Planning FUTURE CITIES

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For me, this project was borne out of the need to better understand the process of curriculum creation. The supreme power in the universe has instilled in me a passion for history and I have long desired to engage students with materials we all found interesting. I am thankful that Walter asked me to embark on this project with him so we could do just that. My first employers, Estrella Mountain Community College and Arizona State University, provided institutional support while outlining this project. Lucy Berchini, Tracy Encizo, Bee Gallegos, Pablo Landeros, Molly Rentscher, Matt Robinson, and Denise Sievwright all helped me juggle teaching responsibilities with manuscript obligations. Matt Garcia offered me an opportunity to practice course development with students enrolled in ASU Online. Tameka Spence has always been a willing editor for rough projects needing additional attention. Also, the design and editorial staff at Kendall-Hunt has been a pleasure to work with—I appreciate their patience and professionalism. My parents continued to support me as I finished my numerous projects. Domingue continues to inspire me to remain creative in my approach to work and life. Above all, my students also encouraged me to think of new ways to organize and present information. I must thank my pupils—past, present, and future—for their apprehensive inquisitiveness that makes teaching a challenge and a joy.

Anthony Pratcher

"Free yourself. Free others. Serve every day."

—Nelson Mandela

In a smoke-filled backroom, I learned what governance involved. It was the exercise of power to shape the opportunities and limitations that others faced. After studying the life and liberation of Nelson Mandela the previous year, the irony of sitting in a room with a group of men who resembled his jailers did not escape me. Over the following decade, I lived a life of dedicated civic activism – a series of actions determined to reshape the landscape of opportunity for a new generation that knew nothing of the quiet power of governance. At the first stable opportunity to establish a permanent foundation for universal human liberty, I joined the Society for American City and Regional Planning History. No other organization better balanced the activist's passion for justice and the cold authority of the state planner.

The society addressed the problems that Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, T. Thomas Fortune, Marcus Garvey, Mary McLeod Bethune, Martin Luther King, Jr., Barack Obama, and Kamala Harris have encountered over the last two centuries – how do the disenfranchised come to exercise power at every level of society? Over the last decade, a litany of accomplished scholars have entrusted me to answer this question and advance the society's mission. *Planning Future Cities* is the direct product of their research, insight, and guidance in my career. Now, it is my turn to give thanks to them. Mary Corbin Sies, Angel David Nieves, Lynne Horiuchi, John McCarthy, Julian Chambliss, David Goldberg, David Freund, Joseph Heathcott, Amy Howard, Owen Gutfreund, Meredith Drake Reitan, Victoria Wolcott, Carl Nightingale, Paige Glotzer, Larry Vale, Margaret Crawford, and hundreds of colleagues worldwide have provided support and inspiration for my ongoing work in the liberation of the oppressed. Most recently, my distinguished colleagues in urban studies at Monmouth University – Karen Schmelzkopf, Geoff Fouad, Rupa DasGupta, Dickie Cox, and William Gorman – have brought new rewards by incorporating graphic arts and digital design into my work. Most of all, great praise is due to my co-editor, Anthony Pratcher II. Due to their boundless courage and limitless creativity, one day we will all be free.

Walter Greason

INTRODUCTION

Building Communities

The rationale of military discipline has silently silhouetted the arc of American history. Since the formation of this nation, military enlistment has served as a rite of passage for many American men; conscription has consolidated cosmopolitan collections of enlistees into rationally planned military units commanded by centralized leadership. Within the military, where mission success depends on the decision making of operational leadership, strategists were taught a key maxim: a well-executed plan, no matter how poorly designed, is superior to a well-designed plan that is poorly executed. Upon return to civilian life, many veterans would heed such wisdom and capitalize upon lucrative opportunities to plan the development of metropolitan space. These doggedly determined men bent long-standing political policies, blew past environmental concerns, and broke virgin soil in pursuit to reshape the metropolitan landscape for private profit. In many ways, their development strategies transformed the American society and the global economy as their planned visions unfolded.

While military leadership remains subservient to elected politicians, ambitious veterans sought economic opportunities with the vigor of military operations. Private investors deployed lawyers to oversee battles to restructure domestic land use policies for strategic advantage. In domestic politics, lobbyists and consultants petitioned politicians for legal policies that advanced private plans; other litigants bullied bankers and bureaucrats to adopt administrative practices that emboldened private investment. Some investors retained legal mercenaries to design regulatory policies that guaranteed state support for private projects—often with compulsory investment of public funds. Private investors also employed design professionals to diagram a spatial environment that would prove profitable for speculative operations. Urban planners helped facilitate large-scale investment through meticulous management of land usage; moreover, skilled workers developed efficiencies that expedited timelines for construction of the built environment. Metropolitan development was greatly accelerated by the physical and mental efforts of design professionals; indeed, their tactics helped private investors maximize opportunities to profit from spatial expansion in myriad domestic regulatory environments.

Yet, within urban communities, many local stakeholders did not gain access to conversations on how to manage land usage or where to build master-planned projects. Private investors frequently designed their visions with insufficient input from the very people whom these policies were supposed to serve—community residents. Maladaptive practices or ineffective policies could pose genuine threats to the health and safety of preexisting communities. Poorly designed projects housed hidden hazards that, over the long run, detrimentally affected the economic and social value of metropolitan expansion. Still, even flawed spatial growth remained profitable, and so private investors continued to advocate for policies and practices that encouraged centralized planning in pursuit of sustained expansion—with little regard for participatory input from

local communities. Instead, consumer engagement would remain limited to their market-based navigation of an expanded metropolitan space. In many cases, marginalized residents would be forced to incur cost for their lack of developmental agency.

Practical Planning History

This collection includes, as an example of historic planning practices, secondary literature on the planning history of Phoenix, Arizona. In their article, "The Evolution of Early Phoenix: Valley Business Elite, Land Speculation, and the Emergence of Planning," Larissa Larsen and David Alameddin show how local elites centrally planned spatial development in anticipation of future economic expansion. Urban development began in the Salt River Valley, a low-lying oasis blessed with surface water and temperate winters, after American settlers intensified agricultural activity in the area following the American Civil War in the 1860s. Within two generations, Phoenix blossomed into one of the largest towns in the American Southwest, and local elites longed to ensure that their community achieved metropolitan status. Their early efforts to garner control of municipal offices were influenced by a desire to enforce urban planning policies that would rationalize spatial development in accordance with their vision. Urban planning provided civic activists with a role in spatial development—and allowed some to emerge as community builders—even if their imagined metropolis existed in a future not yet attainable.

Civic elites would have to wait until technology made their vision feasible to bring their plans for metropolitan improvements to fruition. Historians have shown how technological advances—primarily, the advent of air conditioning—created material opportunities to tame the verdant, yet oppressive, climate of the Sonoran Desert.[1] Civic elites invested in energy infrastructure to ensure Phoenix property owners could depend on reliable air conditioning throughout the most oppressive heat of the year. Energy-induced climate control helped attract sufficient capital investment to spur new waves of urban and economic growth after World War II—nearly seventy-five years after Phoenix incorporated.

This energy production, however, came at a consequence: up on the Navajo reservation, far away from the floor of the Salt River Valley, environmental Superfund sites abound as the energy produced to spur spatial growth has poisoned local water resources. In this sense, civic elites planned to produce energy at peripheral sites—such as the Navajo reservation—to ensure Phoenix remained clean from toxic refuse produced to inspire external investment. Practical planning history illuminates how, in efforts to realize sustained growth, political policy inequitably saddles marginalized communities with the noxious by-products of metropolitan expansion. Indeed, centralized planning rationalized land usage, which poisoned resources that had sustained indigenous communities for millennia. *Planning Future Cities* demonstrates how Urban History remains critical for scholars seeking to understand designs of spatial visionaries who positioned metropolitan America to power the nation into the twenty-first century.

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[1] Patricia Gober, *Metropolitan Phoenix: Place Making and Community Building in the Desert* (Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2006); Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 2014); Andrew Ross, *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2013); Philip VanderMeer, *Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860–2009* (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 2010).

Overview

This book's thematic design helps to guide students through essential facets of planning history. Planning History, as a pedagogical praxis and subfield of Urban History, constitutes the first section. Students are encouraged to think about practical and theoretical uses of history. Urban theorists, such as Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford, have reshaped modern conceptions of how cities should operate; their influence extends far outside of academic circles. Moreover, within the academy, scholars such as Greg Hise and Angel David Nieves have left a substantial discursive impact on collective interpretations of metropolitan development. And, as shown in a series of historic maps, urban planning has structured and shaped concepts of place in metropolitan communities across the country.

Moreover, planning pedagogy introduces readers to practical policies which prioritize urban neighborhoods upon the basis of economic value. Planners helped create a real estate market that could drive economic growth through their legal separation of different types of urban activities (primarily commercial and residential) in ways that benefited politicians, investors, industrialists, and affluent homeowners. Not only did planning restrictions make land more valuable, but they also rationally ensured that future urban environments were healthier than the nasty, coal-dusted urban geographies constructed in the nineteenth century. That said, professional planning gave legal cover to political operatives who prioritized land use concerns of more affluent residents—often to the detriment of inhabitants in less valuable areas. Urban planners legally devalued places inhabited by marginalized residents through land use practices that prioritized the concerns of affluent residents over all others.

Indeed, the financial protection zoning provides to property owners has made land use policy an integral aspect of contemporary development. Value accrues from legally enforceable zoning regulations that help investors know how much land is available for a specific purpose within a given metropolis. Assertive homeowners and aggressive speculators petitioned municipal officials to authorize zoning plans that prevented metropolitan development from impacting their lifestyles or investments. But, after World War II, the judicial system increasingly recognized that zoning policies often excluded socially marginalized residents from equal opportunities to acquire housing. Despite legal prohibitions against exclusionary zoning practices, land use regulations continue to outline the trajectory of metropolitan development, and social inequality is continually reified through land use regulation.

Residents in urbanized areas, especially those from marginalized communities, realized that they would have to organize politically if they were to help guide future development. Activists found that no issue catalyzed collective resistance and community organization like transportation projects. For most of the twentieth century, transportation investment in metropolitan areas has disproportionately meant freeway construction. Now largely recognized as detrimental to the urban fabric, freeways were originally developed to expand access between urban workplaces and suburban communities. In many of these cases, highway construction was a speculative venture that injured preexisting communities—particularly those that were socially marginalized. During the 1960s and 1970s, residents in communities across the country politically organized to stop the destruction of their homes for freeway advancement. Their efforts pointed toward progressive futures where citizen input would help guide metropolitan growth. However, as

the social changes unleashed by transportation infrastructure continued unabated, civic activists would have to contest centralized planning at other sites.

Suburban construction was intended to eliminate many of the social ills that plagued cities prior to centralized planning. However, municipal and state planners often excluded African Americans from suburban life before 1970, and other marginalized people experienced trouble acquiring suburban housing, too. Conflict emerged in suburban spaces as public and private actors sought to redevelop suburban spaces to accommodate the logic of equal housing access. In organized communities, local activists sought to navigate the thicket of federal to empower grassroots communities facing development. However, urban space remained associated with social disorder in the minds of many policy makers and investors, and continuing efforts to equalize access to housing and property ownership often came up short of their intended goals. In fact, some began to worry that land use regulations would make housing the most marginal members of metropolitan communities too expensive. Today, most American economic activity occurs in metropolitan communities. But considering how inequitable resource distribution remains, scholars must question how valuable planning has been for our communities—lest future cities replicate the same shortcomings as cities past.