing in the first half of the 1960s, helped steer the cutting edge of professional planning away from placemaking for decades to come. First, it is difficult to overestimate the influence of Jane Jacobs and her 1961 book titled *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Her work helped steer a generation and beyond away from the folly of large-scale physical planning—and in fact, Jane Jacobs continued to influence planners a half century after *Death and Life of Great American Cities*: in Planetizen’s 2009 poll of urban thinkers, she was still voted number one.

Two other influential works in the 1960s supported planning’s move away from placemaking. Melvin Webber (1964, 147), in his piece “Urban Place and the Nonplace Urban Realm,” concluded that planners must “free themselves from
the obsession with placeness . . . For it is interaction, not place, that is the essence of the city and of city life.” And Paul Davidoff argued in his 1965 article titled Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning that “The city planning profession’s historic concern with the physical environment has warped its ability to see physical structures and land as servants to those who use them.” Many became convinced that planning should completely change course and ally itself with the social sciences rather than with architecture and should work in the social realm, from the bottom up, employing small-scale, organic measures focused on the well-being of people. The physical city could largely take care of itself, and in any event, for many planners the character of the physical city was not all that important. Planning should address the city as a socioeconomic space, not a physical space.

In 1967, the American Institute of Planners eliminated all references to land use in delimiting the scope of the profession’s interests (Stollman 2000, 103). John Friedmann’s major planning theory work of 1973, Retracking America; A Theory of Transactive Planning, did not address the physical city at all. His next book, the magisterial Planning in the Public Domain (1987), traced what he viewed as the four major traditions of planning thought—the realms of social reform, policy analysis, social learning, and social mobilization—without any indication that these actions relate to a visual–tactile physical environment. For Friedmann, a planner was a “specialist in mediating knowledge and action” (p. 4). Thus, an influential strain of planning theory disregarded any notion of place or the actual environment in which people live and work, as being of importance to planners.

Advocates for planning to distance itself from placeness often equated the quest for place with a vision of the city as “art.” In 1958, at the height of urban renewal, Jane Jacobs (1958, 133) wrote that “architects, planners—and businessmen—are seized with dreams of order, and they have become fascinated with scale models and bird’s-eye views. This is . . . symptomatic of a design philosophy now dominant: buildings come first, for the goal is to remake the city to fit an abstract concept of what, logically, it should be. But whose logic? The logic of the projects is the logic of egocentric children, playing with pretty blocks and shouting ‘See what I made!’—a viewpoint much cultivated in our schools of architecture and design.” She expanded that criticism in Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961, 372) to claim that “a city cannot be a work of art.”

Postmodern architecture in the 1970s began to rekindle some excitement in design to counter an increasingly bland corporate modernism, but from the planning perspective M. Christine Boyer wrote a response. Decrying the postmodern movement’s transformation of the city into a “one-sided development game in which the tax base is always the winner and light, air, circulation, and the pedestrian the continual losers” (p. 49), Boyer suggested in 1988 that “we have learned increasingly in the last two decades to look at our cities, their buildings and neighborhoods, as aesthetic objects.” But, she continued, “this gaze . . . neither sees the displacement of users and people, the rapid gentrification of whole areas of the city . . . nor does it understand the hidden class structure implicit in the development of these formalistic tastes,” concluding that “city planners and architects have become the new promotional agents for this stylization of everyday life” (p. 51). The term “city planning” thus became a euphemism for large-scale architecture. “The reaction against planning as art,” noted Talen and Ellis (2004), was “essentially a reaction to planning as autocracy, absolutism and the misuse of power . . . It is a distinction between using art to help build cities that are satisfying . . . and, conversely, using art to symbolize the grandeur and authority of the state or of a particular ideology or individual” (p. 16).

Policymaking versus Placemaking

Despite the trajectory away from design, calls for a rapprochement between design-oriented planning and nondesign-oriented policy planning never disappeared entirely from the literature. Already in 1952, Perry Norton, editor of the Journal of the American Institute of Planners, mused in an editorial, “We use the word ‘design’ frequently. I wonder how most of us mean it. Do we think of design as the frosting on the cake, the final touch which makes the product attractive? I hope not, but I am afraid it is so” (Norton 1952, 152). Eight years later, Morton Happenfeld (1960, 98), in the same journal, proclaimed the need for “a reaffirmation of beauty as a community value. The form of the city must be considered from the physical as well as the economic and social view.” David Crane (1960, 280) noted that “professional preoccupations have relegated design to a minor place in the planning process.” This view was corroborated by Frederick Steiner in 2011, when he noted (p. 214) that “Planners have largely turned a blind eye to aesthetics for the past fifty years.”

In 1979, Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard offered a course at Berkeley, from which emerged a largely student-generated “urban design manifesto.” Their manifesto suggested five designed physical characteristics that must be present to realize the goals and values central to urban life: (1) livable streets and neighborhoods, (2) a minimum residential density as well as intensity of land use, (3) an integration of activities—living, working, and shopping—in reasonable proximity, (4) buildings that define public space as opposed to buildings that sit in space, and (5) “many separate, distinct buildings with complex arrangements and relationships (as opposed to few, large buildings).” Their treatise was finally published eight years later, in 1987—reluctantly, they suggest in their prologue—by the Journal of the American Planning Association.

Though some writings in the late twentieth century began to herald a reconvergence between socioeconomic planning and physical planning (Krieger 2006; Sanyal 2000), that convergence has remained elusive. Bish Sanyal (2000, 319), in his report on a 1997 planning colloquium, noted that “even the staunchest advocate of socioeconomic planning grudgingly admits that physical planning, if done with adequate
appreciation of socioeconomic factors, provides a useful approach to addressing urban problems.” It is difficult to call this a convergence. Looking at overall urban and suburban development in the quarter century since Jacobs and Apple- yeard’s (1987) “Urban Design Manifesto” was published, one finds that planning for traditional single-family suburban sprawl has continued largely unabated (Kotkin 2013) even as its future may be called into doubt (Ehrenhalt 2013; Gallagher 2013).

After 2005, despair by some urban critics about the state of the designed city began yielding to more hopeful prescriptions for the urban future. Andres Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck’s polemic of 2000, Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream, gave way in 2009 to his Smart Growth Manual, which demonstrated applications of his espoused principles. Nan Ellin followed Postmodern Urbanism, her scathing 1996 critique of twentieth-century urbanism, with Integral Urbanism in 2006, a book that offered “guideposts along that path toward a more sustainable human habitat.” A spate of other books pointed the way toward repairing the city, among them were Paul Lukez’s Suburban Transformations (2007), Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson’s Retrofitting Suburbia (2008), and Galina Tachieva’s (2010) Sprawl Repair Manual.

This publication trend accompanied new urbanism’s descendants such as smart growth and complete streets that would influence much thinking about urban development by the 2010s, even if they would not dominate new urban development itself. Their strength appeared undiminished by strident criticisms such as that of Paul Walter Clarke, who claimed in 2006 that new urbanism created “counterfeit communities.” Nevertheless, it is safe to say that Euclidian zoning had disappeared from writing about cities by the 2000s, to be replaced by form-based codes, mixed-use development, and suburban improvement schemes like “prefurbia” (Harrison 2011), along with other calls to reconstitute a lost urbanism. Christopher Leinberger (2008) cogently demonstrated a pent-up demand for “walkable urbanism” in contrast to the existing excess of “drivable suburbanism.”

However, most of the ideas that came to dominate discussions that furthered dense urban spaces, transit-oriented development, and walkability—in movements such as the new urbanism—emerged largely out of the architectural profession rather than out of planning. Nan Ellin (1996, 107–8) suggested that most urban design trends in recent decades emanated from architects rather than planners because “architects have largely been the ones to generate visions for change, while planners have tended more toward offering piecemeal band-aid solutions after the fact.” She also observed that “architects have been reappropriating the role of town planner which had been theirs in the days of the master builder prior to the emergence of the planning profession.” Her observation would not readily become dated; fourteen years later, Brenda Scheer (2010, 106) wrote, “The canon of new urbanism gives great respect to understanding existing urban places; it is planning practitioners who demand easy to-apply formulas.”

Thus, one must ask where the fundamental contribution of the planning profession lies and to what extent planners, and the planning profession, have been in the vanguard of new directions or if they have remained largely on the sidelines. James Howard Kunstler, in The Geography of Nowhere (1993), asked rhetorically whether urban planning had anything to do with making good places anymore. “Planners no longer employ the vocabulary of civic art, nor do they find the opportunity to practice it—the term civic art itself has nearly vanished in common usage. In some universities, urban planning departments have been booted out of the architecture schools and into the schools of public administration. Not surprising, planners are now chiefly preoccupied with administrative procedure . . . in short, bureaucracy. All the true design questions . . . were long ago ‘solved’ by civil engineers . . .” (p. 113).

As Terry Szold (2000, 40) has noted, “new urbanism and its literature have left it to those largely outside the movement to address the redistributive and equity questions associated with the physical and social evolution of our collective landscape.” Yet, the influence of the planning profession on these questions has been noticeably weak. Here, then, is the crux of the problem in which the planning profession has entangled itself: as planning broadened its scope to embrace socioeconomic considerations, it diminished its commitment to the quality of the physical city—the city that most people see and experience—so that planning lost much of its visibility, both literally and figuratively, thus also losing much of its capacity to address the socioeconomic considerations it rightly deemed essential in forging a more successful society. Planners, having sidestepped a vision of the city as a place, appear not to have replaced that vision with convincing arguments for the essential role of socioeconomic concerns in discussions of the urban future. Eran Ben-Joseph (2005) asserted that failure to fully understand the effect of planning rules on sprawl and other manifestations of a poorly designed urban realm have made planning’s integration with design more important than ever.

Szold (2000, 36) elucidated well the two separate streams of planning practice that continue to linger, albeit unequally. She said the placemaking stream “relates to planning endeavors focused on spatial development, urban design and city form, public realm, streetscapes and related infrastructure, and the general imaging and re-imaging of places.” The process stream, on the other hand, “relates to planning endeavors focused on citizen participation, equity, inclusiveness, and the organization and anticipated benefits of the process itself”—that is, suggesting policy planning rather than placemaking as the primary goal, since placemaking also embodies a “process.”

Part of the problem, of course, is that planning is a quite diffuse profession, whose practitioners and educators share few common strands. In 2013, Virginia Tech professor Tom Sanchez analyzed the areas of interest expressed by 851 planning faculty, which resulted in 1,511 unique planning topics, though the terminology of some topics may have overlapped. He grouped the topics into a bundle of 20, of which the rather
amorphous field of “community development” topped the list. Although perhaps less amorphous, the other 19 topics of greatest interest to planning educators spanned a huge range of interest, but only 2 of which (urban design and land use planning) exhibited a clear relation to placemaking. Although detailed descriptions of the topics were not included in his article, the other topics, such as geographic information systems, environmental planning, housing, economic development, and so on, could generally be construed as allied with the policy-making realm of planning. Thus, it appears that a fundamental difference in interests appears to continually separate planners interested in placemaking and planners interested in policymaking.

City Planning versus Urban Planning

This fundamental difference in interests within the profession may have some deeper roots than the influence of writers like Jane Jacobs or differing reactions toward the problems of cities and how best to address them. It may have partly to do with the different ways planners think. Howard Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences may lend some deeper insight into the placemaking/policymaking bifurcation within planning. In his 1983 work Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Gardner (1983, 4), impatient with traditional IQ tests as the primary gauge of intelligence, sought to “expand and reformulate our view of what counts as human intellect” as a foundation for devising “more appropriate ways of assessing it and more effective ways of educating it.” Positioning that individual people tend to have a unique blend of different intelligences, he proceeded to identify seven distinct “human intellectual competences.” People are not defined solely by a single intelligence but exhibit varying strengths in one or more of the seven intelligences: linguistic, musical, bodily kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, logical–mathematical, and spatial. The last three are relevant here.

For Gardner (1983, 170ff.), persons with strong spatial intelligence can readily visualize with the mind’s eye and recognize patterns within space. This intelligence is associated with artists, designers, and architects. Szold (2000, 37) suggested that the placemaking realm of planning requires certain skills: “design and graphic skills, spatial lens and perspective, artistic, strategic, and synthesizer.” As a faculty member in an architecture school, I am struck by how many architecture students say such things as “I designed a new house for my parents when I was in junior high school” or “I have always wanted to be an architect.” And frequently, “As a kid I had a passion for playing with Legos.” One of my students, a brilliant designer whose architectural projects regularly demonstrated aesthetic prowess, once said to me, “I hate to read. Books with text are boring.”

In contrast to spatial intelligence, Gardner identified two intelligences that may well be associated with the policymaking realm of planning. Logical–mathematical intelligence endows a capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. For Gardner (1983, 128ff.), it entails the ability to detect abstract patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is usually associated with scientific investigation and mathematical thinking, but one might also apply it to the rational–comprehensive mode of planning. Interpersonal intelligence endows one with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people, thus to communicate effectively and empathize easily with others—a quality conducive to leadership in group settings (1983, 237ff.) and, perhaps, to an interest in endeavors such as advocacy planning or John Friedmann’s transactive planning model of mutual learning between planners and client groups. Szold (2000, 37) suggested that the policymaking realm of planning concerns itself with the following questions: “Who gets to have a say, how are issues debated, and what is the framework for resolving disagreements?” These questions, and the professional skills required to address them, often have little relationship to the skills required for placemaking. One could imagine these two realms of planning as two different professions.

It is time to achieve some clarity to differentiate the two realms of planning. Taking the traditional term for the policymaking realm of the discipline from the era when planning the city had to do with its design, city planning can emphasize the realm of spatial intelligence and a passion for the city as a place. Emphasizing the use of logical–mathematical or interpersonal intelligence in addressing nonplace urban issues—“urban” implying a socioeconomic realm rather than place—the term urban planning may well be applied to the policymaking stream. Thus, one might usefully apply differing definitions to these two terms that have had an uneasy relationship. If this clarity can be achieved, the merits and contributions of each realm can be better understood and defended, and each can assume its rightful place in the task of building the just, sustainable, and beautiful human environment, without everything falling into an amorphous mass merely called “planning.”

The dichotomous terminology of city planning versus urban planning was in fact presaged by Harvey Perloff in his 1957 book Education for Planning: City, State, and Regional. Though he employed the term city planning throughout the book, he claimed a higher legitimacy for the term urban planning: “The term ‘city planning’ is used its broadest sense, that is, referring to planning activities concerned with the entire urbanized area of broad metropolitan regions, as well as activities centering on small urban communities or the central city of a metropolis. ‘Urban planning’ or ‘regional (metropolitan) planning’ might be preferable terms as far as technical accuracy is concerned, but the term ‘city planning’ has the advantage of wider understanding and traditional usage.”

The Dichotomy Reflected in Education

If spatial intelligence is often associated with an interest in, among other things, placemaking, which attracts many young people to the field of architecture, and if logical–mathematical and interpersonal intelligences are associated with, among other things, an interest in studying urban planning, these
divergent emphases are supported in the accreditation criteria for university planning and architecture programs in the United States. Planning programs are governed by the eight-member Planning Accreditation Board, half of whom are appointed by the governing body of university planning programs themselves, being the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. The American Institute of Certified Planners, the organization of practicing planners, appoints three members, and an eighth member represents the larger APA. In the end, the accreditation criteria reflect the diffuse interests that Tom Sanchez discovered in his survey of 851 planning faculty members noted earlier. Of the twenty-four elements constituting the Planning Accreditation Board’s 2006 criteria for curriculum, only one mentioned design: “4.2.1.(c) An understanding of human settlement as it relates to planning based on knowledge of the relevant concepts and theories from the design arts (architecture, landscape architecture, art, urban design).” A second element (4.2.4.a) rather offhandedly mentioned “beauty” in requiring planning students to comprehend and discriminate “among the goals that an individual, group, community and organization hold when considering the future, including the values of justice, equity, fairness, efficiency, order, and beauty.” The other twenty-two elements by which university planning programs were evaluated in the 2006 document were silent on the matter of design or placemaking.

In 2013, the Planning Accreditation Board revised its criteria for planning education. In the new document, the word “beauty” was dropped entirely. The terms “architecture, landscape architecture, art, and urban design” disappeared, to be replaced by a more nebulous requirement that planning knowledge include “appropriate perspectives from history, social science, and the design professions” (p. 14). The word “city” did not appear at all in the new document.

If a thorough grounding in design and placemaking tends to be elusive in university planning program accreditation, the socioeconomic quality of places garners only oblique references in American architectural education. Of the thirty-two student performance criteria in the 2009 National Architectural Accrediting Board’s conditions for accreditation, five (A9, A10, C2, C8, and C9) touched upon human concerns, but often in superficial language that offered little guidance toward any actual learning outcome. For example, criterion A9, “Historical Traditions and Global Culture” required architecture students to understand the “parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture, landscape, and urban design including examples of indigenous, vernacular, local, regional, and national settings from the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern hemispheres in terms of their climatic, ecological, technological, socioeconomic, public health, and cultural factors.” As a result, one may question whether people trained primarily in design thinking are well prepared to deeply address socioeconomic issues that affect quality of life in the city. Here is where the planning profession becomes vital—it is the only profession potentially prepared to address both realms—placemaking and socioeconomic policymaking—and to integrate them into a comprehensive view of the desirable urban future.

However, if the profession is to truly pursue this comprehensive view, faculty scholarship in university planning programs must reflect that breadth. Beyond the realm of teaching, the diverging emphases on placemaking and policy making have influenced faculty scholarship at universities. In 2011, Luc Anselin and colleagues documented the higher scholarly publication rate among planning academics in planning departments associated with nondesign units, such as the social sciences, and observed that planning faculty in nondesign units view their programs more favorably than do their colleagues associated with design programs. They further noted that faculty success in planning schools is based largely on peer-reviewed publications and citations, whereas success in architecture schools can be based on exhibitions, competitions, or writings for public consumption. Architecture faculty can contribute to “prestigious but nonpeer-reviewed journals,” whereas exhibitions or nonpeer-reviewed publications are of little value to planning faculty. A case in point: The Chronicle of Higher Education in 2013 profiled the University of Oregon planning program’s Sustainable Cities Initiative, a major commitment to service learning whereby students act as semester-long planning consultants to needy cities and work to develop specific projects for urban betterment. One problem for the faculty running it: “The program is not yet useful for purposes of promotion and tenure” (Carlson 2013).

It would appear that planning academe is caught in what might be called the social science web—most research analyzes what has already happened, rather than proffering new ideas to support experimental visions such as placemaking, making it difficult for many planning scholars to explore creative territory. One can even make the case that academic research in design-based planning has been discouraged. Reid Ewing (2012, 45) noted that at one time, the editors of the Journal of the American Planning Association rejected “otherwise adequate papers” on built environment topics “simply because the journal had already published a lot on that topic.” It is difficult to imagine such a statement being made about articles relating to, say, the socioeconomic aspects of planning.

In fact, planning as an academic field retains a fairly tenuous hold in academe overall. Thomas Campanella (2011, 15) has noted that despite urban planning’s allegiance to the social sciences, the relationship is not reciprocal. At universities, “even today it’s rare for a social science department to hire a planning PhD, while planning programs routinely hire academics with doctorates in economics, political science, and other fields.” “Indeed,” he continues, “Nathan Glazer observed that one of the hallmarks of a minor profession is that faculty with ‘outside’ doctorates actually enjoy higher prestige within the field than those with degrees in the profession itself. They also tend to have minimal allegiance to planning.” My own PhD program, in fact, was populated with faculty who identified themselves as geographers, economists, historians, and sociologists—all claiming primary allegiance to their own discipline even as they served in a planning program.

Tridib Banerjee (2011, 209) noted that academics in planning often reject normative discussions, visionary thinking,
or “aesthetic ruminations” in favor of hard positivist social science research. “In the purge of the normative from the positivist leanings of the planning academia and the process and procedural orientation of practice, architects have filled the void in providing the normative vision of the good community. The popularity of new urbanism is a case in point.” In fact, Terry Szold (2000, 41) has observed that “many students today can pass through a master’s in city planning program and not be able to articulate or illustrate preferred development outcomes.” Ann Forsyth (2007, 462) disparaged architecture schools for engaging in “apprentice-like professional training,” and for dismissing academic research as “at best irrelevant and at worst a threat to achieving excellence in professional education and practice.” But Frederick Steiner (2011, 214), in return, suggested that “a little more ‘apprentice-like professional training’ might help prospective planners learn the art of plan-making.”

The diverging emphases on placemaking and policy making in planning education can result in people who are not particularly interested in the design of cities—and who graduate from planning schools that de-emphasize design and in some cases view architects as adversaries—obtaining jobs in city planning offices where almost every issue relates to the design of the city. Both realms of planning, the placemaking realm and the policymaking realm, are vital but, as one correspondent noted, “that one can have a graduate degree in planning, as well as professional licensure, without having any knowledge of physical planning, which is what the public expects us to be able to do, is unfortunate. It contributes to the widespread view that the profession is irrelevant” (emphasis added).

Planning as a Profession

To grasp this notion of the planning profession’s relevance in forging the urban future, it is first helpful to review briefly the significance of planning as a profession. From the plethora of professionalization literature, William Goode’s assertion in 1966 of the boundaries between a profession and a nonprofession remains one of the most succinct. In contrast to occupational groups regarded as “nonprofessions,” a profession is defined by three attributes: First, entry requires prolonged training in a body of abstract knowledge (thus distinguishing professions from the trades). This knowledge must further be applicable to concrete problems, and the profession must help to create this knowledge, not merely possess it. Second, a profession maintains a “service orientation,” meaning that “the professional decision is not properly to be based on the self-interest of the professional, but on the need of the client.” At the same time, the professional plays a role in defining this need; it may diverge from what the client specifically requests. Third, a profession is defined by a “collectivity orientation,” whereby it creates a set of policies and controls such as a code of ethics for its members that allows society to grant the profession “much autonomy or freedom from lay supervision and control” (Goode 1966, 36–37).

To maintain these three attributes, professions are usually self-governed by one or more formal organizations that determine entry requirements into the profession and attempt to increase the privileges and advantages of those who have entered. In planning, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, through its guidance of member schools and its primary position in the Planning Accreditation Board, establishes the trajectory of planning education, being the “prolonged training in a body of abstract knowledge.” The APA, largely through its cadre of members who have passed an examination to enter the American Institute of Certified Planners, guides the trajectory of planning practice. Though the realm of action of a profession’s members is often codified into law, the professional organizations themselves guide much of the profession’s trajectory and influence that codification. Thus, in the end, professions are largely self-defining and self-governing. Therefore, if a profession is to adjust its trajectory, the professional organizations themselves, rather than the public at large or a governmental agency, bear the primary burden of taking the initiative to do so.

If the professional organization is perceived to be vague and directionless, it cannot be effective in establishing any trajectory. More research must be done on how planners view the APA, but the frustrations expressed by one observer, Chuck Marohn, may exemplify contemporary challenges faced by the APA in possessing and creating abstract knowledge, in furthering a service orientation, and in maintaining a collectivity orientation. Marohn (2013) expressed frustration with the basic tools of planning—“use-based zoning codes, planned unit developments, comprehensive plans, projections, superficial public input”—as “the relics of process-driven era.” He asked why there seems to be no debate within the APA about “the issues that are urgently relevant to our time.” He questioned “the planning profession’s role in the bankruptcy of America’s cities,” and he viewed the annual APA conference—attended by some 5,000 people—as being reduced to “consultants telling you about their fantastic, mixed-use, green, leadership in energy and environmental design-certified, transit-oriented, biodiverse project and all the public input they heroically spearheaded tolerated to make it happen.” However hyperbolic his comments, he raised issues that go to the heart of the profession, because they question its fundamental relevance.

It is difficult for a profession to maintain a position of prestige when fraught with such doubt. One result of the profession’s amorphousness, and a result in particular of the profession’s reluctance to fully embrace placemaking, is that even though discussions continue regarding the potential role of placemaking within planning (e.g., Szold 2000; Krieger 2006; Cuthbert 2006; Gunder 2011), urban design and other constituent parts of placemaking appear to remain safely ensconced within the profession of architecture. A case in point is the 2009 textbook Urban Design for an Urban Century, by Lance Jay Brown, David Dixon, and Oliver Gillham. The three architect-authors offered a thorough treatment of urban design suitable for a university classroom. They defined urban design as “a social and public art” and attempted to elevate it both
above architecture (“While architects may focus on style, urban designers look increasingly at how design can enhance the way people experience a place”) and above planning (“Designing the experience of place requires establishing the essential planning parameters related to transportation, land uses, density patterns, environmental sustainability, and similar issues”) (Brown, Dixon, and Gillham 2009, 21). They surveyed seventy urban design case studies since 1990, including master plans, downtown redevelopment, older neighborhood revitalization, new neighborhoods, waterfronts, public realms, and college campuses, all of which represented winners of the American Institute of Architects’ Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design. To be sure, the entrants were all architects, but several projects focused on the positional issues with which planners are rightly concerned—access to transit, community involvement, mixed-income housing, neighborhood open spaces. Although several of the winning teams included planners, it would be challenging to make the case that urban planning professionals were an essential component in these seventy cases of urban revitalization.

At the same time, even though urban design has been safely ensconced within the field of architecture, that does not necessarily make it its rightful home. Tridib Banerjee (2014, 3) has suggested that architecture-based urban design and planning-based urban design offer distinctly different approaches. The former, he observed, is “edifice-oriented, and implicitly defined or presumed to be large-scale architecture, where the organization of buildings in space . . . defined the essential task of urban design.” The architectural tradition of urban design evolved through architects who “mostly relied on their personal worldview and normative positions,” where the “institutional, political, and social contexts of a particular arrangement of human settlement did not always reckon” in the urban design process. The planning track, on the other hand, developed under the influence of the social sciences and has addressed urban issues at a larger scale. “The scale difference necessarily requires urban design within the planning track to be responsive to the overall social arrangements and institutional structures of the urban context” resulting in “an engaged and inclusive process involving public discourse, debates, and critiques” (pp. 3–4). “If the architecture-based urban design is characterized by a legacy of heroism and hero worship,” he concluded, “in the planning-based approach urban design remains a classic antithero. If the architectural and built form is the protagonist of the architectural approach, the planning approach sees the city, the community, the public realm, and nature more broadly as the principal protagonist in urban design” (p. 5). In other words, for architecture, the built product may be the ultimate goal, whereas for city planning the built environment serves as one instrument in forging the just, sustainable, healthful, efficient, and beautiful city—the five of which together form the planning profession’s ultimate raison d’être.

Design is sometimes considered to be a form of art, as in Boyer’s 1988 accusation that we have learned to look at our cities as aesthetic objects, but it is in fact quite different from art. Artists communicate their own perceptions, feelings, needs, and issues through some expression, usually visual, tactile, or auditory. Designers, on the other hand, attempt to address other people’s perceptions, feelings, needs, and issues usually through creating a visual, tactile, or auditory environment. Whereas an artist’s process can be a mystery to anyone but the artist, the process of design is to a great extent open, public, and participatory. Planners are good at this. But design as a process disobeys a simple list of operations characterized as a methodology, for indeed the “intuitive leap” is always inchoate in one’s mind until it emerges. “Intuitive leap” is often associated with a visual idea that generates a building that is published in design magazines, but an intuitive leap need not at all be visual. Nevertheless, a borrowing from architecture may be helpful to explain it. Edward Cullinen (in Robbins 1994, 58) noted that “some people who are struggling to become architects push pens and pencils up and down the page desperately looking for a solution, hoping that the drawing will produce the solution or the concept. But it never does. I think that one person or a group of people working together have to have an energetic concept of what it is they are trying to make” (emphasis added). A major driver of the intuitive leap in city and urban planning is an energetic commitment to the environment one strives to create, and for planners the physical and the socioeconomic must be inextricably intertwined.

Placemaking and the Role of Planners

In discussions about the planning of cities, planning-based urban design, and placemaking, the role of planners continues often to be disregarded—even by planners themselves. In 2009, Emily Talen published an urban design user’s guide rooted in community-based planning with a social purpose in mind, as opposed to architecture-based urban design that can emphasize the arrangement of three-dimensional objects in space. She provided a step-by-step guide to ten community-based urban design issues (neighborhoods, centers, edges, parking, etc.), setting up a framework for urban design without proposing the design of specific buildings. Implementing her formulas called for basic knowledge of geographic information systems software, a 3D modeling program such as SketchUp, and graphics software such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Her contribution to placemaking practice is welcome and useful—so useful, in fact, that community groups themselves could develop design solutions for the problems she has posed and thereby become active players in matters of civic improvement. But despite her stated purpose that “the book is intended to help urban planning regain confidence in the realm of urban design,” it is striking that making full use of Talen’s book does not actually require any education or professional experience in the discipline of planning. The software she suggested is available through open source or is readily purchased and learned. Her plug ‘n’ play formulas can be readily mastered by community activists and put to good use without sophisticated social science research.
Similarly, Nan Ellin, in her 2013 book *Good Urbanism*, documented numerous case studies and proffered some practical formulas for “creating prosperous places.” The successful placemaking interventions she documented resulted from “sideways urbanism,” by which a person or group can begin with an idea and invite “all stakeholders to refine and realize the vision.” This approach could be initiated by anyone—“political leaders, planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, artists, developers, philanthropic organizations, cultural institutions, universities, or interested community members” (p. 118). “The only precondition for stepping onto the path,” she noted, “is a willingness to let it take us someplace we’ve never been before” (p. 3). At the book’s conclusion, she pleaded at length the importance of the planning profession, as others have done (e.g., see Silver 2013; Farmer 2014), but her actual case studies and discussions of “good urbanism” regularly mentioned planners only marginally as one group among many “urbanists.” Architects, and sometimes artists or community activists, took the lead role in all of the projects she cited, but never planners.

If a central concern of planners relates to the quality of life of residents in a community, it would seem that planners and planning should play a prominent role in a study such as journalist Charles Montgomery’s 2013 book *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*. In the book, the goal of which was to document a strong link between the design of cities and the level of happiness, he proposed “a basic recipe for urban happiness drawn from the insights of philosophers, psychologists, brain scientists, and happiness economists. What should a city accomplish after it meets our basic needs of food, shelter, and security?” (p. 43) In his thirteen chapters in 300 pages, beginning with “The City Has Always Been a Happiness Project” and moving through “How We Got Here” and “Everything is Connected to Everything Else,” planners were hardly given a mention, and when they were, they appeared as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. “Unfortunately, when choosing how to live or move, most of us are not as free as we think. Our options are strikingly limited, and they are defined by the planners, engineers, politicians, architects, marketers, and land speculators who imprint their own values on the urban landscape” (p. 91). He concluded with the chapter, “Save Your City, Save Yourself,” and his final words were “We do not need to wait for someone else to make [the happy city]. We build it when we choose how and where to live. . . . We build the happy city by pursuing it in our own lives and, in so doing, pushing the city to change with us. We build it by living it” (p. 321). Planners appeared not to be an important part of the picture in creating Montgomery’s “happy city.”

Then there is Streetmix.net, a website that allows anyone to design their own street. With a few clicks, one can take a street and add street trees or bike paths, change traffic lane widths, widen sidewalks, add medians, or install planting strips. Anyone can be a planner.

The trend toward “city planning without planners” perhaps reached its zenith in works such as Charles R. Wolfe’s e-book *Urbanism Without Effort* (2013): “Traditional and active close-knit spaces and spontaneous human interactions of the historic city are reemerging as key components of a lively urban future. . . . Urbanism without effort is what happens naturally when people congregate in cities—based on the innate interactions of urban dwellers that occur with one another and the surrounding physical environment. Such innate interactions are often the product of cultural tradition and organic urban development, independent of government intervention, policy, or plan.” That so many people have become involved in improving the urban environment is a truly welcome trend. But the question becomes ever more pressing: Where, actually, are the planners when it comes to planning cities?

### Design Justice and the Role of Planners

Searching for “justice” in the city comprises an important strain of planning scholarship, having drawn largely from the field of geography (e.g., Harvey 1973, 1978). Ed Soja, a geographer at the University of California, Los Angeles urban planning faculty, has directed the discussion toward “spatial justice,” founded on the premise that “whatever your interests may be, they can be significantly advanced by adopting a critical spatial perspective” (Soja 2010, 2). Soja studied a class action lawsuit against the Los Angeles transit system brought by low-income groups dependent on transit, in the end forcing the transit system to invest in low-income areas of the city rather than in a glamorous rail project for upper-income districts. He studied the Coalition to Stop Plant Closings, Justice for Janitors, the Santa Monica Renters’ Rights movement, and other efforts to achieve greater equity in the disbursement of public goods and benefits in Los Angeles, demonstrating how a grasp of the spatial distribution of advantage and disadvantage in the city is a vital component in working toward a more just distribution of resources.

For the discussion of the placemaking versus policymaking dichotomy within planning, however, it is significant that “spatial” in Soja’s discussion largely refers to an abstract two-dimensional field. The quests for opportunity, self-respect, and an equitable distribution of public goods represented in spatial justice discussions relate little to the qualitative urban visions essential to placemaking—what, indeed, is the *experience* of using transit to get to work and the grocery store, how do plant closings affect the physical qualities of the city as a place to live and work, or what are the built-environment effects of a renters-rights movement? Because in the end, as the Knight Foundation discovered, it *does* matter what the city looks and feels like, being a place created with pride and attention to detail. One need only ask the residents of Santa Barbara and Santa Fe. The success of Santa Fe for over a century, in fact, has been all about careful, detailed, human-scale design that takes its cues from the identity of the place (Gleye 1994).

Architectural design standards, sign guidelines, landscaping requirements, and streetscape improvements are readily seen in upscale communities. Special assessments on property owners

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*Gleye*
yield human-scale streetlights, landscaped boulevards, street trees, and other amenities. These may vary by municipality, but one trend remains fairly constant—affluent citizens who can pay for improvements in their own public realm tend to receive them. For that matter, everyone else pays for them as well. Leinberger (2008) described the mechanism by which residents citywide, even in the poorest districts, subsidize improvements in a city’s “favored quarter”—the quadrant extending outward from the city center that encompasses the wealthiest districts of a metropolitan area—improvements that are often part of a planning program. On the other hand, if the city is to truly succeed in terms favored by either placemaking-oriented or policy-oriented planners, the city as a whole must be accessible to all. As Rick Baker (2011), former mayor of St. Petersburg, Florida, noted, the successful city must be “seamless”—conducive to people going anywhere in the city without feeling uncomfortable. Both of these observations—that urban services flow upward to the favored quarter and that cities have “seams” that restrict some people from feeling comfortable everywhere in the city—lead to a hope that planners would call for design justice as a component of successful placemaking, whereby everyone, not just the wealthy, can live in and have access to a well-designed environment equitably supported with public dollars. Works such as those by Ellin and Wolfe cited earlier, as with much of today’s discussion about placemaking, pay scant attention to the equity and justice questions vital to good planning. And “urbanism without effort” has to do with people creating places primarily for themselves. Planning should have to do with creating places for everyone.

Planners should not be satisfied until both sets of questions are addressed: on one hand, how do quests for economic, spatial, and other forms of justice influence the city as an aesthetic, alluring, authentic, identity-rich, inspiring, nurturing, physical, well-kept, seamless place? And on the other hand, how does the quest to create desirable place further the goals of design justice and broadly distributed equity?

An Agenda for Planning

Many players now sit at the placemaking table, and the Internet allows all manner of voices to broadcast their message (bettercities.net, citiscope.org, citiwire.net, nextcity.org, newgeo-graphy.com, placemakers.com, Project for Public Spaces (pps.org), smartgrowth.org, sustainablecitiescollective.com, thisbigcity.net, urbanophile.com, urbantimes.co, among many others). The blogosphere is saturated with ideas about cities. If the planning profession is to capture, or regain, the role of influential, transformative player in the current urban scene that emphasizes creating place, and to gain a seat at the table with architects, civil engineers, community activists, and others while maintaining its strong commitment to justice and equity, several recommendations are in order. If many people entering the planning profession cannot suddenly develop spatial intelligence and transform themselves into design thinkers—and, indeed, they should not have to—there are some ways that the planning profession is uniquely qualified to engage the city as a place. A new conceptual reordering of what planning should be about is not necessary. If planning is concerned with identifying and pursuing practical steps to realize a desired urban future, then the planning profession itself needs to take some practical steps.

In order to regain focus on the relevance of city and urban planning to accomplish what the public expects us to be able to do, and to more fully realize the planning profession’s significant contribution to the city, the observations outlined in this article suggest five recommendations. Though individual members of the profession can of course act on their own, a new trajectory requires a rethinking of the profession’s “collectivity orientation” so that the profession moves as a body, even allowing for a dissident minority, toward the new trajectory. In fact, given William Goode’s definition of a profession, a new orientation can only come from within the profession itself, largely through its professional organizations and university degree programs.

As a first recommendation, a recommittal to long-term thinking and long-term action are essential. Rybczynski (2000, 212) has reminded us that it took fifty years to realize Frederick Law Olmsted’s park system for Buffalo, New York. It is unlikely, he cautions, that civic leaders, businessmen, municipal politicians, and governmental structure would back such a long-term undertaking today. He then asks, “Where are the visionary town planners?” Vision is fundamental to a successful planning profession, and it is fatal for the profession to be associated with bureaucratic inertia. Edward T. McMahon, writing in The Atlantic Cities blog (2012), observed that “Place is more than just a location on a map. A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics—visual, cultural, social, and environmental—that provide meaning to a location. A community’s unique identity also adds economic and social value. To foster distinctiveness, cities must plan for built environments and settlement patterns that are both uplifting and memorable and that foster a sense of belonging and stewardship by residents.” He quotes Joseph Cortright, chief economist of Impresa, a consulting firm specializing in regional economic analysis, as saying “the unique characteristics of place may be the only truly defensible source of competitive advantage for communities.” McMahon concluded that “Planners spend most of their time focusing on numbers—the number of units per acre, the number of cars per hour, the number of floors per building. In the future, they will need to spend more time thinking about the values, customs, characteristics and quirks that make a place worth caring about.”

How can planners refocus on long-term thinking? Many European cities offer examples that seem far beyond reach in the United States. HafenCity in Hamburg, Germany, which is Europe’s largest urban redevelopment project, comprises the transformation of the old, obsolete harbor into a mixed-use district to include an opera house and a university (HafenCity Hamburg 2012). Planning began in 1997, implementation is about half complete at this writing, and the entire project is scheduled for completion in 2025. Thus, a coherent development plan lasting for nearly thirty years is in place. Plans have
been adapted over time to address changing circumstances, but the notion of the “capacity for encounter”—in other words, a placemaking ethic that encourages interpersonal interaction and minimizes a dependency on the automobile that isolates people from each other, remains the guiding vision through those adaptations. “Capacity for encounter . . . highlights the difference between urbanity and straight commercial success,” according to Jürgen Bruns-Berentleg, the project’s chief executive (p. 5). The city of Antwerp, Belgium, where I travel each year with students, is engaged in a massive urban revitalization project that addresses both the social and design qualities of the city. The once dirty and unkempt city is transforming itself into a magnificent urban habitat through a comprehensive plan being implemented over a thirty-year period (Antwerp 2012). A similar commitment to a planned, sustainable future is taking place in cities across Europe. Such tenacity in planning is not to be found in the United States.

Vision does not emerge from a black box, but must derive partly from citizens’ perceived needs and desires, even as planners help to define those needs. Antwerp also hosts an annual “week-long brainstorming over the future of the city.” Every March, the city planners invite all the residents of Antwerp to sit at tables of 8–12 people and brainstorm about the city of tomorrow. The theme in 2014 was “Antwerp in 2030,” by which time the city is expected to grow from 500,000 to 600,000 residents. During the annual Brainstorming Week, residents offer their ideas for their neighborhood, but professionals also share their expertise and insights into the “city of tomorrow,” ideas are forwarded to city hall (Antwerp, City of. 2014). It is vital that the public whom planners serve become aware of two things: that their own ideas will be taken into account and that professional planners really do have visions worth listening to.

A second recommendation is that since planning must of necessity address the short term as well as the long term, planners should place an intense focus on implementation in addition to that long-term vision. In fact, the number of units per acre and the number of cars per hour are also vital to successful planning. Although almost every urban plan talks about implementation, success is elusive. Inspiration for implementation most often comes from best practices—Kansas City, Missouri, among other cities, has dedicated a specific planning staff to its long-range plan implementation program. But without assertive action, implementation can easily remain on the shelf with the printed plan, a fate that has become nearly a cliché in planning. In 2010, I participated in a “Plan 2030” visioning process for my city. The plan was adopted with great fanfare by the city commission and it has not been heard from since. The cliché of planners preparing documents that go on the shelf besmirches the reputation of the entire profession.

Implementation is actually a challenge for both placemaking-oriented city planning and policy-oriented urban planning. It requires steadfastness, negotiation skills, perseverance in a malleable political environment, maintenance of vision when others have forgotten it, and the ability to convince others that the nebulous entity called a “plan” has substance worth working toward through the obstacles of changing economic fortunes, even as it is updated to accommodate new knowledge and insights. To borrow again from Terry Szold, planners must be able to articulate and illustrate preferred development outcomes, and pursue those outcomes. A tenacious focus on implementation places planning in its own unique realm where no other profession, nor the blogosphere, places great emphasis, yet it is vital for the achievement of an identity-rich, seamless, and just city. Frustration with a lack of implementation appears to underlie much of the recent interest in “do-it-yourself” trends such as Charles Montgomery’s assertion that “we build the happy city by living it” or Nan Ellin’s call for “sideways urbanism” that invites anyone and everyone to become their own urbanists, since planners are apparently not doing the job. Urbanism without effort may be effective at creating places for the moment, but real planning skills are needed to make sure they are still going strong many years from now. Ad hoc implementation by community activists is no substitute for real planning.

Unfortunately, a dearth of planning literature is dedicated to implementation, especially relating to urban design. Frederick Steiner (2011, 215) noted that “Design can provide a valuable link between policy and implementation,” but “to use design as an implementation tool requires an understanding of the history and culture of design.” Indeed, a greater emphasis on implementation, especially of design-related endeavors, might lessen the need for Ann Markusen’s seatmates to tell her they could use more planning in their town. The success of planning, for much of the public, is measured not in the vision, but in the implementation of things people can directly see and experience.

A partial model for implementation of things recognizable to the general public may be found in the notion of form-based codes, which define the character that a development project is to take, though they do not in themselves actively pursue implementation of any specific project. Actual design is left up to architects, where it can well reside, but planners establish the parameters within which that design is to take place. If successful, those parameters allow “people to see what their ideas look like in three dimensions that is so important and refreshing in the urban planning process” (Walters 2007, 79). Unlike Euclidean zoning, which closely regulates what can take place on a parcel or within a building but says little about what it looks like or how it relates to the city around it, either physically or socially, form-based codes generally allow greater flexibility regarding uses but are careful about the effect on the larger city. Planners would do well to investigate how such an approach can serve as a model for the many other realms of city and urban planning.

A third recommendation is for the planning profession to more effectively employ its close ties to the social sciences by taking the lead in evaluating solutions—design and otherwise—to test how well they meet human needs. Here is a research opportunity for academics, since those needs extend well beyond the perceived needs of the urbanism-without-effort activists. A weakness within architecture is post-occupancy evaluation,
partly because architects’ reputations are made by implementing splashy new designs, rather than “messier, more realistic assessments of how buildings operate long after the ribbon-cutting ceremonies are done” (Hawthorne 2011, 60). Planning, however, can follow a longer path. In the long run, it matters little whether a completed project photographs well; it matters greatly whether a project enduringly meets human needs. Planning has not been silent here—several evaluations have been published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*—Lund (2003) and Rodriguez, Khattak, and Evenson (2006) regarding new urbanist development, and Dumbaugh and Rae (2009) regarding urban design and traffic safety, among others. However, greater emphasis on assessing the extent to which completed designs and other plans take steps toward achieving their goals, and especially toward achieving *design justice*, can carve out a salient role for planning in the broad field of placemaking, especially when that assessment leads to plans that promise to do a much better job in the future. One need not be endowed with an intense dose of Gardner’s “spatial intelligence” to further the realization of placemaking and design justice in the city.

Program evaluation is a well-established discipline, the elements of which are not arcane. The University of Wisconsin-extension (2009), as one example, offers an evaluation framework readily adaptable to planning situations. In matters such as design justice, the primary stakeholders constitute an easily overlooked population that often does not engage with the planning process. Here is where professional assistance with defining needs of the client is crucial. Another fundamental criterion for successful evaluation is that its findings actually be used. The Wisconsin evaluation model specifically calls for the findings and lessons learned from an evaluation to be shared, that they be used in decision making, and that they be employed in determining next steps. Planning is a dynamic and ongoing process—there are always next steps, and these cannot be taken if the plan, or the evaluation, sits on the shelf.

A fourth recommendation is that the APA as an organization should assert the importance of the designed environment in planning outcomes. In embracing placemaking, city planners make the critical contribution not of designing objects in space, but designing what in the end constitutes a *social environment* in a place. Participation in the urban design process provides an opportunity for urban planners to address design justice and other issues integral to successful placemaking. As it stands now, acknowledgment of urban design’s role in planning constitutes only one of twenty specialized membership divisions within the APA—and in fact it actually claims only half a division, since it shares the Urban Design and Historic Preservation Division with the worthy but not entirely related specialization in historic buildings and districts. In other words, urban design becomes one of the least emphasized specializations within the APA. The Urban Design and Preservation Division is intended for those who “believe good urban design is essential to maintaining community character, a sense of place, quality of life, and economic vitality,” which suggests that other planners do not share those concerns very much.

The recently instituted American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)-Certified Urban Designer designation does enhance the recognition of design, but one must ask to what extent even this is at the cutting edge. In 2014, the recommended reading list for the exam included fourteen books, the average publication date of which was 1995, and it included books such as the 1981 *Urban Design Review* by Hamid Shirivani, who has long since left the profession. The addition of a New Urbanism Division within the APA is also a welcome step, but it champions a specific theory of placemaking. Perhaps a “Placemaking Division” would better further the ideal without the constraints of pursuing a specific typology.

Indeed, if the quality of place in the physical city resulting from planning initiatives is central to the profession, urban design should perhaps not be relegated to a division at all. Or at least one could establish a policy of adding a “placemaking” component to all plans—and for that matter, a component addressing design justice—whatever the primary focus of those plans may be. Since placemaking is where the popular action is, the professional organization for planners should be there also, encouraging its members through educational programs and AICP Certification Maintenance Credits to develop energetic concepts of what they are trying to accomplish in these realms, and at a deeper level than that of an architectural aesthetic.

A final recommendation is that the governing board of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, through the Planning Accreditation Board, should emphasize the importance of planning-oriented urban design and placemaking in planning education, even for nonspatial thinkers. It should not relegate design to one of the twenty-four curricular elements it evaluates when accrediting planning programs, as it did in the 2006 accreditation document, and not bury notions of design almost entirely as it did it the 2013 revision. All planners should not be expected to become designers, but they can certainly become placemakers, taking a leadership role in guiding architects, civil engineers, and others who design the objects defining those places. In 2010, planning theorist John Friedmann finally, after a career of disregarding placemaking, compellingly defined “place” as “a small, three-dimensional urban space that is cherished by the people who inhabit it” (Friedmann 2010). Learning to create such places for all constituencies should be a major emphasis in planning school curriculums and in the profession. In other words, city planning should take its place alongside urban planning in planning education and practice. And one should encourage some of those urbanism without effort activists to expand their horizons and actually become planners.

Perry Norton’s 1952 admonition in the terminology of his day regarding planners as placemakers, published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, speaks to the profession today as much as when he wrote it. He said it is unfortunate if planners consider design to be merely frosting on the cake, “because then we miss altogether an important truth: that design is a process. It is a process of learning and then of understanding and creating a visual form. As a process it warrants the same careful development we give to other
studies, because it plays a vital role at every stage of the program... So it is that the design grows, not as an added dash of flavor, but as an integrated process, the creative element, if you will, which means the difference between an embodied statistic and a sparkling, lasting achievement.” It is toward realizing those sparkling, lasting, identity-rich achievements that all people can directly see and experience, within the context of a just, sustainable, healthy, efficient, and seamless city, that planning should strive—and planners should bring in architects and civil engineers to help them do it. Therein lies the planning profession’s unique and indispensable role.

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