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REVIEW

Dear Readers,

The Urban Review team is proud to present this issue of the Urban Review. This issue is produced in conjunction with a special alumni event honoring Hunter Urban Affairs and Planning Alum and APA President Mitch Silver, the first event in a series that will lead to UAP's 50th Anniversary in 2015.

Within these pages is the most extensive edition of the Urban Review ever published. It includes articles written by both undergraduates and graduates in Urban Affairs and Planning. The Urban Review serves as a forum for ideas, a showcase for student projects and an opportunity for students to publish their written work. The range of subjects covered in this issue reflects what students are learning in the classroom as well as how they are applying these critical skills in the field.

The Urban Review is entirely student produced—from soliciting submissions, to securing funding for printing, to designing the finished product that you hold in your hands. This edition would not have been possible without the help of many dedicated students!

-Melanie Bower

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Table of Contents

Alumni Spotlight: Mitchell Silver	3
Dan Compitello	
Daniel Burnham and The City of Manila, 1905	6
Jim Diego	
This Fire is Right on Time - The New Bronx Sizzle!	9
Lorraine Rolston	
Havana's Urban Agriculture	12
Jesse Alter	
From Brooklyn to Peru	16
Melanie Bower	
The Past and The Present of Coney Island's Shore Theater	19
Oksana Mironova	
Bike Lane Resistance in New York City	22
Laura McNeil	
Shades of Green:	24
Bike Lanes and Gentrification in New York	
Sam Stein	
2010 World Exposition	27
Maria Chernay	
Mapping Technologies and The Informal World	30
Charles Davis	
Art Hill	32
Fall 2010 Staten Island Studio	
Dana Frankel	
Cooking Up Community Food Security	35
Alexandra Hanson	
The Domino Effect	38
Erin McAuliff	



Alumni Spotlight Mitchell Silver

By Dan Compitello

Mitchell Silver is a 1993 graduate of the Urban Planning program at Hunter College, and his tremendous energy and enthusiasm for planning is easy to see. He completed his degree in two years, while also working for the Manhattan Borough President. Part of his honeymoon was spent revising the final report of his planning studio on Harlem. A year later, Mitchell came back to Hunter to co-teach a planning studio on East Harlem with Genie Birch, then the director of the department of Urban Affairs and Planning. Both projects won the AICP National Award, which complement the many high profile planning jobs Silver has held in New York City and Washington, DC. He currently holds two titles for the City of Raleigh, North Carolina as their Chief Planning and Economic Development Officer and Director of City Planning. In these roles he oversees the Raleigh 2030 Plan, which was adopted in 2009 and seeks to guide the city through an anticipated growth of 250,000 residents.

On April 12, 2011 Mitchell was formally sworn in as the President of the American Planning Association at the APA National Conference in Boston. This is an historic precedent – Mitchell is the first African American President of the APA and is the third President to come from the halls of Hunter College. Mitchell and his story speak to students of urban planning, well seasoned professionals and anyone in between.

On September 16, 2011, Mitchell will be honored at the Roosevelt House by Hunter Urban Affairs and Planning as an outstanding alumnus. This occasion begins a series of annual events leading to the 50th Anniversary of Hunter Urban Affairs and Planning, in 2015. Mitchell's trip back to Hunter this fall signifies great anticipation and reflection for Urban Affairs and Planning. While the immovable walls of the classrooms have not changed much, UAP has undergone great transformations since Mitchell's time here. It has tripled in size, both with students and faculty, and is now Hunter's fastest growing Masters program. UAP now offers a wider range of accredited curriculum, and it added a new full time faculty member this year – an amazing feat considering a near state-wide hiring freeze. It is expanding its international based studies, while at the same time refining its academic and community service reach into the five boroughs through the Center for Community Planning and Development. A proud line of experienced planners, both graduates before and after Mitchell, are working in a range of positions around the world.

Hunter Urban Affairs and Planning has more than tripled in size since you graduated. My classmates want to know what advice you have for us? How is the landscape of planning changing? What should we be thinking about as we begin our careers, or continue to refine them?

The advice I have for students today is look ahead; you have chosen a fascinating career path at a time when the profession of planning is undergoing major changes. There are exciting and hard times ahead, and young planners are a big part of how the profession is adapting. The most important thing for any planner is to hold on to your sense of purpose – both of who you are and what you think planning is. Planning today needs to be a multidisciplinary role. You want to be the go-to person in the go-to profession that can tie in the different approaches needed to face the enormous political, environmental and economic challenges that we have ahead. If you don't understand your sense of purpose, you will question yourself throughout your career.

Communicating is also key – simply knowing information or understanding how to do something is not enough – planners have to separate themselves from other professions by how they communicate. We will not move an idea forward without properly explaining the idea. It is not just public speaking that is important but how you engage your audience. Planning is a profession of jargon, and it can be very difficult for us to communicate to the public because we speak a foreign language. Planners need to be able to speak in plain English, and to listen closely to what people say to find where our language needs interpretation.

Planning has always been a forward thinking profession. The new APA Development Plan addresses emerging trends that the profession will face: changes in demographics, the rise of single

person households, the uncertainty of oil production and access to water. These are big issues are they going to be some of the defining issues of the 21st Century.

We want planners, particularly those in school, to understand the enormous challenges we are facing and to be prepared for those challenges. The new APA Development Plan is really a call to think differently, to be innovative, and to be multidisciplinary. One piece of advice I have for planners starting their career is to work with a range of professionals to solve problems—keep in mind that planners can't do it all. It's the architects, landscape designers, urban designers, even psychologists – a range of professionals who are needed to work collaboratively to solve problems.

Planning has a political dimension which is not always taught in schools. It is important to understand how projects get funded, approved and developed, and that's all part of the political process. Understanding how politics work in planning will help you be successful. Students need a firm grasp of finance, tax policy and property tax policy; those will be major drivers over the next twenty years of how local governments will function.

Moving into your role as APA President, are you nervous? What is the most difficult part of your agenda? What will be the most fun?

Well, no I'm not nervous—I'm quite excited about the opportunity. One challenge I see is communicating to planners that they're not just regulators, but that they have a specific role in their communities. I've observed a trend of planners retreating from their purpose of being communicators of ideas and facilitators of dialog.

The most fun part is spending time with APA members. I really enjoy that. I enjoy traveling, attending events and seeing planners in action around the country. Spending time with students is especially nice – getting to know them and their dreams and connecting them to the field of planning is an incredible opportunity.

Regarding the importance of diversity and planners, which you have helped lead the APA to realize, what needs to happen to make sure planners represent the diversity of the communities they plan with?

Making sure that planning as a profession values diversity is a lasting goal of the APA. It is one that has formed over the course of several years. We have an agenda – when we look at the demographics, as the country becomes more diverse, we need to increase the ranks of members who represent that diversity. Today there are over twelve local chapters with their own diversity initiatives. They each connect to the Ambassador's Program, which reaches out planning schools and introduces the profession to younger and more diverse demographics. Planning magazine now has more articles focused on minority issues. I am proud to have been part of the initial discussion. Where it once was just a discussion these issues are now imbedded in our core services as an organization, and within the daily practice of our planners.



You moved from being a planner in the nation's first Capitol – New York City – to its current, Washington, DC. What was that transition like as a planner? What supported your decision to move to Raleigh after DC?

Overall, it has been a great transition. It took about a year to transition from Washington DC into the Raleigh area. Raleigh area is known for innovation, and it has been great for developing partnerships between elected officials, the business community and the public that are needed to make big changes. This region is truly becoming a world class metropolitan area. Once you're here, you don't want to leave.

Inward migration is a big issue here – there are many transplants from other parts of the country. Duke, North Carolina State University and Chapel Hill, and all the industries that are supported by the 'Research Triangle' make this an exciting entrepreneurial community - we lead the world in patents created in many industries. There are smart people moving here, there are smart people living here, and there are smart people staying here. Time Magazine surprised me when they called. They wanted to feature Raleigh as a City that stands out. I told them I get a lot of calls about the Raleigh 2030 plan, but few calls like this. It is not average to have a city mentioned like that and Raleigh is not an average City.

The City of Raleigh is implementing its 2030 Comprehensive Plan. How did Raleigh change while the plan was being created? What are the challenges facing the plan?

Before the plan started, I knew it was important to have a conversation with the public. In New York City, almost everyone wants to be part of the conversation, but that was not the case in Raleigh. We needed to lay the foundation for dialog. We needed to bring people together and talk about the region and to introduce ideas like walkability and sustainability.

Through the conversations we realized we have finite limitations to growth and development. The community was receptive and they realized how the 2030 Comprehensive Plan could address their present needs and the growth we expect ahead. It was unanimously adopted in 2009.

In terms of challenges – people are starting to realize that the Comprehensive Plan is not just going to sit on a shelf. It is a living document and it is motivating people. With the exception of a complex section on flood plains which requires more work, we are moving forward with every piece of the plan. There have not been many challenges in the fourteen months since adoption. So far it's been good news – widely accepted and initiating well.

Some data points – the Raleigh 2030 Plan anticipates a growth of 250,000 residents over the next 20 years. Detroit lost that many in just the past ten. Despite PlanNYC predictions that New York would add a quarter million, Raleigh and New York City gained about equal measure. Is this fuel for the moniker 'Sprawleigh'? What makes a city like Raleigh grow in such a way?

Raleigh grew by 128,000 people since 2000, and we expect that many from 2010 to 2020. We have grown about 3% every year since Raleigh was founded. That is a remarkable rate of growth. When we looked at available land while writing the 2030 Plan we realized we only have 20,000 acres left to develop (NYC has 11,000 acres of vacant land). To manage that growth, we need to be fully

conscious of the availability and limits of land. The 20,000 acres does not include redevelopment of land – infill – but the plan addresses these items to produce opportunities for more compact development. Accessory dwellings can be made on larger lots; new density controls were established to create more walkable areas; the number of cottages per lot was increased so rather than one large single family home, homeowners can build new units; and there are more contextual land use controls too, which help preserve the character of neighborhoods.

The City has already changed as a result of the Plan – just by making it – it has gone from a small town to a conscious Metro area. We are now going through transitions and having some growing pains. Today 60% of residents expect to have a real transit system, but just a few years ago we didn't. Our tallest building is just over 30 stories high. People now expect walkable neighborhoods, and think of Raleigh as a world class city. But there are also people who lived here their whole lives – they are questioning what is happening to Raleigh. Some people don't want to see the culture change.

There was a great deal of interaction from Generation Y and Generation X in the plan making. We understand that we are building a city for a new demographic – many of whom are younger people. It is because of the college atmosphere, and the entrepreneurial atmosphere that the Millennial Generations are embracing this area. We're addressing the issue of sprawl in Raleigh by looking at the regional connectivity of the Research Triangle and its position in the growth of the City. We want to have a polycentric City with multiple centers where people can live and work in closer proximity. As a result we planned 12 multimodal corridors for light rail and BRT, and those growth centers will emerge as centers of walkability. This addresses the sprawl we've dealt with for the last century, but also a generational issue—the public no longer wants to live in those sprawled areas. More walkable neighborhoods are attractive to both seniors and young people.

We're trying to give these twelve planned corridors enough transit and infrastructure, as well as density controls and incentives to build up and not out. There is a need for a denser City, and less sprawl. 60-70% of the development needed to support Raleigh's anticipated growth will be targeted within eight high density growth centers – these are incorporated into the new building code and also the regional transit links.

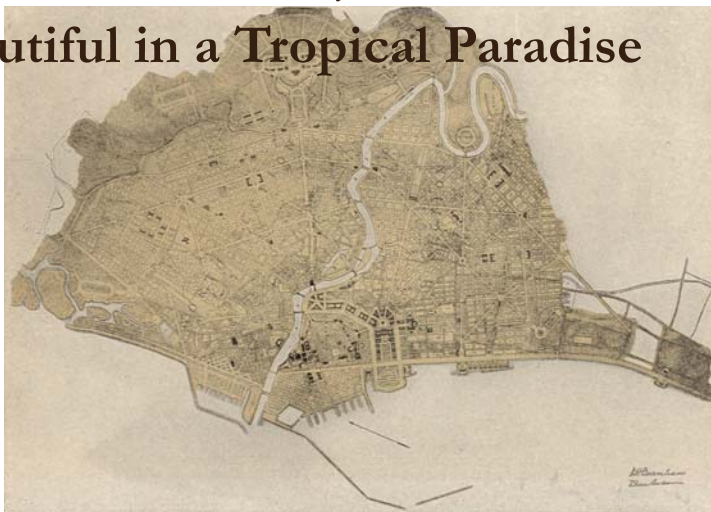
That gets us to another interesting data point – David Brooks cites the Pew Research Center, writing that "cities remain attractive to the young and that 45 percent of American's between the ages of 18-34 would like to live in New York City". New York can't hold 38 Million people, except as tourists over the course of a year. Will these people look to other cities?

Young people are choosing the city they want to live in before they choose a job. That is very different than earlier generations. It is hard to predict what will happen to people who move to New York City – it is not like living anywhere else. For example my son moved to Raleigh at 25, and at 28 is buying his first house. That wouldn't happen in New York – it takes longer before you can buy. But you can't exchange the lifestyle in New York, no one can compete with that. I think younger generations are looking to other cities. Owning a house, lifestyle choices – more and more young people are choosing to leave cities where those options aren't available. They are certainly moving south or west because of lifestyle changes. ■

Daniel Burnham and The City of Manila, 1905:

The City Beautiful in a Tropical Paradise

By Jim Diego



Burnham's Plan for Manila

Daniel H. Burnham was considered to be the preeminent architect and planner in America at the turn of the twentieth century. He established himself as a leader in the City Beautiful Movement and was commissioned to design master plans for many major cities across the country, including the McMillan Plan of Washington, D.C. in 1901. In 1904 and 1905, Burnham completed a renewal plan for Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, the newest overseas acquisition of the United States. Although the plan was only realized in parts, many of its planning concepts proved crucial in shaping the composition of Manila and its metropolitan area today.

Manila began as a small tribal settlement on the banks of the Pasig River near the mouth of Manila Bay. It took its name from a white-flowered mangrove plant, the nila, which grew in abundance along the marshy shores of the bay and was used to produce soap for regional trade. "Maynilad" or "place where the nila grows" became a prosperous Islamic community ruled by the Rajah Sulaiman, a powerful Malay Sultan. In 1571, Spanish conquistador Manuel Lopez de Legazpi was searching for a suitable location for the capital of the Spanish East Indies and led his force of 280 Spaniards and 600 native Filipino allies to occupy the area.

Shortly thereafter, the Spanish constructed the walled city of Intramuros, serving as the political, military, and religious center of Manila. Because of its coveted strategic location as Spain's chief trading post in the Far East, Manila was prone to native uprising and attacks by pirates

from nearby China. Intramuros, situated at the bay's edge, covered sixty-four hectares of land, with walls eight feet thick and over twenty feet high, surrounded by a deep moat. Over the next three centuries, Manila prospered under Spanish rule. In 1896, after many years of growing anti-Spanish sentiment among the Filipinos, rebellion broke out with the goal of independence. It was led by a growing secret society of revolutionist Filipino professionals, called the Katipunan. This secessionist movement spurred United States involvement in Philippine affairs. The U.S. became allies of the revolutionists, initiating the Pacific theater of the Spanish-American War.

After two years of fighting, Filipino nationalists conquered nearly all of the land previously occupied by the Spanish. The Filipinos, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, declared independence in June of 1898; however, this was short-lived, as neither Spain nor the United States recognized Philippine independence. The Treaty of Paris, signed in December of the same year, handed possession of the islands from the Spanish to

the Americans at the cost of \$20 million. This started another process of colonization and a "pacification campaign" meant to stabilize and quell insurgent activity, which the Filipinos resented for many years to come.

Believing in a mission of tutelage, the American colonial government believed that it was of great necessity to bring modern social and political institutions to the Philippines in order to introduce the Filipino people to democratic governance. The Americans believed that the Filipino people, if granted their independence, would resort to the Spanish legacy of oligarchic rule and resume a dictatorship. Furthermore, they also believed that their new colony's physical facilities and cultural amenities required improvement, such as transportation systems, architecture, and urban planning. Strategic in its location, the Americans saw the Philippines as a valuable resource for both protecting its interests in the Far East, and continuing its growth as a world power.

At around the same time, Daniel Burnham was becoming revered as a prac-

itioner of architecture and urban planning in the United States. His budding reputation caught the attention of W. Cameron Forbes, the newly appointed Commissioner of Commerce in the colonial government of the Philippines. In 1904, Forbes, along with Secretary of War William Howard Taft, selected Burnham as the chief architect to develop a new master plan for Manila. As a result of continual resistance from the Filipino nationalists, the American government was determined to assert its authority over its newest colony. The United States hoped that Daniel Burnham could conceive of a plan that would set an appropriate imperial, yet progressive tone.

As a moderately liberal Republican, Burnham identified with American progressivism. While believing ultimately in "the Philippines for the Filipinos," he also believed that Filipinos needed a period of tutelage in which the more "advanced" Americans could help affect a "progressive civilization" by instruction and example. He stated that "the United States, having overthrown the Spanish government... was under obligation to see that the government established in its place would represent all and do injustice to none." As an advocate of "progressive" planning in the United States - based on the political agenda of progressivism, which advocated governmental reform and regulation of large business interests - he believed that the same kinds of urban programs should be implemented in territories overseas.

Burnham's Manila plan was remarkable in its simplicity and its cognizance of Philippine conditions and traditions while still conveying the tone of City Beautiful planning. Concise and straightforward, his plan accounted for Manila's projected growth from 250,000 residents to 750,000 residents. It included technical recommendations for streets, parks, railroads, and public buildings. These recommendations echoed many of Burnham's previous city plans. Burnham set an ambitious objective of transforming the city into "the adequate expression of the destiny of the Filipino people as well as an enduring witness to the efficient services of America in the Philippine Islands."

Burnham's plan turned the original Spanish model of planning in Manila inside out by redefining the relationship of public buildings to the urban fabric. Rather than being cloistered in Intramuros as they had been under the Spanish, government buildings were placed in deliberately public



www.philippine-history.org

Manila, 1905

and accessible spaces. The most immediate focus of the Manila plan was the creation of a grandiose public space for government buildings near the center of the city.

Directly facing Manila Bay and bordering Intramuros was Luneta Park. Luneta Park was to be widened, creating a landscaped center for buildings housing the capitol and other departments of the national government. It would also be extended about one thousand feet into Manila Bay, allowing for beautiful public playgrounds and picnic grounds, flanked on either side by impressive governmental buildings. The extension aimed to form a natural starting point for a 250 foot wide continuous bay-front boulevard for infinite views of the ocean and sky.

This waterfront boulevard, named Dewey Boulevard to honor American naval admiral George Dewey, was intended to contain driveways, parkways, and perhaps even a bridge path for horse carriages. Construction of the intended twelve-mile long boulevard was authorized in 1909, and was pursued in connection with the improvement of the port of Manila. The waterfront boulevard element was one that Burnham would promote in several other plans, most notably for Lake Shore Drive in his plan for Chicago.

While the walled city of Intramuros retained some of the elegance that made Manila one of the most celebrated colonial cities of its day, the moat around it was stagnant and a perennial health hazard. In addition, the infrastructure in the areas outside of the walls was spectacularly in-

adequate. Burnham's plan preserved Intramuros as an artifact of the Spanish period, with its walls and bastions pierced in places to form gateways, promote ventilation, and allow for efficient circulation of traffic. The moat was filled with sand and converted into a public park.

Using his earlier experience with the McMillan Plan as a model, Burnham also devised a composite scheme of both radial and diagonal arteries to be superimposed onto the existing irregular pattern of the city. Encouraged by the colonial government's pacification campaign and its process of population re-concentration, Burnham's proposed avenues cut through a very concentrated built environment. The radial street scheme divided the town into five sections, in which the rectangular gridiron prevailed, but also created a fan-shaped system radiating from the center. This promoted the idea that every section of the city "would look with deference toward the symbol of the Nation's power," and that traffic would be directed efficiently up to a point where diagonals would be introduced as continuous connections between sections.

Three large parks, considered "breathing space for the masses," were accessible from the city center and each other via parkway boulevards. In addition, as many as nine smaller parks would be evenly distributed throughout the urban fabric of the city. These parks were designed to improve upon the moral tone of the neighborhoods they served. Each location was chosen with special regard to the

landscapes' potential and each would provide facilities and venues for a plethora of outdoor events.

After Burnham submitted his plan in June of 1905, work began under the auspices of William E. Parsons, the American government's consulting architect who was recommended for the job by Burnham. Parsons served in Manila from November 1905 until 1914, supervising the implementation of Burnham's plan as well as directing the design of all public buildings and parks throughout the islands. Parsons bore the burden of interpreting Burnham's plan, which, of course, as a broadly focused set of concepts, was necessarily tentative and subject to change and modification. Because of limited resources and reprioritized funding, many aspects of Burnham's plan did not come to fruition. However, the waterfront parkway, a handful of governmental buildings and, the Luneta extension were completed.

Aspects of the Manila plan, despite it not being fully conceived, were able to guide future public works for Manila. For instance, the 1931 zoning ordinance followed the basic framework of the Burnham plan, with an added layer of single uses and

ward irrigation projects, a concern for the economic capability and potential of the new nation. Additionally, Quezon began the development of a large area of rural land north of Manila with the hopes of developing a new capital city well inland and protected from possible sea attacks from invader.

A decade later, Manila was at the forefront of World War II, culminating in a battle that would completely devastate the city. Greater Manila was dissolved, and the capital moved to the Quezon's new city, aptly named after him (Quezon City). The Philippines finally declared its independence with foreign recognition.

After the war, despite many buildings being heavily damaged beyond repair, Manila was able to rebuild quickly. Manila became regionally oriented, encompassing the conglomeration of sixteen



Roxas Boulevard

gerrymandered cities known as Metro Manila, each with dynamic city centers of their own. With no real planning focus or guidance - not to mention complete governmental negligence to severely escalating poverty, leading to the development of widespread informal settlements - Manila swelled into a bustling and vibrant metropolis of over 10 million residents over the next four decades. What was

specific uses. The ordinance, along with subsequent zoning changes, development controls, and building regulations, had a small but essential impact on the future shape of the city.

In 1935, the Philippines was granted the status of a commonwealth. The first Filipino to head the commonwealth's government, Manuel Quezon, diverted funds initially directed for the Burnham plan to-

to be envisioned as a city with "graceful tree-lined boulevards, properly manicured parks, and comfortable suburban housing" became a city of "unplanned chaos" - bulky concrete structures blocking the sun and trapping pollution and noise on the streets below; crowded warrens of houses, shanties, slums and alleys; and heavily congested roadways, thick with traffic not unlike many other major world cities. Still, these

burdens of daily life add to the city's encompassing, and ultimately alluring energy. As with many other international metropolitan areas, Manila has continued to experience urban problems. Burnham's work, like most other planning, did not solve any problems for all time or all problems at any time. But his plans were a new beginning which influenced the development of the city, and continue to do so, in some capacity today.

The City Beautiful movement realized one of its greatest architectural successes, not on American, but on foreign colonial soil with the Manila Plan. On the other hand, the result of the City Beautiful model also displays its generational failure to anticipate unpredictable factors. Socio-economic, cultural, and sustainable growth all played second fiddle to the tenets of the City Beautiful movement - neoclassical civic beauty. As conceiver and implementer, Burnham and Parsons still brought about successful and enduring improvements in Manila, because they took a genuine interest in the development of the capital city. They were not simply acting as imperialists superimposing a standard plan onto an unwilling municipality. Instead, they embraced what existed, analyzed what needed to be repaired or renewed, and worked cooperatively with the indigenous topography, climate, and transitioning government, to leave a lasting impact on Manila. ■

This Fire is Right On Time - The New Bronx Sizzle!

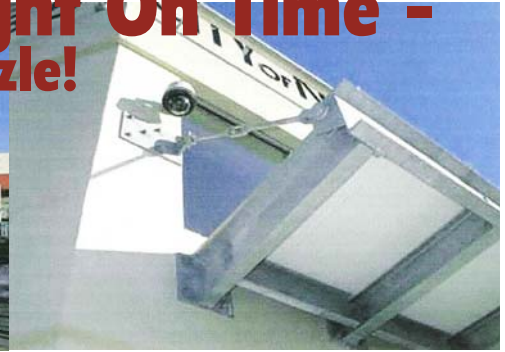


Figure 4

Gateway Center Anchors Local Redevelopment

By Lorraine E. Rolston

From the late 19th century until 1945, West Haven, a small industrial district in the Bronx, hummed as one of the City's manufacturing and industrial transport centers. After WWII, West Haven became known for its diminished housing and abandoned warehouses bordered by the Bronx Men's House of Detention (BMHOD) and Yankee Stadium at its north, industrial and commuter railroad yards to its east, and the Major Deegan Expressway at

its western edge facing across the Harlem River to the Manhattan Valley (Figure 1). By the mid-1950s this once thriving industrial center formed the western edge of one of the poorest sections of New York City; one that would languish in blighted obscurity for almost 60 years.

Redevelopment at West Haven held little interest for City planners until 2006 when a major redevelopment initiative led by Related Companies, and driven by enlightened self-interest on the part of both the City and the developer, forged a public/private partnership to redevelop the western edge of West Haven along its shoreline. By executing a comprehensive Community Benefits Agreement (CBA),

the Developer and a coalition of community organizations agreed to "... ensure that the Gateway Center at the Bronx Terminal Market (Gateway) proceeds and does so in a manner that is beneficial to the neighboring and surrounding community" and thereby overcomes obstacles of placement, environmental limitation and social stigma.

Today, Gateway, located in the community of my childhood and early youth, represents the new Bronx Tale of the successful integration of economic renaissance with contemporary sustainable urban redevelopment.

Community History: The Past Links to the Present

West Haven's factories, stores, rail lines and public buildings expressed 19th century economic and social models of industry, transportation, civil authority and recreation.

Early neighborhood social expressions in West Haven included beer halls, open green spaces such as Cedar (now Franz Sigel) Park, and entertainment venues such as the vaudeville theater known as the Bronx Opera House. Until World War II, the economic and social capital that was produced by these institutions made West Haven a community center for Bronx County as its rural paths yielded to paved roads and infrastructure to create lines on the land that defined the older urban core.

As social venues evolved, manufacturing infrastructure emerged. The western edge of West Haven remained partially submerged (Figure 2), until the completed

Figure 1



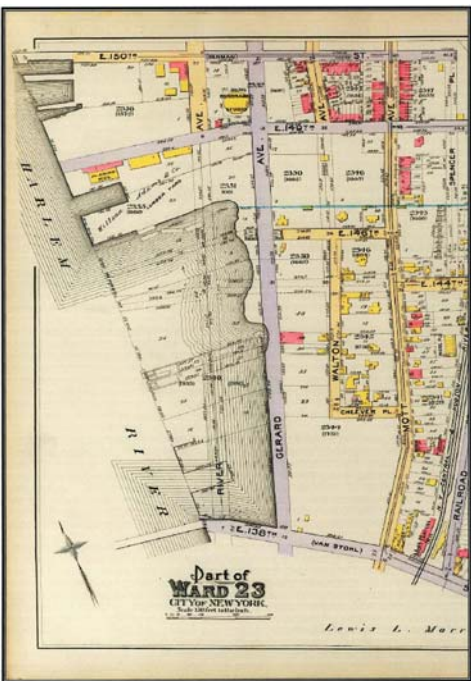


Figure 2

The Gateway Project and its Components: Building on Strength

In 2004, the New York City Council unanimously agreed to support the redevelopment of the former Bronx Terminal Market, as a part of the City's larger goal to re-establish social and economic capacity in older core neighborhoods. During the redevelopment, a combination of land rezoning and transfer, street closings and road reconstruction was followed by building demolition, renovation and new construction reviewed and approved via the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The Gateway Project for redevelopment also required demolition of three commercial buildings and the BMHOD; creation of shore-front parks and community open space; upgrade of transportation infrastructure; new pedestrian bridges and esplanades; and a new train station for the Metro-North rail line. By 2009, Gateway housed 957,700 gross square feet of retail space, adjacent to 2,835 spaces for parking. In addition, construction of a 250 room hotel in the area is expected to be completed by 2014.

The construction at Gateway produced new commercial infrastructure, up-

graded transportation modes, increased efficiency of movement for people and goods through the region, and generated additional revenue for the Bronx from new parking spaces for a rebuilt Yankee Stadium, by siting new transportation and pedestrian infrastructure on Gateway's northern boundary next to the "House that Ruth Built". This process also created Gateway's stunning land use profile along the Harlem River shoreline (Figure 3).

In addition to this redevelopment, a pattern of regional transportation and associated infrastructure built during the early to mid-20th century surrounds Gateway with the promise of renewed economic growth; a pattern that includes highways and access roads, city subways, interstate commuter and commercial rails. The restored link between the CSX freight line and the Oak Point Rail Yard, located in the East Bronx near Hunt's Point, joined this western shore of the Bronx to New York City's largest classification yard and restored West Haven's status as a major urban freight intermodal transport corridor.

Community Acceptance: Nothing is Given To You

The physical redevelopment by the Related Companies after their purchase of the site did not, however, proceed successfully to deadline without expressions of community concern.

One of the more controversial actions taken by the City to support the redevelopment was a rezoning of the project site to create a 'General Large Scale District'. This rezoning enabled the creation of increased parking capacity to accommodate the anticipated increase in traffic in the immediate area of the Project. The potentially negative impact of this decision on nearby residents and ecology was directly addressed and mitigated by the creation of easements, parks and expansive open spaces.

In 2005, critics condemned the City's funding level for the Gateway Project as excessive and unnecessary, noting that other successful Bronx retail projects went unfunded in a borough whose limited retail resources guarantee that "if you build it, they will come". Additionally, community representatives voiced concerns over their perceived exclusion from the development process. Both issues were addressed through collaboration between the Developer and Bronx Overall EDC located on E. 161st Street. In 2006, both sides reached a

consensus that was codified in a CBA affirming municipal funding, Developer commitment and Community support for this project. The comprehensive job placement and apprenticeship opportunities contained in the 2006 CBA offered human capital development via jobs, career paths and entrepreneur access to retail space for local impoverished households and gains for City revenue and tax rolls; sufficient justification for a sizeable municipal investment.

The relocation of older commercial entities and residential displacement, even in an area as blighted as West Haven, raised concerns for social equity. Community representatives voiced concerns regarding possible evictions of the few remaining commercial tenants (There were never any residential structures on the project site), and the pressure of Gateway's increased non-residential land use to create a critical mass effect on surrounding neighborhoods, resulting in increased residential property values as these communities become more desirable. To address these concerns, the City provided commercial tenants with financial compensation and relocation assistance, and the City's economic impact analysis determined that Gateway's isolation from adjacent communities and its existing statutory protection from market-driven housing cost increases will prevent adjacent residential displacement. Thus far, commercial displacement from nearby areas such as along Third Avenue has been minimal to non-existent.

Adjacent Projects, Open Space and Post-Construction Environmental Impact

Gateway employs contemporary design models for land use, space planning and environmental development within an urban setting. This retail presence, a welcome change from the seedy bodegas whose activities often contribute to community sociopathology, contrasts the earlier elitist merchant city model described by geographer Mona Domosh; it combines shops and parking areas in a contemporary retail construction model that centers big box stores amid refurbished structures at neighborhood edges to draw shoppers, and build economic capacity in adjacent communities. The integration of the earlier Art Moderne architecture of a renovated Building D (Figure 4) and decorative details from the BMHOD with the spare lines and design of contemporary architecture at Gateway exemplifies this contemporary

urban retail construction model.

Two major ancillary projects at Gateway safely integrated pedestrian access with highway traffic ensuring future economic development at this site: the complete replacement and seismic retrofit, during 2006-2007, of the adjacent 145th Street Bridge and the reconstruction of sections of the Major Deegan Expressway to facilitate pedestrian traffic flow from the bridge to the Exterior Street access road to Gateway.

Gateway's final layout accommodates the expected 6,500 daytime visitors, employees and residents, includes a public waterfront space totaling 12 acres, which exceeds acceptable passive open space ratio requirements for workers and residents, and mitigates the adverse impacts of the large new parking lots via use of an extensive open space design. The hotel scheduled for completion by 2014 will require no additional zoning action since waivers and civil easements already acquired also apply to the hotel project site.

The application of modern construction procedures and the use of sustainable infrastructure resources such as green building material use, eco-system management and public/private partnerships characterized land use, construction and project development at Gateway. This produced a minimally invasive, sustainable development that will not degrade the ecology for the local urban wildlife (rodents, pigeons and other indigenous birds), or the natural lands adjacent to this project. Ultimately, the disturbance to adjacent tidal wetlands that occurred during project construction, produced landscaped open space to benefit local wildlife ecology.

Conclusion: Drawing Strength from the Fire

Gateway opened in 2009, proudly emerging from the edge of West Haven along the Harlem River shore. This project – the second largest project of any kind in the Northeast United States to receive certification



Figure 3

for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED silver certification) for both its core and shell- generated much needed local economic capacity, and its structure is a viable urban retail template – creating economic stimulus using urban entrepreneurship and constructive political strategy that symbolizes this City's commitment to responsibly rebuild a much maligned older urban community on the foundation of its rich industrial history. ■

Havana's Urban Agriculture: An Alternative Perspective

By Jesse Alter



Cuba has undergone an agricultural transformation whereby a new urban-organic model has emerged. This article will discuss organic food production in Havana and the role urban agriculture has played in improving the economic and social conditions for many Cubans. I will focus on how government reform and policy has addressed Cuban's food system challenges, particularly its food crisis, by creating urban agricultural programs through decentralization and financial incentives for farmer cooperative production, farmers markets and on-site stores. Such programs have proven to be largely successful, improving the health of many communities within the city of Havana.

In 1959, the Cubans, led by the efforts of marginalized rural farmers, successfully overthrew the U.S. backed Batista dictatorship. The Cuban revolution committed to self-sovereignty and supporting a just social system that would provide the basic right to education, healthcare, land and food. The Agrarian Reform Law (May, 1959) was one of the first pieces of legislation that put limits on landholdings and redistributed land to peasant families, sharecroppers, and landless farmers. As a result, more than 100,000 landless peasants became landowners overnight, many committed to maintaining crop diversification and integrated farming practices. Four years later, 80 percent of all landholdings and expropriated foreign territory was nationalized and converted into Cuban state-run farms.

Despite Cuba's revolutionary commitment to self-sufficiency, it was not able to produce enough food to feed its people: 57 percent of all food calories consumed were imported, including a full 80 percent of proteins and fats. More than 85 percent of Cuba's trade was with the Soviet Union and European socialist countries. The Soviet Union's willingness to purchase excessive amounts of sugar in the international marketplace enabled the Cuban government to purchase food elsewhere. But following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Cuba's imports were reduced by 75 percent including most foodstuffs and nearly all agro-inputs. The average decrease in caloric intake for Cubans dropped 30 percent. Without access to agro-inputs and oil, Cuba's agricultural system was faced with the insurmountable tasks of increasing food

production at home while simultaneously encouraging the exportation of tobacco, sugar, citrus fruits, and coffee. Cuba was in a severe food crisis.

During the 1990s (Cuba's Special Period In Time of Peace), the Cuban government enforced severe economic austerity measures that forced farmers to substantially reduce their usage of imported technologies that required excessive amounts of capital and oil. At the height of Cuba's food crisis, the U.S. passed the Torricelli bill (1992) which barred all shipments of food and medical supplies from overseas subsidiaries of U.S. companies. Several years later, the US Embargo was tightened by the Helms-Burton Act (1996) restricting all foreign companies that do business with the U.S. to trade with Cuba. Since Cuba could no longer access foreign assistance and international food aid the country needed to maximize its most valuable resource: the human workforce. The Cuban people were in need of a solution that addressed their severe food shortage without relying on the automobile to transport goods and imports from foreign countries.

During the 1990s, food production became the most important priority for the country and President Fidel Castro announced plans to cultivate every acre of vacant land. In May of 1993, a group of Cuban professors and researchers founded the Formative Group of the Cuban Organic Farming Association (ACAO) to promote organic alternatives. The organic farming advocates strongly believed that organic production would lead to the use of low-inputs resulting in less costs, remediate the land and save the environment. In addition, the Organic Farming Association encouraged the government to promote research and to provide technical training to all Cubans willing to produce food. A new ideological approach to agriculture was founded dependent upon the intellectual capital of the Cuban citizenry, especially from the small-scale farmers who maintained their long family and community traditions of low-input production.

In response to ACAO, the Cuban government invested a tremendous amount of resources in agro-technology and education; amended land use laws and tenure; and changed financial structures to streamline the efficient production and distribution of food. The Cuban government recognized the poor management of state-run farms in which state control had become too indirect, inflexible, and not

sufficiently democratic. Under socialism, ownership is in the hands of the "associated producers" either directly in cooperatives or indirectly through the state. Where management by the state proved too indirect, inflexible, and not sufficiently democratic, new forms of ownership were adopted. For example, when private land sat idle for more than six months, the government made plans to turn the vacant land over to those wishing to cultivate it. Since their were no landlords to resist change, the state had the power to divide land and labor according to the social need of the country including the production of food.

In September 1993, the Cuban government enacted the Basic Unit of Cooperative Production (UBPC), a new agrarian reform law that broke up state-run farms into small cooperatives. The transfer of land management from state-run farms to worker cooperatives was integral to maximizing the social capital of the Cuban people. Also important was the opening of farmers markets (1994), especially in populated cities such as Havana, because it allowed for the direct sale between producer and consumer. The government's efforts to decentralize food production and allow for farmer markets helped popularize the organic food movement in Cuba.

As a result of governmental reforms and policies, urban farmers transformed Havana into an important model for organic agriculture. Cuba's Ministry of Agriculture implemented a key urban agricultural program based on the following principles 1) access to land for worker cooperatives, 2) research and development, 3) organized points of sale for growers and 4) new marketing schemes. The program was a great success. From 1997-2005, the annual production of vegetables in Havana soared from 20.7 to 272 thousands of metric tons.

This amounts to an almost 15 fold increase in vegetable production over an eight year period that supplies Havana residents on average with more than 340 grams per capita per day. Agro-ecology and organic agriculture play a critical role in increasing food production and maximizing the use of the land.

Agro-ecology and Organic agriculture in Havana

Organic agriculture in Cuba is based upon the farmer's understanding of agro-ecology, a complex agro-ecosystem made up of ecological interactions,



bio-diversity and crop output.

In addition, the composting of crops and use of vermiculture, the process by which worms break down organic matter into rich-nutrient compost, are important to increase the supply of enriched soil and to maximize the capacity to

and synergisms between biotic and abiotic components—mechanisms by which soil fertility enhancement, biological pest control, and higher productivity can be achieved. In other words, agro-ecology requires farmers to discover the most efficient combination of plant and animal life to match the environmental landscape of each farm. To be successful, farmers must be intimately familiar with each patch of soil so they know where organic material and pest controls should be added. By using the agro-ecological model, farmers produce food without causing externalities such as harm to themselves or degradation to the environment.

During my travels to Havana, I read a sign reflective of this philosophy as I entered a home garden called *Patio Felicidad*: “He who works the land has an important responsibility (ranging from preparation to harvest) to respect the lives of everything.”

In a meeting with Cary Cruz, an expert at FANJ (Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre), she spoke about the need to integrate permaculture within a community through architecture, physical planning, design, and aesthetics. The utilization of space is important not only to maximize the capacity to produce but “to create a culture of permaculture” that will inspire residents and teach future generations about consuming less energy, reducing waste, composting, and organic food production techniques.

The use of bio-pesticides and natural plant-life to combat insect pests and resistant plant varieties is critical to maximizing the production on a farm. Urban farmers use a combination of bio-pesticides, crop rotations, compost, fertilizer, and cover cropping to help increase the

produce on the land. Organic farming practices have enabled urban farmers to grow food at little or no financial cost because they are not dependent upon synthetic inputs, fossil fuels, or oil. Much of the energy needed comes from alternative sources such as solar, wind-farms, and hydro-power. The combination of using alternative energies and low-input agricultural techniques has resulted in an efficient use of resources that allow nutrients to recycle back into the land. It is these types of efficient technologies that contribute to a long-term sustainable approach to urban agriculture in Cuba; one that is holistic, efficient, and adapts to the local environment.

Worker Cooperatives and Employment

During the Special Period, new types of cooperatives were strengthened that brought together pre-existing private farms. To participate in the national urban agricultural program, urban farmers reorganized themselves into cooperatives to address the labor intensive challenges of organic agriculture and to optimize their land’s capacity to produce. A Credit and Services Cooperative (CCS) is in charge of facilitating the merge of privately owned farms—with or without a jointly held area—into a cooperative. An Agricultural Productive Cooperative (CPA) consists of a small group of farmers that collectively own a single plot of land. In an interview with Fernando Funes, President of the Grupo de Agricultura Organica (GAO, formerly known as ACAO), he explained why the CCS is much more efficient and productive than the CPA for two reasons 1) the longstanding history of CCS since the Revolution took power in 1959 and 2) the economic incentives to produce food are much greater be-

cause the CCS can readily sell their crop at demand/supply farmers markets.

In Cuba, the state maintains the property rights to the land and the worker cooperatives own the rights to production. Most worker cooperatives, especially the CPAs, are obligated to sell their crop back to the government at predetermined prices set much lower than market-rate. All crops harvested in excess can be sold at the on-farm store or nearby demand/supply farmers market. The opportunity for worker cooperatives to sell excess crops at a higher price creates positive work incentives for farmers to produce. In addition, it deters them from using costly inputs and to maximize readily available alternative technology (wind and solar) while employing organic farming techniques.

Currently, urban farmers in both the CCS and CPA have incomes that are well above the national average. The current perception of the peasant farmer is directly related to the surge in urban-organic farming and the sophisticated level of education and business savvy required. The Cuban tradition of men growing produce is the norm, however, this is changing with the rapid expansion of urban agriculture. Recently, the social and economic environment of urban farming has experienced a sizeable increase in the number of women and young workers into the labor force including the addition of technicians, researchers, engineers, and teachers. The continued incorporation of younger people and women into the agricultural sector and research institutes will be vital to sustaining the longevity of organic agriculture in Cuba.

Collectively the CCSs, CPAs, and some individually owned private farms have helped preserve a large portion of Cuba’s farming traditions, experiences, and culture. For Cuba this is of great importance for the permanent shift toward sustainable and agro-ecological production. Organic agriculture depends upon small-farming traditions and intensive levels of training and scientific research. In Havana, the urban agricultural workforce has grown from 9,000 in 1999 to 44,000 in 2006. Many well-educated and highly qualified professionals are working side-by-side with farmers to encourage the production, distribution, and consumption of healthy produce. Thus, urban agriculture has increased employment in Havana at the rate of 20 jobs per hectare. According to Fernando Funes, more and more Cubans are interested in food production including the 800,000

requests for land from the Ministry of Agriculture last year. There is a cultural shift occurring in Cuba toward increasing the efficiency of labor production and becoming more self-sufficient. In an interview with Miguel Salcines, the Founder of Alamar’s urban agricultural project, he spoke towards the changing mentality of the typical Cuban worker by succinctly stating, “In Cuba, if you don’t work—you don’t eat.”

Today, there are 370,000 urban farmers in Cuba with thousands of specialists, technicians, researchers, teachers, and Ministry officials who are actively improving and transforming Cuba’s landscape into an agro-ecological production model for sustainability. Since the beginning of the Special Period, the training and education of Cubans in agro-ecology has been a priority of the Ministry of Agriculture. Due to the Revolution’s commitment to education Cuba has a high literacy rate and a large number of Cubans with advanced degrees: scientists, engineers, and teachers. This has enabled the growth and dissemination of information on agro-ecology resulting in many positive impacts. Furthermore, efforts have been made to teach organic farming techniques to elementary school and secondary school students but also the elderly. Parents, students, and teachers are working



together on community gardens throughout Havana and also throughout Cuba. In response to the food crisis, Cubans have produced an abundance of produce in and around their home and marketplaces for produce can be found throughout each community.

Points of Sale and Affordability of Produce

In Havana, there are over 1200 points of sale for residents to buy produce including farmers markets, mobile stands, on-site stores, and state-run marketplaces. The prices of produce differ for each type of vendor. For example, the more affluent Vedado Farmers Market is a supply and demand marketplace where vendors determine their own price for produce. Most of the produce and meat sold at this farmers market is relatively expensive due to the high cost for transportation from neighboring municipalities, storage costs, a mandatory 5% tax on produce sold, and rent payments for the use of a stall.

There is also a large network of small government-run and military-run marketplaces where the government sets the price of produce. When I visited several of the small government-run marketplaces located every few blocks in Central Havana, a densely populated and mixed income neighborhood, a market vendor indicated that the prices were indeed relatively expensive for community residents for the same reasons the Vedado Farmer’s Market prices were high. In contrast to the relatively high price paid for produce in Central Havana, the government subsidizes a number of military-run marketplaces which includes produce sold at very affordable prices. In this case, the government highly subsidizes all necessary inputs from seed to plate including the costs of production, labor, transportation, and service costs.

There are also a number of peri-urban on-farm produce stores located in eight

municipalities situated on the periphery of Havana. These municipalities are where the vast majority of Havana’s produce is grown because there is greater access to vacant fertile land. Peri-urban farmers who sell from their on-farm store are not required to pay rent nor the 5% tax to the government. Since there are fewer costs (minus the cost of transportation to the city) the price of produce at the on-farm stores is more affordable for local consumers. Specifically, by selling on-site it saves the peri-urban farmers from the intensive work of a market harvest, risk of unsold produce, and time away from the field.

Conclusion

Despite the surge of urban agriculture in Havana, Cuba’s food system continues to be dependent on imports; approximately 80% of their food staples such as rice, beans, grain, wheat, and meat products from various countries including China, Canada, Vietnam, U.S., Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina. But still, Havana’s urban agriculture program has risen to the top of the nation’s political agenda—a salient example of how a city is capable of increasing the capacity to produce ones’ own food. Agro-ecology and organic food production has become institutionalized and strengthened through the coordination efforts between the Ministry of Agriculture and community-farmers. What once started as a proposal from the ACAO in the early 1990s to promote organic alternatives has transformed Cuba’s entire agricultural system. Havana’s peri-urban farms and permaculture gardens continue to increase in size and in number. The quality and variety of produce is impressive and reflects Cuba’s rich traditions of sustenance and small-scale farming. Havana’s urban agricultural program has improved social conditions by attracting a new labor force consisting of the young and old, many more females, and different types of professionals. While the Ministry of Agriculture continues to grapple with the challenge of decentralization and maintaining financial incentives for farmer cooperatives to maximize production, the urban agricultural program has provided a much needed economic boost that encourages environmental sustainability, innovation, and the creation of well paying jobs. Havana’s urban agricultural program is proof that a city can dramatically increase their food production using sustainable techniques in the wake of a food crisis. ■

From Brooklyn to Peru

Fair Trade Coffee, Urban Consumers and Rural Livelihoods

By Melanie Bower

When the bus let us off on the side of the road, it was starting to get dark and I was beginning to get nervous. To be clear—I am not scared of the dark. But as a native New Yorker, I am also not entirely used to it. I find it comforting to think that even the darkest of New York's dark alleys have some form of eclectic illumination from a nearby bodega or an overhead street lamp. But the road I happened to be standing on was deep in rural Peru and there was no sign of anything remotely electrified. The sun had already sunk as my boyfriend and I dug our flashlights out of our backpacks and tried to orient ourselves. I studied the directions that Sabine had given me over the phone: "Tell the driver to let you off at Sachuahres, then walk up the path on the hill, for about 15 minutes until you reach the farm." I had assumed that the vague directions would make sense upon arrival. And while there was indeed a path, it appeared to me that it led straight into the jungle. In the gathering darkness, we switched on our flashlights and headed up the hill.

What is Fair Trade?

The path to this farm in Peru started in a Trader Joe's in Brooklyn. I had been buying Trader Joe's Fair Trade coffee for several months, willingly paying an extra dollar or two for coffee labeled "fair trade." But I began to wonder where that extra money was going. On some naive level, I assumed that it was winding up in the pocket of some impoverished coffee grower. However, as I began to explore the meaning of Fair Trade, I found it was far from that simple.

In basic terms Fair Trade is a labeling system designed to provide consumers with information about the conditions of production of a particular item. When you buy coffee, chocolate or any other product with a Fair Trade label on it, it means that the company which made the product has paid a Fair Trade organization for the right

to use their label. The Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) sets Fair Trade standards and ensures they are enforced. Typically, this means workers earn a decent wage, child labor is prohibited, working conditions are safe, etc. For food commodities like coffee and cocoa, FLO guarantees that producers were paid a minimum "Fair Trade" price for their product. This offers producers protection from volatile commodities markets—in the case of coffee, this floor price of \$1.35-\$1.65 per pound can be twice as high as the value determined by commodities markets. Fair Trade labeling is used primarily for food products—the supply chains of products such as electronics or clothing are too complex for Fair Trade standards. Fair Trade coffee comprises the majority of Fair Trade sales, worldwide.

Over the past decade, consumers have become increasingly aware of injustices surrounding coffee, causing Fair Trade to evolve from a fringe movement to a full-fledged cause. Almost 90% of the world's coffee is grown in impoverished countries in the global south for export to developed countries. The coffee industry is highly concentrated with just four major companies controlling between 50% and 70% of the market. Although these companies profit extensively, the majority of the world's coffee farmers live in poverty, struggling to break even. In Peru, the 130,000 families that grow coffee typically require about 80 cents per pound to recoup their losses. They usually receive half that, sometimes even less. Unable to hire laborers during harvest season, many growers are forced to take their children out of school so that they can assist with work in the fields.

In Peru, many growers have abandoned growing coffee in favor of cultivating coca, the plant used to make cocaine. Coca thrives in the same conditions as coffee and it can be 13 times as lucrative. Peru is the world's the second largest producer of coca (35,000 hectares), but while this crop

is lucrative, its cultivation brings violence and crime into the communities where it is grown. In some Latin American counties, farmers have given up on growing coffee altogether, abandoning their fields and migrating to cities. In short, struggle and suffering are part of the reality of growing coffee.

Organizations such as the UN, the World Bank and Oxfam have praised Fair Trade, arguing that paying farmers a fair price for their coffee is a strategy for poverty alleviation and path to empowerment. Consumers are increasingly aware of Fair Trade and in recent years both Dunkin Donuts and Starbucks have committed to purchasing certified Fair Trade coffee. Although it represents less than 3% total coffee sales, Fair Trade imports into the US have been growing at about 33% a year, and it is the fastest growing segment of the coffee market.

Yet for all this fanfare, there is remarkably little research on the actual benefits that farmers receive from Fair Trade. There are plenty of "impact stories"—those touching narratives that you might read on a bar of Fair Trade chocolate. Impact stories usually profile a grower and describe how their life has improved since they began participating in Fair Trade. Journalist Michal Pollan has dubbed these stories "supermarket pastoral", brief vignettes that provide a snapshot of how food is produced but often veils the true complexity of where it actually come from.

It was my desire to lift this veil that led to me to live and work on a farm in Peru. I found the farm through WWOOF—the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, an organization that links organic farms with volunteers. The time I spent on the farm was a work exchange. In return for room and board, I was expected to help with any and all farm tasks.

I had done a decent amount of research before disembarking for the farm,



providing me with some academic context for my adventure. There are only a handful of studies that have systematically assessed Fair Trade. One such study found that while Fair Trade growers in Rincon, Mexico ultimately received more cash for each pound of coffee they sold, they also had higher inputs of capital than conventional growers. In the end, the study concluded that Fair Trade growers had an annual average household net loss of \$379, compared to conventional grower's loss of \$450. Another study found that when market prices

of coffee were low, members of a Fair Trade cooperative in Nicaragua earned more than farmers who did not participate in Fair Trade networks.

Additionally, the role of coffee cooperatives complicates the issue of Fair Trade. Cooperatives are common in Latin America, in both Fair Trade and traditional networks of buying and selling. Cooperatives act as middlemen, buying coffee from smallholdings farmers and selling it to exporters or roasters. Since the majority of the world's coffee growers are smallholding

farmers, growing on less than 10 hectares of land, cooperatives can help farmers pool their resources and manage economies of scale. But remember that extra two bucks I was shelling out for Fair Trade beans? That extra cash ultimately goes to the Fair Trade cooperative, not directly to the growers. In many cases, cooperatives buy and sell both Fair Trade and conventional coffee and pool the proceeds into a single payment to farmers. In cooperatives where Fair Trade price benefits are retained at the association level, growers may be entirely unaware

of Fair Trade price premiums, and in large associations, the Fair Trade premium “may be so small as to be meaningless if it were actually divided among all producers”.

A literal take on field work

Sachahuare, the farm where we stayed, is owned by a married couple—Roberto, a native Peruvian and Sabine, a Belgian with a degree in agronomics. It is deep in the jungle of Peru—the nearest town is so small it rarely appears on maps. Their main crops were cocoa, coffee and mangos. Like most rural farms in Peru, there was no running water. Electricity was a handful of bare bulbs powered by solar panels and the stove wasn't much more than a firepit. Moreover, it was simple but sufficient.

Sabine and Roberto practice biodynamic farming. Unlike traditional farming, which emphasizes yields, biodynamics sees farming as processes of inter-related ecological activities that can enrich the land, rather than just take from it. This meant that all activities on the farm were done with careful consideration. Weeds were pulled by hand, since herbicides couldn't be used. Similarly, “pest management” meant hacking at ant nests with machetes, since pesticides were also not used. Planting and harvesting was aligned with phases of the moon. Coffee bushes were grown under the shade canopy of larger trees which protected the plant's delicate berries and also provided habitats for toucans and other local fauna.

Roberto and Sabine were faithful stewards of the land, and being an organic, pesticide free farm was a point of pride. But I was surprised to learn that many farmers in rural Peru adhere to organic standards—not for ethical reasons, but because chemical pesticides and fertilizers are too expensive to afford.

During my time on the farm, I also learned that the challenges of rural life are not limited to the difficulties of making a living from the land. For example, there is no such thing as public transportation in rural Peru. Combis, private minivans, ply the main routes between towns, making mobility a challenge, especially for schoolchildren. Schools can be 5 or 10 miles from home and if a combi doesn't show up, or is already full of passengers, kids often skip school altogether, rather than walk.

When asked what they see as the problems for farmers in the area, Sabine explained that the construction of a massive natural gas pipeline nearby was luring



farmers off the land at an alarming rate. “Everyone who can, leaves” said Roberto. “They go to the cities, they get jobs working on the natural gas pipeline. No one wants to farm the land.” But the fact is that the planet needs more farmers like Roberto and Sabine. The UN recently recognized that agroecological methods, like those used as Sachahuare, are key to poverty alleviation and climate change mitigation. Without farms like Sachahuare, we won't be able to produce enough food for our planet's growing population without doing significant damage to the environment.

There is no Fair Trade cooperative near Sachahuare, which means that Roberto and Sabine aren't able to sell their coffee or coca as Fair Trade products, even though they would meet the standards. Instead they sell their products to the nearby cooperative, which usually compensates them fairly. When I asked them if they thought Fair Trade was a good strategy for helping farmers earn more, they weren't certain. Farming is hard work and pays little. Roberto seemed certain that as long as there were decent paying jobs elsewhere, farmers would continue to slowly leave the land.

As for me, my journey ended up back where I started. I continue to buy Fair Trade coffee from Trader Joe's, not because I have embraced the ideology, but because there are few alternatives. Until I learn otherwise, it seems fairer than anything else.

Many New Yorkers (myself included) like to think that shopping at farmers markets, or purchasing coffee that is packaged with a Fair Trade “impact story” somehow brings us closer to the producers of these products. We want to believe that when we support local agriculture or

buy sustainably sourced chocolate we are re-embedding non-monetary, social values into the marketplace. But the problem with this perception is that it doesn't do justice to the actual labor involved in earning a living from the land. Being a farmer—in America, in Peru or anywhere else—is physically and economically challenging. And I'm not about to claim that spending a few weeks on a farm was nearly enough to make me appreciate the reality of farming in the developing world. But if we are to study and understand Fair Trade, as researchers we first need to understand our subjects. For me, spending time on a farm was a sort of informal ethnographic study, a way of gaining a glimpse of an insider's perspective. Clearly, the gap in theoretical knowledge on Fair Trade demands further research. And while it may be tempting to “prove” that Fair Trade works by showing that Fair Trade farmers earn more money, I am wary of this narrow, quantitative approach. As I learned during my brief stay on the farm, rural livelihoods are complex and our understandings of them should be qualitative as well as quantitative.

Planners have recently started taking food issues seriously, but much of the discourse has focused on creating “localized” food systems where rural producers are connected to urban consumers. While this certainly an important goal, as planners we must be mindful of the global reach of our food supplies. To focus on the local overlooks the many ways in which we are connected to producers in the developing world. Fair Trade may have flaws, but helps understand the limitation of local food and it is an important step toward creating a more just food system. ■

The Past and The Future of Coney Island's Shore Theater

By Oksana Mironova



Photo: Loew's Coney Island Theater, Brooklyn Public Library 1924

The Shore Theater – located on the corner of Stillwell and Surf Avenues – is a microcosm for the greater Coney Island. The deterioration of its interior due to 35 years of vacancy is not immediately apparent from the outside, due to the solid construction methods used at the beginning of the century. Scaffolding wraps around the outside of the building, making it seem as if renovation is under way. The Shore Theater recently received a landmark designation, securing it a spot in the new, revitalized Coney Island of the future. It has been mentioned in numerous redevelopment plans for Coney Island written by multiple developers, non-profits, the local development corporation, the community

board, and the city. However, the scaffolding is misleading; it is not the result of one of the many redevelopment plans. It went up in 2007 in preparation for steam cleaning the exterior of the building. But as a result of non-payment by the owner, the exterior did not get cleaned and the scaffolding never got taken down.

The theater spurs nostalgia for a constructed, idyllic New York of the past; a simpler era before the failures of technocratic planning, suburbanization, budget defaults and gentrification. Of course, nostalgia is a fabricated reality – New York has never been perfect. Like much of New York City's history, rise, decline, abandonment and potential resurrection are all encom-

passed in the story of the Shore Theater. This historical narrative parallels the experience of Coney Island as a whole. After years of neglect, Coney Island has become the focus of attention due to the release of a Strategic Plan in 2005 and a Comprehensive Rezoning Plan in 2007. By tracing the historical development of one building in Coney Island, I hope to provide a richer understanding of Coney Island's heritage and its relationship to New York City. Further, I will contextualize the current redevelopment scheme in a longer history of public and private plans for the neighborhood.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Coney Island did not have the best reputa-

tion. Coney Island was part of the town of Gravesend, where politics were controlled by John Y. McKane, a crooked politician with a connection to Tammany Hall. The Democratic machine supported the establishment of gambling dens, brothels, and seedy bars, as long as they paid off the right person. At the same time, the informal atmosphere allowed for the establishment of legitimate immigrant-run businesses, which would not have been able to survive in more established neighborhoods. The Tammany hold on power was broken when Gravesend was annexed by Brooklyn in 1894.

Three competing real estate developers set out to improve the image of Coney Island — re-imagined as a family-friendly resort — and to make a whole lot of money in the process. Between 1897 and 1904, they bought out vacant brothels, burned-out lots of land, and forced out the immigrant business owners. The three amusement parks that they built — Steeplechase, Luna Park and Dreamland — continue to define Coney Island. If it was not for the collective memory of the grand old days of Coney — reinforced by books like *Coney Island Lost and Found*, movies like *Annie Hall* and even the name and design of the new Luna Park — the current redevelopment plan for Coney Island would not be such a contentious and emotional issue.

Grandiose in design and scale, the turn-of-the-century parks drew on the latest mechanical innovations, the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and on the City Beautiful movement. The three parks offered a welcome escape from the congested city, drawing 100,000 people per day in the summer season. Yet in spite of their popularity, the parks were destined to be ephemeral. Building materials of wood and plaster combined with a marginal understanding of the danger of electricity made the parks dangerous and fire-prone. In fact, given the frequency of fires, it is surprising to find any older buildings in the Coney Island amusement area. Dreamland, the most ambitious of the three parks only lasted seven years, when its spectacular plaster and wood construction fell victim to fire in 1911.

The Shore Theater — then known as the Coney Island Theater — was built in 1925 as a result of a concentrated effort of the Coney Island business community to “develop Coney Island on a larger and broader scale”. The businessmen making money on Coney Island’s seasonal crowd began to imagine it as a year round desti-

nation. With the extension of the subway to Coney Island, this became a feasible goal. The theater was built on the site of the private Culver depot, which had become redundant after the consolidation and expansion of the subway system. In *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas describes Coney Island at the junction of the 19th and 20th Century, a testing ground for architectural and planning ideas which later defined the development of early 20th century Manhattan. Architectural details present in the spires and towers of the three amusement parks re-emerged in the art deco design of early New York skyscrapers. The transformation of discarded industrial uses to modern mix-use buildings continues to be a common theme in New York City planning today.

Moreover, the construction of buildings like the Shore Theater represented the unwavering post-war optimism of the Roaring Twenties — a decade of rapid economic growth and conspicuous consumption — which characterized not just Coney Island but the city as a whole. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported in January of 1925, “\$2,000,000 Theater and Office Building Reflects Transformation of Coney Island”. In May of the same year the publication wrote that the theater “will be the first of its kind in the art deco and the forerunner of similar structures in the movement to make Coney Island an all-year amusement resort.” Two features of the building set it apart from the entertainment establishments of Coney Island’s past. First, it was constructed out of limestone and brick rather than plaster and wood. This made the building fireproof and permanent. Second, the neo-Renaissance Revival façade, along with its additional non-amusement uses, further signified the stability and seriousness of the theater, especially when juxtaposed with glitzy lights and plaster spires of Luna Park. The Coney Island Theater Building also had office space on its top floors, intended to attract organizations related to the entertainment industry.

When the building opened in 1925, it was leased and maintained by the Loew’s Corporation, and was renamed the Loew’s Coney Island Theater. The rechristened theater featured both film screenings and live vaudeville entertainment. Retail spaces on the ground floor featured a Nedick’s restaurant and two cigar shops, while construction companies and a local draft board leased the offices upstairs. Despite the Depression, the Theater proved to be a success through the 30s and 40s.

During these decades, Coney Island as a whole continued to attract millions of visitors each summer, with its free beach and cheap amusements.

In the post-war era, New York City began to show signs of financial distress due to suburbanization and economic disinvestment. The highways that made the new suburbs possible also made further-afeld recreational destinations like Jones Beach accessible. The 1920s dreams for a transformed Coney Island faded. Loew’s lost control of the theater in 1964, and it became the Brandt Shore Theater under a new owner. 1964 was also the year when Steeplechase Park finally closed after years of neglect. Steeplechase was acquired by Fred Trump, who had plans for a housing development similar to Trump Village, a 40-acre middle-income complex built on the site of Luna Park (which had burned down in 1944). When the city did not grant Trump the zoning change required for the construction of residential high-rises, he held a strategic and spiteful “demolition party”. Guests were invited to throw bricks at the park’s famed glass exterior, which was nominated for a Landmark Designation. He sold the Steeplechase lot back to the city in 1968.

With the three main amusement areas gone, Coney Island struggled on. The beach, boardwalk, bathhouses, and scattered amusements continued to attract an influx of patrons, albeit seasonally. The Brandt Shore Theater unsuccessfully attempted to reach out to the surrounding Jewish population with productions like “Bagels and Yox”. The *New York Times* reported in April of 1966 that Leroy Griffith, was to begin staging two dollar burlesque shows at the theater. This was a pivotal point for the Shore Theater, when it stopped trying to live up to its neo-Renaissance Revival façade and took any opportunity to make money. In the early 1970s, the space had a very short-lived career as an adult theater. The last active use of the theater space was in 1972, when it was converted to a bingo hall. During this time, the offices upstairs housed a dress manufacturer, a Medicaid office and a Head Start nursery.

According to *Vanishing New York*, the owner of the Kansas Fried Chicken chain, Horace Bullard, purchased the theater, as well as a number of other properties around Coney Island, in 1978. Naturally, a Kansas Fried Chicken took over the prime corner retail location on the ground floor of the theater, replacing the Gay Way

Bar. It is unclear when exactly the building emptied out all of its tenants. As Head Start and Medicaid both maintain offices in the neighborhood to this day, one can only speculate that actions on the part of the landlord forced them to relocate. Kansas Fried Chicken went out of business sometime in the late 1980s, leaving a dusty relic of yet another era of New York on the corner of Surf and Stillwell. Coney Island as a whole was ravaged by the crack epidemic, disinvestment and arson.

Unfortunately for the theater and for Coney Island, Mr. Bullard’s properties became a site for his power battles with the City of New York and then mayor, Rudy Giuliani. Through the years, Bullard proposed a number of grand plans for his lots in Coney, which housed the Shore Theater, the Playland arcade, and the now gone Thunderbolt rollercoaster. The plans included a new theme park or casinos and hotels. The relationship between City Hall and Bullard was one of lawsuits and countersuits. In 2000, the City even demolished the Thunderbolt on Bullard’s lot, although a federal jury later ruled that the city had no justification for tearing down the rollercoaster. For the Shore Theater, the struggles over power and space have amounted to water damage and deterioration due to lack of main-

tenance. For Coney Island’s residents, the struggle between the city and a succession of developers with lofty plans has amounted to a succession of empty lots stretching all along Surf Avenue.

The city’s Strategic Plan of 2005 and Rezoning Plan of 2007 are complimentary efforts by the city to address the blight that has gripped the neighborhood since the 1970s. The Shore Theater is central to the redevelopment plans both geographically and conceptually, because the maintenance of Coney Island’s “character and culture” is one of the driving goals behind the two plans. It was initially nominated for landmark status in 1996, and finally received the designation from the Landmark Preservation Commission in 2010. The future of Coney Island seems a little bit brighter now that the Shore Theater cannot legally be torn down. Since there is such a sparse selection of historic buildings in Coney Island, there has been some speculation that the city might broker a deal with Bullard to take over the building. For now, there are no publicly known revitalization plans for the building.

While the landmark designation has ensured the Shore Theater’s space in the future Coney Island, a number of other buildings from the same time period — all nominated and denied landmark status — were torn down this past winter. Among them were the Bank of Coney Island, Henderson Music Hall and the Shore Hotel, all owned by Joe Sitt, of Thor Equities. The city’s plan for Coney Island has been criticized by various non-profits, including Save Coney Island and the Municipal Arts Society, for selectively preserving one historic structure, while allowing the destruction of

vacancy of the Shore Theater — many critics feel that stricter rules regulating development are necessary.

Joe Sitt has floated his own designs for the future of Coney Island. Tall hotels, big-box stores and national corporate chains characterize his vision. Sitt’s development history is anything but exemplary. He has “done very well buying but not building things in Brooklyn. In 2005, he bought a parcel west of the [Coney Island] amusement district for \$13 million and sold it 14 months later for \$90 million. He also bought the Albee Square Mall in Downtown Brooklyn for \$25 million in 2001, vowing to renovate. He sold it in 2007 for \$125 million, without the makeover. Recently, after a few years of tense negotiations, the city paid Thor Equities \$95.6 million for seven acres of land along the boardwalk, to be redeveloped by the city as part of the Rezoning Plan. However, Sitt still owns 5.6 acres of land in Coney Island, including the now empty lots where the Bank of Coney Island and the Shore Hotel once stood. Given Sitt’s history of unscrupulous development practices, the two lots are likely to remain vacant until they are profitable enough to sell. On the other hand the alternative (see rendering) might be more damaging for Coney Island’s future. Even though the Shore

Theater survived after an incredibly long period of neglect, if it is surrounded by chain restaurants and stores that can be found in strip malls across America, its historical value will be irrelevant. As an amusement park, Coney Island will not reach the status of Six Flags or Disneyland, nor should it aim to.

The history, nostalgia, and a touch of grittiness are its drawing points. As long as bad development practices — including the neglect of landmarked buildings, land speculation and destruction of historic sites — continues in Coney Island, its future will remain in jeopardy. Whatever the future may hold for the Shore Theater building, it is likely to continue being a microcosm of the neighborhood as a whole. ■



Proposed redevelopment of Joe Sitt's properties

tenance. For Coney Island’s residents, the struggle between the city and a succession of developers with lofty plans has amounted to a succession of empty lots stretching all along Surf Avenue.

The city’s Strategic Plan of 2005 and Rezoning Plan of 2007 are complimentary efforts by the city to address the blight that has gripped the neighborhood since the 1970s. The Shore Theater is central to

three others. In fact, according to Tricia Vita of *Amusing the Zillion*, “the historic buildings were doomed by the City’s rezoning of the parcels for high-rise hotels in 2009”. For many critics of the city’s plan, the leeway given to developers about what to build and how high they can build it has been a major sticking point. Given the history of developer-facilitated blight in the neighborhood — including the 35 yearlong

Bike Lane Resistance in New York City

Is it Really About Public Involvement?

By Laura Mac-

In New York City, community boards provide the basic means of community input in the public planning process. Established by New York City's charter, each community board represents a specific district and acts as a liaison between city agencies and citizens in decisions that pertain to their geographical boundaries. Although technically advisory, community boards often have political sway, as city council members often act on guidance from community boards.

Many of the city's agencies seek input from community boards when implementing projects, but relying on community boards as a means for public involvement can be problematic. First, community boards are systematically under-funded, which undermines their ability to effectively evaluate plans and represent community interests within the municipal planning process. In a July 2010 article in the *Gotham Gazette*, Hunter College Professor Tom Angotti points out that the average board has annual budget under \$200,000 and the combined funding for community boards makes up less than .02 percent of the city budget. Community Boards can barely afford a skeleton staff, much less specialized training or the services of a professional planner who could help assess the potential impact of proposed projects. Second, under the current City Charter, community board members are not directly account-



Photo: John Marshall Mantel, NY Times

able to their districts; residents do not elect who represents them on the community board. Instead, the elected borough president unilaterally appoints half of each board and selects the other half from a list of nominees by that district's city council member. While board members have to live in New York City and either reside, work, or have a significant interest in their district, there is no official mechanism to ensure fair representation of community districts by board members.

These systemic problems with community boards have not received much attention in the media, but they are especially important given the recent furor over bike lane implementation in New York City. The city's streetscape has changed substantially over the past four years: In this short period of time, New York City's Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) has nearly doubled the city's on-street bike

network using a 1997 Master Bicycle Plan as its guide. During those same three years, the number of daily cyclist commuters increased by 109 percent. Emboldened by Mayor Bloomberg's 2007 PlaNYC strategic plan, the NYC DOT has pledged to install 50 bicycle lane miles each year so as to reach the goal of 1,800 bicycle lane miles by 2030.

These rapid streetscape changes have alarmed some citizens and spurred accusations that the NYC DOT hasn't adequately involved the public in its decisions to install bicycle lanes. Norman Steisel, a vocal bike lane opponent who was once deputy mayor, called NYC DOT's public review process "tainted with opacity" in an October 2010 letter sent to City Hall. Steisel has since sued the city to have the Prospect Park West bike lane removed, charging that the city misled residents about its benefits. James Vacca, chairperson of the New York City Council's Transportation Committee, held

a public hearing in December 2010 on bicycle lanes under the auspices of assessing Local Law 90, which requires community notification and input when DOT implements major transportation projects. During the oversight hearing, Brooklyn council member Lew Fidler complained that the DOT needed to do a better job of consulting with communities before implementing bike lanes. Fidler then asked for the NYC DOT Commissioner's support for his bill that would require a public hearing with an affected Community Board 90 days before putting in any bike lane. The Commissioner declared herself in "violent agreement" with Fidler—in no small part because NYC DOT already does this Community Board outreach on a regular basis.

NYC DOT's standard process of public outreach has been to notify citizens of a proposed bicycle lane through letters and presentations to community boards. The community board (or boards) then votes to approve or disapprove the plan. Although technically advisory, community boards often have political sway, making it in NYC DOT's interest to accommodate their concerns in project designs and implementations. NYC DOT representatives also consult with borough officials and the district manager of the community board during the project conception phase "to get a pulse of the community," according to the agency's Bicycle Program Director, Hayes Lord. The NYC DOT has consistently informed and solicited input from community boards on its street improvement projects under Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. The fact that



some citizens and politicians still feel surprised by bike lane implementations could be more indicative of systemic faults in the community board structure rather than the actions of a specific agency.

The process of appointing community board members, rather than holding elections, may lend itself toward creating community boards in which members are more aligned with the interests of elected officials than those of the district residents they represent. When Community Board 10 of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, voted against new bike lanes last June, Helen Klein of *The Brooklyn Paper* quoted CB 10 member Allen Bortnick explaining his position in words that echo those of Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz: "The city is bent on taking away driving lanes for cars. We are not going to be able to live with this comfortably."

It's ironic that the same city council members who grandstanded about the need for better public outreach on bike lane implementation stood silent during their biggest opportunity to introduce institutional improvements to community participation just months earlier. The problems plaguing Community Boards could have been addressed when Mayor Bloomberg created a commission to review the city charter and recommend improvements. Amendments to the city charter could have granted CBs more funding and staff to in-

crease their effectiveness within the municipal planning process. City charter amendments could have also mandated some or all CB members be directly elected by district residents to ensure fair representation of community interests. Despite recommendations for community board reform from Borough President Scott Stringer and community advocacy groups, the mayor-appointed commission members chose not to examine the structure of community boards in their review process. And when Speaker Christine Quinn testified before the New York City Charter Revision Commission on behalf of the entire City Council in June of 2010, her testimony did not once mention community boards—much less the need for institutional public-participation improvements. The implicit decision to overlook community board reform was a lost opportunity to bring lasting, meaningful public-involvement improvements to not only decisions about bicycle lanes, but about every proposed municipal project impacting a community district. Mandating additional public hearings on already overburdened community boards is less a means of furthering public participation than a political tactic to slow down controversial streetscape changes. As planners, we should advocate for true public participation reform. In the meantime, city agencies, politicians, and community boards should be held accountable to the interests of the public—not politicians. ■



Shades of Green

Bike Lanes and Gentrification in New York

By Sam Stein

PLANNING in a GENTRIFICATION CONTEXT

Gentrification and class/race displacement are prominent features of New York City's changing physical and demographic landscape, shaping its economy, housing market and built environment. All city-wide policies being implemented today—whether or not they are aimed at affecting this reality—are occurring within the context of gentrification.

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) bicycle infrastructure program is one such city-wide policy. Recent streetscape improvements have coincided with a precipitous rise in rents and the return of upper middle-class residents to formerly working class neighborhoods. Efforts to make New York City's streets safer and more multi-modal have been attacked by critics as causing and perpetuating gentrification. This criticism reflects a misunderstanding of the dynamics that cause and perpetuate gentrification, but it points to a broader problem with the city's implementation of its bicycle network: bicycle planning in New York City currently reflects and amplifies city-wide transportation injustices. A retooling of the program around the needs of working class cyclists, however, could produce dramatically different results.

BACKGROUND: What We Talk About When We Talk About Gentrification

Gentrification is often theorized using "production" and "consumption" explanations for neighborhood change. Production theories look at the creation of "rent gaps," "value gaps" or "functional gaps" in urban housing markets. These "gap theories" postulate that gentrification occurs when landlords observe a significant difference between the income they earn from their properties when occupied by

low income tenants or small businesses, versus the income they could be generating if they rented to richer tenants, sold the building to real estate speculators, or converted their spaces to more lucrative uses. These changes are sometimes encouraged by local government through zoning and land use changes, relaxation of laws protecting tenants, and capital investments targeted at people wealthier than the current neighborhood residents. Consumption

theories of gentrification look at why upper income people become attracted to particular neighborhoods over wealthier urban and suburban alternatives. Generally, these theories speak of the unique appeals of inner city urban spaces, including attractive architecture and lively streetscapes, shorter commutes, cosmopolitan politics, and the availability of arts, entertainment and specialized retail. For some, the availability of bicycle infrastructure and safe

Photos: Scott Richmond



streets is one such motivation for choosing to live in a gentrifying neighborhood.

Today, cities like New York are competing with other "global cities" around the world to attract international capital and investment. One of the explicit goals of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC2030 is to compete with global cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, London and Shanghai on the basis of livability. Common capital attraction strategies include rezoning to enable high-end development, developing entertainment districts, encouraging high-end consumption markets (artisanal food and alcohol, and specialty retail), and creating recreational open spaces. Another key strategy for creating capital-friendly urban environments is reducing traffic congestion, and promoting forward-looking environmental consciousness by encouraging alternative modes of transportation. In this sense, DOT's work, while much broader in scope and intention, fits into a larger, city-wide competitive strategy to attract and retain global capital.

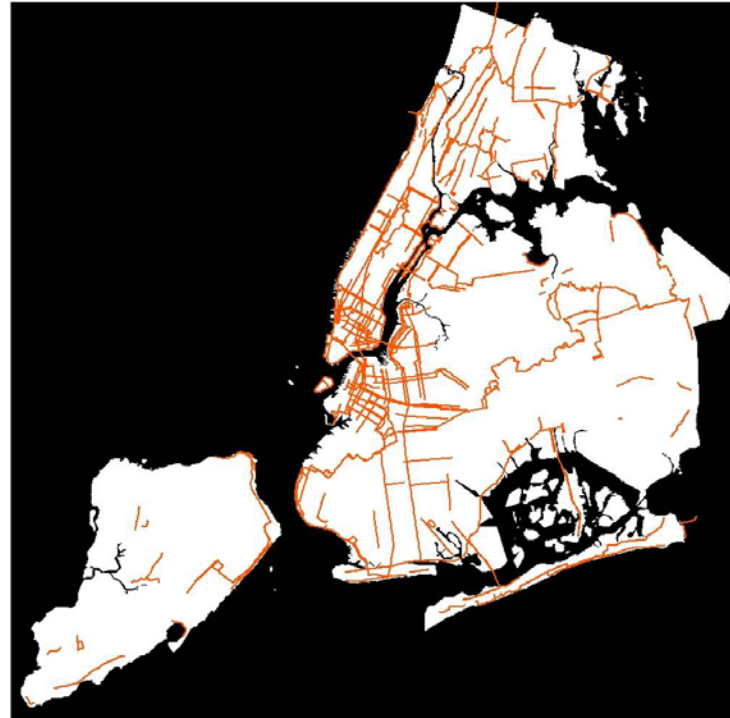
The rise of New York's young professionals and artists—generally able-bodied

people with liberal attitudes towards the environment, fewer savings to spend on cars and gasoline, and without long-term attachments to New York City's street form—helped spur the rise of cycling in the city. But building bicycle infrastructure in gentrifying neighborhoods has created long-term impediments towards extending the network and building broader community support. Long-term residents are alienated by capital investments that appear to arrive only after their neighborhood has been gentrified. This can be especially true in neighborhoods where residents have long biked, but have not seen street improvements targeting their needs until now. Gentrification can also displace low-income workers and recent immigrants, who often rely on cycling as a free mode of transit and sometimes ride as a part of their jobs. Key potential beneficiaries of DOT's streetscape improvements are therefore missing from the neighborhoods where much of the building is taking place. As a result, there is a contradiction between where DOT is choosing to build bike infrastructure, and where the need is highest.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION: Class and the Backlash

In public forums and press accounts, opposition to the proliferation of bike lanes and streetscape changes has grown. Some members of the public have equated the creation of bike lanes with their fears of losing control over their neighborhoods. The backlash against bicyclists can be seen as a sort of perfect storm of class relations. As the city is gentrifying and many long-time New Yorkers fear for the stability of their neighborhoods, many perceive cyclists to belong to one of two "threatening" classes: people who are richer than them (white yuppies in spandex); and people who are poorer than them (commercial cyclists, immigrants, people of color and punks). The self-identified middle class is furious with the city for seeming to help everyone around them, while supposedly ignoring outer borough car- and transit-oriented needs. Participants in the backlash are acting out of a fear of losing control over their "authentic urban spaces" to gentrification, while also reflecting their

Map: Jennifer Harris Hernandez



anger and resentment towards people of color and social outsiders, whom they imagine the city prioritizes before the white middle class. Many middle-class car owners in New York see the automobile as a symbol of their rise out of the working-class, and may resent DOT's efforts to slow traffic and reduce free on-street parking. Outer borough residents' displeasure at DOT's focus on lower Manhattan also reflects long-simmering resentments over the public transit system's central business district orientation. Recent cuts to bus service have been particularly hard on those outer borough residents who live further from subway lines. These bus riders are witnessing simultaneous cuts to the bus network on which they rely, and an expansion of a cycling network that feels alien to their needs.

This framing of cyclists and city agencies ignores many inconvenient truths: bike ridership is representative of all strata of New York society; street infrastructure improvements often improve safety and public



Photo: Groundswell Mural Project

spaces for all New Yorkers, not just those who cycle; bicycling has been an important part of New York City residents' commuting patterns since the 19th century; the cost of instituting bike lanes pales in comparison to the cost of running a transit system or maintaining car-oriented infrastructure; and finally, the city is most definitely not prioritizing the needs of low income people of color over the white middle class. It is unclear how large a segment of New York's population actually believes that bike lanes are a threat to their class status, but those who do seem particularly mobilized in the current political moment.

BIKE LANES and REAL ESTATE:

DOT does not create bicycle infrastructure in order to raise property values. Building owners and developers, however, have learned that the city's streetscape improvements can create more attractive spaces, and the presence of bicycle infrastructure near a development can be a selling point for affluent young newcomers. New luxury towers in such neighborhoods as the Lower East Side, Williamsburg and Downtown Brooklyn tout bicycle-friendly buildings and the presence of nearby cycling infrastructure in advertisements geared towards "hipsters." Meanwhile, Times Square experienced the largest retail rent hikes in the city—over 71 percent—coinciding with DOT's installation of a pedestrian plaza in Times Square. The Hudson River Park Trust has observed that the presence of the extended bike riverside lane has increased neighboring property values by approximately 20 percent. Richard Florida, an advocate for the so-called "creative class," has publicly commended DOT's bicycle in-

frastructure improvements as a tool to attract young, highly paid professionals into the city. These examples show that bicycle infrastructure can serve elite interests, and correspond with neighborhoods' overall gentrification. By no means, however, should this correlation be interpreted as sole causation, or as inevitable. Streets like Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn have received a great deal of attention from DOT's Bicycle Program, and yet these infrastructure improvements have not brought on the immediate gentrification of south Brooklyn neighborhoods. The class implications of bicycle infrastructure are therefore highly contingent on their siting and design.

CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVES: Urban Design for Whom?

DOT is tasked with designing infrastructure that benefits all New Yorkers. At the same time, the agency recognizes that its bicycle and street redesign programs play a large part in the city's strategy to attract global capital. At a recent forum on cycling and real estate strategies, DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan reminded her audience that, "capital can locate anywhere, so it's extremely important that we create safe, attractive spaces where people want to be."

The siting and design of street changes often implies the type of user the city expects to benefit from a project. Today, New York City's bicycle network is most built-out around the locus of gentrification: downtown Manhattan and northwestern Brooklyn. There are a number of good reasons for this choice: these areas are two of the biggest employment centers in the city; they are home to cycling-friendly community boards; and they are the site of many transit interconnections. Focusing on these areas, however, reinforces the impression that gentrification follows bike planning, and vice versa. This choice also results in a failure to provide needed infrastructure in high-cycling, low-infrastructure neighbor-

hoods like Flushing, Queens and Pelham Bay, Bronx.

Cycling infrastructure built for working class and immigrant riders might take various forms. These could include, but are not limited to: connecting working-class residential neighborhoods to local job centers, rather than the downtown central business district; making travel to the subway safer and faster, especially in areas suffering from bus cutbacks; creating connections between nearby neighborhoods that are not adequately served by mass transit (such as connecting northwest Queens to the south Bronx); providing bike-share in neighborhoods where owning a bicycle is impractical or unaffordable; and creating lanes that mirror the routes taken by commercial cyclists in the outer boroughs. These modest steps would demonstrate a real commitment on the part of DOT to addressing the city's transportation injustices.

CONCLUSION: Infrastructure for the Underserved

In recent years, gentrification and class displacement have changed New York for the richer and the whiter. Like all city-wide policies, DOT's bicycle project is occurring in this polarizing political context. This inescapable fact colors both DOT's program and the public's mixed reaction to it. By focusing construction on the most intense flashpoints of gentrification—lower Manhattan and northwest Brooklyn—the bicycle network reflects and reproduces the city's transportation injustices, in terms of class, race, and geographic isolation. This fact does not prove that bike lanes cause gentrification; instead, it points to the imperative for needs-based infrastructure construction. High need areas, where working class people bicycle every day under increasingly dangerous conditions, have not received the same level of attention of the city. DOT and other city agencies need to reframe their priorities in order to serve those most vulnerable to gentrification, rather than those who profit from it. ■

This piece was built from works written in Professor Tom Angotti's 2010-2011 Studio on bicycle planning. The ideas contained here were developed in close consultation with Jennifer Harris Hernandez and Sunghoon Yoo, and in conjunction with the other members of the studio (Max Applebaum, Andrew Camp, Conor Clarke, Joseph Delia, Sungbae Park, Brian Paul, Scott Richmond, Eva Tessa Udyarhelvi, and Matt Wallach). All conclusions and any errors, however, should be attributed solely to the author.

2010 World Exposition



Photo: Philippe Lopez—AFP/Getty Images

The Evolution of Urban Planning Practice and the Perception of Quality of Life

By Maria Chernaya

In just ten or fifteen years China has undergone the very amount of growth that came gradually to much of the developed world in the second half of the Twentieth Century. In order to understand how this development occurred, it is necessary to understand the historical conditions that have led to China's current role as a world power. Within the span of a century, China has shifted from a country ruled by a nationalist government, to a centrally planned economy under Mao's regime, to an authoritarian market socialist state under Deng Xiaoping. Whereas Mao's political ideology was defined by contributions to the state, and the collective good of Chinese society, the individualist capitalism promoted by the likes of Deng Xiaoping

supplanted the very ideals that the modern Chinese state were built upon. With the forced opening up of the economy by Deng Xiaoping, the new Chinese state resembles less the traditional Confucian-inspired culture and more a typical globalizing state, marked by massive department stores, malls, and commercial skyscrapers.

The polarizing ideologies of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping did not merely result in alterations to China's physical landscape, but also changed the collective perception of quality of life. The 2010 World Exposition, held in Shanghai, highlights China's continuing urban evolution, as well as emphasizes the high value that quality of life holds in China.

East Meets West

To step into Shanghai is to be sent into a whirlwind of activity. Outside of Pudong International Airport, the "maglev" (magnetic levitation) train zips from the air-

port to a metro station on the city's periphery, achieving speeds of up to 501 km/h. Rising from the rice paddies of Pudong, east of the Huangpu River, is an entire new business district, complete with awe-inspiring skyscrapers. The pinnacle of the Pudong skyline is the Oriental Pearl Tower. The structure is a monstrosity indeed—"a gaudy, flashing, spaceship-like pillar"—but it has nonetheless become a symbol of Shanghai and China's urban aspirations.

Previously a small fishing village, the early growth of Shanghai was largely attributed to the development of foreign settlements in the mid 19th century. Built on land ceded to the French, British, and Americans to facilitate trade, these settlements were never fully colonies or Chinese controlled. Rather, Shanghai's foreign settlements offered something for everyone. Adventurous young men from Europe and America, attracted by the prospect of making money, went to Shanghai. From the

surrounding provinces, Chinese citizens flocked to these foreign zones, which offered services unavailable in the countryside.

By the start of the twentieth century, Shanghai was remolded in the image of a Western City. A city celebrated as the 'Paris of the East,' it was renowned for its gas lighting, electric trams, advanced banks, and top universities. At the same time, having developed under foreign influence, Shanghai was notorious for corruption, and was chastised for its neon lights, dance halls, jazz bands, and 'anything-goes' attitude.

Shanghai was not the only city influenced by western-style planning. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Chinese students who had studied western planning in the United States and Europe were returning home. Influenced by western ideas, they sought to make China a progressive nation, and cities from Shanghai to Guangzhou watched their ancient walls torn down, narrow alleys change into boulevards and rickshaw stands become taxi stations. However, these urban reforms quickly languished with the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

The next four decades witnessed a period of war, confusion, and revolutionary communism. In the midst of a war against Japan, the country was also embroiled in its own civil war between the nationalist government, under Chiang Kai-shek, and the Communists led by Mao Zedong. Ultimately, the nationalist government was defeated by Mao, and on October 1, 1949, Mao founded the People's Republic of China.

The Anti-Urban City

One might argue that Mao had an anti-urban perspective of cities but an alternative view is that he had a very specific and narrow vision of urban life and space, one based on an egalitarian, self-sufficient society in which the consumer would become the producer. In Mao's vision, Chinese cities would be "self-reliant concentrated sites for industry, rather than centers promoting regional economic growth, trade and technological progress." In line with Marxist economic theory, Mao believed that state controlled industrial production would help jump start economic development, with the ultimate goal being to eradicate all private ownership of means of production. Accordingly, policy during this era focused on heavy industry and, Chinese cities across the northeast, and some in inland provinces, became dotted with oil refiner-

ies, coal mines, steel mills, and automobile factories. To power the newly constructed factories, millions of peasants migrated from the countryside to work in cities.

Nevertheless, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) did not equate industrialization with urbanization and tried to achieve, "industrialization without a high level of urbanization." The goal was to achieve industrialization on a nationwide scale, without incurring the costs of urbanization- housing, sewage, and streets. Moreover, there was a suspicious attitude perceived towards large cities. Chinese urban policy was characterized by the belief that metropolises were "concentrations of corrupt bourgeoisie" and the cause of "unhealthy" urban life.

Large coastal cities, such as Shanghai and Tianjin, which had been developed by foreign trading interests, were particularly disdained by Mao and party officials. Throughout the 1950s, coastal cities were drained of resources and retreated into the shadows, not to emerge again until the early 1990s. The focus shifted to inland cities, in particular Beijing, which was designated China's capital soon after Mao's inauguration.

Quality of Life in The Maoist City

As a result of a shared ideology with the Soviet Union, Soviet planners visited China to recommend best planning practices. Under Mao, Beijing- the symbol of the new socialist state-became the epitome of Soviet-style planning and was restructured into a city focused on heavy industry, a direct removal from its past as a traditional cultural and administrative center. Modeling after the Red Square in Moscow, Tiananmen Square was enlarged to the equivalent of 'thirty-eight American football fields.' The same year, as part of the Great Leap Forward, ten great "socialist" buildings were erected, blending neoclassicism with Chinese decorative motifs, and Stalinist architecture.

Mao's ideal vision for a city was one in which each district was self-sufficient. Although a city composed entirely of self-sufficient districts was never fully achieved, work-unit compounds, called danwei were realized. Resembling a miniature walled city, each danwei offered its residents workplaces and housing, as well as access to social services. You could virtually, "be born, grow up, get married, live and die in a danwei without ever needing to leave it." Within the gated walls of the danwei, the build-

ings were arranged in identical rows of three to-five story brick and concrete structures, which gave rise to a sprawling and homogenous landscape, deemed the "spatial expression of egalitarianism" and the solution to eradicating urban class structure.

The physical form of the danwei allowed for strict control of social life and inside these compounds, the demarcation between "private time" and "public time" effectively evaporated. These units could only be entered through a limited number of entry points, and most had locks and were guarded by security personnel. As a result, residents lived under the close scrutiny of neighbors and employers and were limited in their social autonomy.

The "smashing the Four Olds" at the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1967, created an unwritten rule that all leisure had to first meet the approval of the state. The few forms of carefully selected media that were allowed were essentially propaganda and had no pretense of providing relaxation, and the term "leisure" was considered a derogatory word. Pursuing a hobby was strongly criticized, considered egotistical and a petty bourgeois amusement. On the contrary, leisure was only meaningful if it offered workers enough time for physical restoration and if it advocated "collectivism." It was not uncommon for employers to ask workers to work extra hours for little or no pay. On Sundays and holidays, students and workers were organized to attend collective events, such as dances and sporting events. Those who didn't participate were scorned for "lacking collectivist spirit."

The Post-Mao City

With Deng Xiaoping's ascent to power and the opening-up of the economy in 1978, the socio-economic policies put in place by Mao were reversed. The retreat of politics and the promotion of consumerism fostered the reawakening of the individual and leisure time. As Chinese citizens began to take advantage of their ability to purchase consumer goods, there was a revival in commercial and business districts,



a direct contrast to the Maoist city. Shopping, the new form of leisure, has provided both the revenue and demand needed to expand the economy and reshape the built environment.

However, even after the implementation of an open economy, Shanghai and Tianjin both lagged behind the new Special Economic Zones, which included the Pearl River Delta (between Guangzhou and Hong Kong) and the Lower Yangtze. In the mid-1980's, economists recognized the importance of revitalizing Shanghai and Tianjin if China were to be competitive in the global economy. In 1990, Pudong, outside Shanghai, was designated a Special Economic Zone, symbolizing the opening of Shanghai into the outside world. The former mayor of Shanghai once noted that had Pudong not become a Special Economic Zone, the urban revitalization projects would have taken up to a hundred years to complete.

The development of Pudong into a Special Economic Zone is just one example of how shifts in ideology have radically transformed the built environment. For many middle-aged people, the China of the 21st century has become unrecognizable. Up until the early 1990s, the majority of the country's traditional courtyard houses, connected by meandering, narrow lanes, (hutongs) were still relatively intact. A decade later, hutong neighborhoods were erased wholesale from the urban fabric, replaced by the soaring skyscrapers, large office towers and shopping centers that define the urban landscape of today's China.

Selling the City

The transformation of China's built environment has been unmistakably influenced by the West. This stems in part from the legacy of the Cultural Revolution. As one man remarked, "In the Cultural Revolution we were told everything old was bad. And people who were born afterwards got a very western education, so young designers have grown up with a lot of foreign influences." Starbucks, McDonalds, Wal-Mart, and IKEA are now ubiquitous throughout China, as they have become associated with worldly taste and "Bourgeoisie-ness." Correspondingly, international architects have flooded China, redesigning buildings in a distinctly western style. In Beijing, some of the more memorable housing developments include Latte Town, Yuppief International Garden, and Top Aristocrat.

In all aspects of urban life and space, China is using the emergence of this new capitalist market to not just sell goods and services but to sell an international lifestyle, now deemed the new sine qua non for upwardly mobile urban elites. Reminiscent of the danwei, many of these house developments include on-site amenities such as gyms, spas, child-care centers, computer rooms, and tennis courts. However, the amenities provided within these privately owned developments indicate China's new emphasis on individual choice and private leisure time.

2010 World Expo: The Symbolism of Place-Making

Policies aimed at creating world-class cities in China can be seen as part of

China's concerted effort to improve overall standard of living, create an urban middle class, and attract foreign investment. Nowhere are these policies more evident than at the Shanghai World Exposition 2010, whose theme is: Better City, Better Life. Expo 2010 symbolized China's further opening into the global economy, while marking the stark contrast between the China fifty years ago, and the China of today.

I visited the Shanghai World Exposition in June of 2010, in order to better understand how the theme "Better City, Better Life" relates to the changes China has undergone. A visit to the Shanghai exhibition clearly marks China's emphasis on higher standards of living for its growing urban middle class. The rise in private home ownership is reflected in the second half of Chinese Pavilion at the exhibition, which showcases a series of private rooms, each room equipped with robots capable of performing all household tasks, somewhat reminiscent of the American cartoon television series, The Jetsons. The themes of sustainability, green living, and harmonious living, were repeated throughout the exhibit, emphasizing the high value China places on quality of life. Deliberate use of these trendy terms reflects the growing influence of a western ideal of middle class living.

Conclusion

Similar to a patchwork quilt, today's urban China reflects the continuous layering of new urban forms over time, each piece constructed under differing, and often conflicting, ideologies. Ongoing transitions in the social, economic, and political systems are constantly changing the shape and life of urban spaces. The ideal city of the Mao era constituted a self-sustaining city, wherein the consumer became the producer. With the changing of the guard, Deng Xiaoping strove to make cities competitive in the global market, emphasizing individual choice and private ownership. Today, the reforms of Deng Xiaoping continue to resonate as China becomes more receptive to Western ideals.

Shanghai, a city which for years lay in a time capsule, its economic growth frozen under Mao, has reemerged at the forefront of China's urban development. Guarding its nickname as 'The Pearl of the Orient' the World Exposition 2010 reinforces Shanghai's status as a world class city, while affirming the value of attaining a high standard of living, necessary for a "better life, in a better city." ■

Mapping Technologies and the Informal World

By Charles David



CapeTown Slum



RioChina

By 2015, there will be at least 500 cities whose population will be over one million. It is also estimated that by 2050, the world population will reach 10 billion, with 95% of growth occurring in urban areas in developing countries, particularly in slums. Most likely, one would not be able to find any of these informal settlements on a map. Historically – if included – slums have been demarcated with the color green, like parks. The relationship between the formal city and the informal slum is tumultuous. Issues such as land tenure and taxes keep the debate impassioned on how informal areas are to be treated and incorporated to the city. Innovative mapping techniques like Geographic Information System (GIS) and access to portable technology is altering both the way informal settlements are mapped, and how they are understood in relation to their surrounding environments.

In recent times, slums and other informal settlements are finding their way

into the cartographic discourse for the first time. One of the driving forces behind this is the widespread availability of satellite images that Google Earth pulls from space. Inclusion on a map – albeit Google Earth – is a testament that these communities can no longer be ignored. Slums are informally established, unplanned, and uncategorized. As a result, there is a very limited understanding of the 200,000 slums worldwide and the billion strong living in them. According to UNHABITAT, 80 cities out of 120 recognize that they do not possess monitoring systems to track changes in the spatial dimension of the city. Even more trying is that countries maintain different standards and information, quite often colored by political considerations, complicating the process of recognition by local authorities. Since most residents of slums don't pay property taxes and pirate much of their services like electricity and

cable, many politicians are only interested in their slum constituency when collecting votes during election time. Because of this, slums have become accustomed to being ignored by the state, and are largely self-serving communities.

In Cape Town, South Africa, GIS has been used as a fundamental tool to upgrade and empower community participation in informal settlements. Because GIS is a flexible platform for design-allowing users to incorporate spatial data as well as qualitative data – it allows local authorities to discuss the interaction between the city's spatial elements and social opportunities. The goals of using GIS for informal settlements include: Long term sustainability; quality of life improvements in regard to physical risks like hurricanes and earthquakes; physical/spatial integration into surrounding formal settlements; and environmental health.

Residents of slum communities in Cape Town are being taught the benefits of GIS influenced planning in order to assess environmental risk, and better maintain their ever-changing environments. It is inevitable that many informal settlements will be incorporated into their formal cities. Interaction between these communities and their local authorities is critical for integration. Given the historical tenuous relationship between the formal and informal world, GIS programs like this one in Cape Town is an exemplary step

forward.

Tracking population change in slums is a perplexing task. Amy P. Wesolowski and Nathan Eagle attempt to compile data about population movement in the slum of Kibera, Kenya, in "Parameterizing the Dynamics of Slums." In order to get a better idea about population change, the two researchers monitored cell phone activity from 2008 to 2009 in Kibera. The number of cell phone subscribers in the developing world is booming; Africa has 280 million subscribers (more than North America). Tracking cell phone movement is an innovative idea for demographic research in communities where the overwhelming majority is off the grid.

By monitoring the movements of cell phone users, the authors were able to keep track of the population moving in and out of Kibera. The results of their research show that the population of Kibera is transient: 50% of the inhabitants move in and out of the slum each month. This data could inform future policy in two ways: Information about what heavily trafficked areas can determine what improvements are most needed and most efficient; information about overall population mobility can provide insight as to why the communities in Kibera are so transient.

Kibera is the home to another innovative mapping project. This past year, the first complete map of Kibera was created by a group of young volunteers using Open Street Map and data from GIS platforms. Hundreds of thousands of people

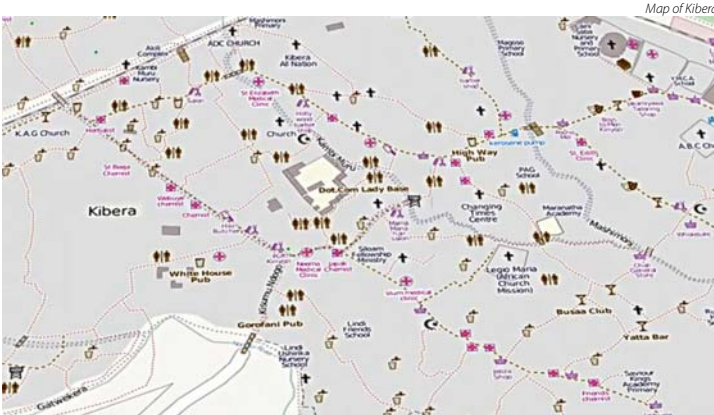
live in Kibera. Even though there are some concrete structures in the area, the vast majority of dwellings are made of corrugated metal and mud. Because of the overwhelming lack of permanent structures, the map of Kibera is constantly evolving, with resident volunteers making edits as they notice changes in the neighborhood. The map pinpoints hospitals, schools, food kiosks, kerosene pumps, and restaurants.

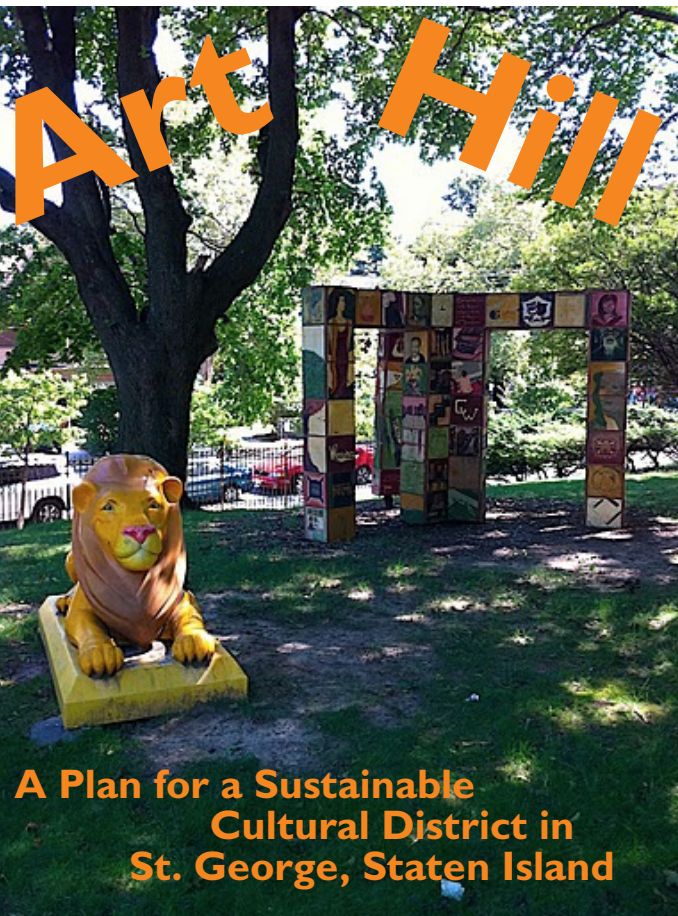
Mapping technology is being used in Latin American informal settlements as well. More than one million people – a sixth of the city's population – live in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, and have been largely ignored by the municipal government for over 100 years. The favelas lack access to city services like public transportation, sanitation, and electricity. Portable technology like cell phones, cameras and lap tops, are having a positive impact in the favelas. Instead of being monitored like the cell phone users in Kibera, these communities are putting themselves on the map. Brazilian reporters are using small video cameras, lap tops, and open source software to profile life in the favelas. Viva Favela, a state department-affiliated Alliance of Youth Movement, gathers the multimedia reports and displays them on Google Maps, bringing world attention to life in favelas. Community schools have been established in many neighborhoods acquainting favela residents with web based technologies. By having a voice on the web, the residents of favelas are able to communicate with the rest of the world despite the history of exclusion by the municipal government.

The Viva Favela program illustrates why web technologies are crucial to the inclusion of informal areas into the formal fabric of the city.

In Rio, GIS could be a key instrument for long term sustainability in informal settlements. It is being used to assess physical risks like hurricanes and earthquakes, for physical/spatial integration into surrounding formal settlements, and for the promotion of environmental health. Because informal settlements are likely to be built on whatever land is left over after initial development, the land itself is often prone to natural disasters like floods, mud slides, and erosions. In Rio, where many favelas are located on hill sides deemed unsafe for formal development, frequent catastrophic floods sweep away whole neighborhoods, killing hundreds. GIS application in these areas could be crucial for natural disaster mitigation, or at least could be a useful tool for informing the residents of the dangers.

According to Mike Davis, author of Planet of Slums, "The urban future does not lie in Chicago or L.A., and it will not be shaped according to the schools of thought named after them. Rather, the future lies in cities like Cairo, Rio de Janeiro, Istanbul, and Bombay." The informal development of slums has far surpassed formal development in the Third World. Yet, these areas of rapid population growth continue to be invisible. Most governments do not report on slum conditions and trends. Therefore, it is up to the slum communities to empower themselves by making themselves visible to the rest of the world. As our society moves forward in the future, becoming better acquainted with the expanding informal world will be crucial to world harmony and sustainability. Innovative mapping techniques like Geographic Information System (GIS), portable technology, and the expanding access to computers are just a few of the tools that can create positive change in the lives of people living in informal areas. Better spatial understanding of the rapidly transforming informal world can be used to empower slum communities to improve their environments. ■





A Plan for a Sustainable Cultural District in St. George, Staten Island

By Dana Frankel

When I reflect on my love for New York City, I think about all that's unique and stimulating — the things that keep me inspired and make me feel like I'm in the place where it's all happening. This city offers access to arts, culture, entertainment, diversity of every kind, beautiful urban and natural landscapes, and character that exudes from every block and neighborhood; I can't help but be captivated in its splendor.

These are attributes that New York City dwellers collectively relish. It

draws people here, and attracts them to particular boroughs, neighborhoods and distinguished places. What's interesting (for some of us), is to look at the city's history to see how these neighborhoods have evolved over time as trends, economics, governance and societal circumstances constantly change. The city itself is a center of art and culture; within it, artists and others have found niches to live and work and to call home. In the last several decades, it's interesting to see where concentrations of artists choose to live. Particular buildings and neighborhoods first become artist enclaves then tend to become alluring to other creative types and to anyone who con-

siders arts and culture a part of their lives. As the popularity and "coolness" of a particular area grows, it tends to become attractive to an increasing number of people in and around the city. This trend can (and tends to) lead to gentrification, putting original residents/artists that essentially built a community in a position to get priced out. Historically, these neighborhoods have primarily transpired in manufacturing districts, where artists could occupy buildings (often against zoning code regulations) where they could live and have space to produce their work. Once others catch on and create a high demand for housing, the area is generally re-zoned to residential, which allows developers to capitalize on the market of "cool" and begin renting and selling to well-established artists and high-salaried professionals and others. The original, organic character of the neighborhood can change quickly, recognizably leaving some level of authenticity behind. This has occurred in SoHo, DUMBO and more recently in Williamsburg and Greenpoint.

Our studio assignment was to create a plan for an Arts and Cultural District in St. George, Staten Island under the direction of our instructor Pablo Vengoechea, for our client, the Council on the Arts for Staten Island (COAHSI). We knew that being tasked to create such a plan would mean considering the importance of these issues, and that formalizing the district would mean creating a long-term home for art and for the artist community. With this approach, we aimed to create a sustainable arts and cultural district. We envisioned a place where artists could afford to live and produce their work, where vibrant street life would be the setting for cultural exchange - a place that would be a unique destination for creativity to serve the local community, New York City residents and visitors from all over.

We developed our plan based on prior efforts to create a Cultural District in St. George, building upon the transformative energy that is already taking place in the North Shore community. By attending events, administering surveys, hosting a visioning workshop/charette for stakeholders and the artist community as well as studying other successful districts across the country and abroad, we created a plan for a sustainable Cultural District in St. George that we call 'Art Hill.'

St. George: One Step Away

We recognized quickly that St. George was just one step away from be-

coming a thriving arts district and that the intention of the Art Hill plan was to formalize the momentum already taking place and to provide the infrastructure and resources necessary for realization. St. George is the home of more than 200 full-time artists, comprising 6% of its occupied adults. The concentration of working artists is comparable to that of well-known naturally occurring arts districts such as Williamsburg and DUMBO.

We learned that St. George has tremendous assets that have yet to be utilized to their full potential. It has a charming neighborhood character that is wholly unique in New York City. The combination of the steep hills facing New York Bay and the downtown skyline of Manhattan create a number of spectacular views, especially at night with the City lights twinkling over the water. The presence of the maritime industry in the Kill Van Kull channel adds to the unique views, especially when huge ships

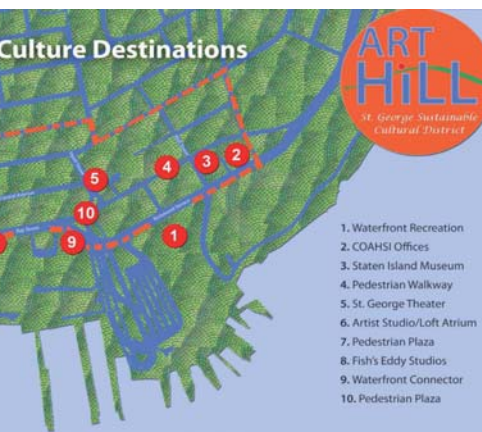
coming a thriving arts district and that the intention of the Art Hill plan was to formalize the momentum already taking place and to provide the infrastructure and resources necessary for realization. St. George is the home of more than 200 full-time artists, comprising 6% of its occupied adults. The concentration of working artists is comparable to that of well-known naturally occurring arts districts such as Williamsburg and DUMBO.

lading with containers or cruise ships twenty stories tall can be seen passing by the waterfront. St. George is the transit center of Staten Island with 65,000 people riding the ferry everyday and another 67,000 people arriving by bus to the Ferry Terminal on 26 bus lines. It is just 20 minutes away from Manhattan; just 20 minutes away from the committed contemporary arts audiences that make New York City their home; just 20 minutes away from the 47 million tourists who visit New York City each year—the Staten Island Ferry is the third most popular tourist attraction in New York City.

St. George is already home to significant cultural infrastructure including established non-profit institutions like the Staten Island Museum, the St. George Theatre, Sundog Theatre and the Universal Temple of the Arts. Together, these four institutions have combined revenues of almost \$5 million dollars, and generate 129

The Plan

full-time equivalent jobs, \$2.9 million in household income and close to \$300,000 in taxes to the City and State. St. George is also the center of informal gallery spaces on Staten Island. This informal infrastructure has gained more visibility recently through Second Saturday, a monthly gallery walk, which facilitates places for the artists to gather regularly and a structure in which the community can participate. However, it is built on artists' generosity and investment, rather than on a stable organizational infrastructure.



is the prioritization of public spaces and pedestrian uses in order to create places and support for ongoing dialogue and creative innovation in the community. We propose creating more resources for artists including exhibition spaces and artist-centered, shared production spaces, as well as a central coordinating organization that can build capacity to carry out the objectives of the Plan. We recognize that for Art Hill to become real, an anchoring cultural institution with the capacity to help coordinate marketing and the ability to embed the new identity of the District into the physical

fabric of the community is vital.

Specifically, the four goals of the Plan are:

- To Provide a permanent home for the arts
- To connect downtown streets to the Ferry Terminal in a manner that is safe and walkable
- To position St. George as a high visibility gateway for cultural activity in Staten Island
- To ensuring that culture supports economic and community vitality

Some elements incorporated in the Plan integral to achieving these goals include:

- *New cultural infrastructure:* Artists need places to produce and exhibit their work, and the growing artists' community in St. George lacks enough space to satisfy the demand. The Plan proposes a number of new facilities for artists in St. George, including the reuse of the landmarked Police Precinct building on Richmond

Terrace and the adjacent Family Court Building to house an arts center and theater complex operated by COAHSI; renovating the Fish's Eddy building on Bay Street to house music and performance facilities including rehearsal spaces and production spaces; constructing an Artists' Atrium building to connect St. Marks Place and Central Ave with

a covered pedestrian walkway between human-scale buildings that accommodate artist's studios on the upper floors and artist supply, exhibition windows, and a small grocery store on the ground floor; and reuse of the Sanitation Garage on Victory Blvd and Jersey Street to accommodate heavy production uses and building material salvage center, as well as classrooms, exhibition space and flexible space for other creative needs.

- *Safe and Walkable Streets:* The plan for Art Hill proposes street improvements that connect the natural centers

of the community to each other, to the waterfront and to the transit center at the Ferry Terminal. The Plan proposes creating a safer crossing on Bay Street where it meets Richmond Terrace. It suggests the creation of a pedestrian plaza with wide steps, seating spaces, and room to host a farmers market. The Plan includes a proposal for an outdoor amphitheater for performers, traffic calming on Wall Street and Central Ave,

poses public displays of both temporary and permanent art, incorporating arts in streetscape elements, events that encourage participation, collaborations between artists and schools, and use of community gardens where artists can display their work. Implementing these elements would establish a permanent presence of art that could be adapted by the community to bolster the unique identity of St. George.

- *Sustainable Economic and Community Vitality:* The Plan seeks to address the issue of artist enclaves developing at the expense of the artists themselves. It is important to create protections and options for affordable housing and live-work space for the diversity of artists. A major objective of the Plan, therefore, is to increase the concentration of artists in the Cultural District by partnering with real estate agents to advertise the existing affordable housing in St. George and market it to creative producers in New York City. In the mid-term it's important to protect the community as it grows, and the Plan proposes creating a Cultural Land Trust as a mechanism to restrict the allowable uses to cultural uses only. In the longer-term, it's important to maintain the affordability of the community, and the Plan proposes working with like-minded non-profit developers to create sustainable, affordable housing. A model that has worked elsewhere in New

York City is a blended supportive housing/affordable housing model; the Plan proposes addressing the special needs in Staten Island in combination with the creation of low-income artists housing.

Implementation

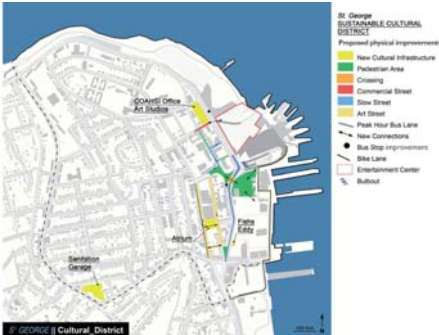
Establishing the St. George Sustainable Cultural District would require the dedication of a committed group of people to achieve consensus on a strategic plan and incorporate an "Art Hill Cultural Development Corporation" as a way to provide basic resources and convene the planning process for this distinct entity through an incubation period. After the incubation period is over, the newly formed board

would employ a staff person to raise funds and implement the Plan. The board is a key resource to ensure the success of the district that must represent the stakeholders in St. George.

Our Plan, which is in the form of a 120-page illustrated report, was presented in December at the Staten Island Museum to a crowd of about 100 people - all interested in making St. George a destination for arts and culture. Since that time, the momentum has continued. We presented four proposals to the NYC Department of Transportation, who is interested in the public plaza feature, and three meetings, under the leadership of COAHSI, have taken place to create a leadership organization for bringing elements of Art Hill to life.

The St. George Sustainable Cultural District Plan builds on the assets of St. George as a gateway for all of Staten Island, and recommends a number of improvements that will provide a permanent home for artists and increase the visibility of Staten Island's creative activity. There are opportunities today to create permanent cultural infrastructure that will serve as a beacon to the creative communities of New York City, and in the process, develop a vibrant neighborhood in downtown Staten Island. Art Hill is a proposal and an opportunity that will help an up and coming artist community come out on top of developers. Staten Island will prove that, just like other boroughs in New York City, it can attract artists, create a renowned Arts District, and develop a cultural aura at the city, the national, and the international level. Facilitating the formalization of a district with character and distinction is an important asset to the city, and an essential obligation in order to ensure that New York continues to be an extraordinary and unique epicenter of life and culture. ■

This piece presents the Plan that our Fall 2010 Studio created, under Professor Pablo Vengochea and the Council for the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island, to create an arts and cultural district for St. George. Our team worked tirelessly on the Plan, and I think I can speak for all of us when I say that the experience was both extremely challenging and incredibly rewarding. This article is a brief presentation of the plan, within the context of some of the broader issues that we considered. Though I'm the contributor for the purposes of this publication, this was a wholly collaborative project; members of the studio were: Helen Ho, Jenny Walty, Eddie Hernandez, Yichen Tu, Kean Tan, Gregor Nemitz, Sara Temple, Sarah Moretti, Ana Rousseaud, Romain Duvoux, Camille Roche and myself.



and a pedestrian mall on Stuyvesant Street between Wall Street and Schuyler Street. These street improvements would transform the streets of St. George into people-friendly public spaces to serve as destinations in themselves.

- *Increase the Public Presence of Art:* St. George currently has a concentration of artists in the downtown area, but it is often not apparent to visitors or current residents because of the lack of artistic expression displayed throughout the District. The Plan proposes increasing the presence of art in order to strengthen the visual identity of the District and create more vitality throughout the District in order to highlight its unique attributes. The Plan pro-



By Alexandra Hanson

Cooking Up Community Food Security

The Roll of Urban Planners in the Community Food Assessment Process

In recent years, the urban planning profession has come to recognize food as an important component of the health and wellbeing of communities. As such, food systems require the same attention as traditionally recognized planning disciplines such as housing, transportation, and land use. However, as food systems have received insufficient attention until very recently, little is known about their structure. Information on how they operate and their impacts on communities is essential for planning professionals to make informed decisions that will enhance community food security. While the term "community food security" can have multiple meanings depending upon the context, a widely accepted definition of community food security is: "a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice". Out of this recognition has grown the "community food assessment" (CFA). This is a process through which food systems stakeholders — academics, food system practitioners, and community members

— gather and analyze pertinent information about their food system to serve as a guide for future improvements. This article examines the CFA tool in the context of urban planning and assess the ways in which planners can be involved in this preliminary step of developing community food security.

History of Food Systems (Neglect) in the Planning Field

Historically, the issue of food has received little attention from the urban planning field. The founders of the profession sought to shape urban society by designing the city's physical world. In the late nineteenth century, Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful cut radiating boulevards through the center of Chicago, while Le Corbusier envisioned grand towers in the park with his Broadacre City. However, they and many other early urban planners failed to address the very basic human need of food and over the past century the urban planning community has remained largely silent on the issue.

However, during the 1990s, food began to gain traction as an important is-

sue with a handful of planning educators. Until that point, food was seen largely as a rural issue in the context of farming. Yet even so, the discipline's view of farmland preservation focused much more on protecting open space, containing sprawl, and controlling the pace of development than the protection of viable agricultural industries and communities, Jerome Kaufman, and Kameshwari Pothukuchi began to draw attention to the importance of food in the urban realm and called for urban planners to include food in their approach to community wellbeing.

Since a 2000 publication by Pothukuchi and Kaufman that identifies food as a "stranger" to the planning field, the attention to food systems by the planning profession has grown significantly. In 2004, the Journal of Planning Education and Research published its first-ever special edition addressing food issues in the planning field. In May of 2007, the American Planning Association adopted its Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, which recognizes food as a significant issue in urban life. The guide outlines multiple methods by which urban planners can contribute to the



sustainability and security of the U.S. food system. These include: protecting farmland from development; planning to reduce the environmental impacts of the food system; using vacant land to support urban agriculture; and engaging communities in food systems planning issues. While previously a marginal issue in urban planning practice, the profession has begun to embrace the notion that food must be integrated into planning in order to address health, environmental and quality of life issues facing communities all across the country.

The Development of Community Food Security

The increased attention to food systems in the planning profession in recent

years mirrors a growing interest in food in the U.S. overall. Although these current food movements do not share a single vision, the concept of community food security has emerged as a recurring theme among many — though not all — of these discourses. The “community” aspect of the concept of community food security is particularly important, as it takes food-related problems out of the realm of the individual and places them in a larger social and political context. When framed this way, community food security recognizes the problems in the current U.S. food system as systemic, and therefore seeks comprehensive instead of individual solutions. Pothukuchi points out that community food security cannot be expected to solve all the current prob-

lems of the global food system, but it can empower communities to develop more socially just and sustainable alternatives.

The questions raised by this new examination of the food system require interdisciplinary approaches that address transportation, environmental sustainability, equity and social justice, land use law and regulation, and economic development. Urban planning is well positioned to assist community food security advocates in redefining food systems at the local and regional level. This is due to the interdisciplinary nature of the profession, the emphasis that planning places on addressing issues that affect a particular physical space, and the existence of community-based planning models.

The Role of Community Food Assessments in Food Systems Planning

Urban planning professionals have a variety of tools available to them to address community food security, such as those outlined in the APA Food Policy Guidelines and by food systems scholars and activists. One of these tools is the community food assessment (CFA). The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) defines a CFA as: “a collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, so as to inform change actions to make the community more food secure”. The CFSC is a national organization that engages in advocacy and education on community food security issues, including providing research support and technical assistance to communities engaging in CFAs.

A 2002 CFSC report entitled *What’s Cooking in Your Food System* recognizes the diversity that exists in the CFA process, and that successful assessments take many different forms. However, they also put forward a set of common themes that often exist in high-quality assessments. According to the CFSC, the following conditions contribute to the creation of a quality assessment: “it examines a range of food system issues, and the connections between food and community goals; it involves a broad range of actors from the community, including individuals and organizations, and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; it involves community residents in significant and meaningful ways, and builds community capacity for future actions; it uses participatory and collaborative processes that generate results, build new partnerships, and leave participants feeling satisfied with the

process; it focuses on community food assets as well as problems, the research is rigorous, and the methods used are consistent with the overall goals of the assessment; it makes effective use of cash and in-kind resources available, and is completed in a reasonable time-frame; it fosters broader awareness and understanding of the community and its food system; and it contributes to tangible actions to bring about positive change in the community’s food system.”. The creation of a comprehensive body of knowledge and analysis that meets the goals of the assessment is critical to the success of a CFA. Equally important, however, are the methods by which this knowledge is gathered and evaluated. Engaging community members as food systems stakeholders in the CFA process is essential to building both capacity and community investment in outcomes.

Though food is fairly new to the urban planning field, urban planners can use their professional training to help communities execute CFAs that engage in the types of analyses outlined by the CFSC. Based on a comparison of CFAs that included professional planners to those that did not, Pothukuchi argues that the involvement of planners in CFAs can strengthen the assessment process and outcomes. She identifies several reasons for this, which originate from the training of planners as simultaneously cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, community oriented, and spatial. Planners, she asserts, can use these skills to help inform the CFA process to address community food security and ensure that assessments undertaken by communities develop as comprehensive an analysis as possible based on the goals of the assessment.

Challenges and Methods for Enhancing Future Community Food Assessments

Communities that wish to conduct CFAs may face a variety of challenges to their implementation. The first is resources. Ultimately, if municipalities are serious about changing the landscape of their food system, they must put resources behind these initiatives. Partnerships with local university planning departments are an option for some communities to implement CFAs without funding. However, not every community will have access to this sort of partnership. Planners can be involved in working with communities to develop models that will provide the necessary resources to move CFAs forward.

Issues of geography and scale are

another challenge that CFAs may encounter. Although municipal boundaries can be used as an easy way to delineate the area of study, in reality these borders may not reflect the area’s food system or its social and economic structure. This is increasingly true as the U.S. has evolved into a metropolitan nation. The metropolitan region has replaced the city or the country as the primary organization of human settlements. It is characterized by social and economic interactions, such as trips to work, which extend beyond defined municipal borders. This shift to a metropolitan structure of human settlements impacts the way that food moves across municipal boundaries.

In addition, the food system has become increasingly consolidated and global over the past several decades. Decisions made far beyond municipal boundaries have had a significant impact on the food systems in communities across the U.S. These structural changes link communities to a much larger system of food production and distribution that often does not reflect municipal, state, or even national borders. Trends outside of the food system, such as employment and the cost of housing, also impact the food security of communities throughout the country.

One of the Community Food Security Coalitions main requirements for a successful CFA is that it is related to a defined geographic place. Without this structure, a CFA can quickly become unwieldy and lose site of its original goals. Individuals involved in generating CFAs must engage in a balancing act that acknowledges the larger social, political, and economic factors beyond the local scale that impact the community food system in the defined area without allowing the local focus of the assessment to be consumed by them. With their knowledge of the social, economic and physical environment, urban planners can help communities identify areas of study that are appropriate for their CFAs.

A 2004 article on community food assessments by Pothukuchi identifies some of the observed differences between CFAs that include planners and those that do not. Attributes of CFAs with participation from planners include: recognition of community planning and government as solutions to community food security and food systems challenges; the identification of a broader range of community concerns regarding food; a broader range of research methods; and a more complex incorporation of space, including the use of data

visualization and mapping. Pothukuchi’s research demonstrates that urban planners have the ability to make significant contributions to the CFA process.

However, she points out that planners can also learn a good deal from community members and other disciplines when implementing a CFA. These include: greater attention to community health issues linked to food; connecting local planning concerns with larger state and federal policy; and employing community visioning techniques as a way to engage community members and build consensus around the issue of food security. CFAs offer an opportunity for planners, professionals from other disciplines, and communities to learn from each other while collectively tackling the challenge of community food security. Ultimately — as recognized by Pothukuchi — all CFAs are exercises in planning, whether or not they include professionally trained planners.

Conclusion

Due to their interdisciplinary nature, community food assessments call for engagement across fields, with a variety of actors and stakeholders. CFAs present an excellent opportunity for both professional and informal urban planners to employ their skills and work with individuals outside of the planning field to enhance community food security. CFAs are an important first step in planning for community food security, not just because of the knowledge they create, but also because of their potential to build capacity within communities to enact change in their food systems. However, CFAs alone will not solve the food security challenges facing communities across the country. The success of an assessment does not lie solely in the comprehensiveness of the document it produces. Instead, the success of a CFA is tied to whether the process can serve as a catalyst for change in the community’s food system. Planners can both contribute to and learn from the CFA process, empowering both communities and the planning profession itself to develop food system plans. Yet they should give equal attention to the CFA process. Through these efforts, urban planners can help communities transform the concepts put forward in their CFAs into meaningful actions that will enhance community food security today and in the years to come. ■

THE DOMINO EFFECT

A STUDENT FILM THAT ANALYZES NEIGHBORHOOD POLITICS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BY ERIN MCAULIFF

Brian Paul, a fellow at Hunter's Center for Community Planning and Development, met Megan Sperry and Daniel Phelps during a Media and Community Advocacy class in the spring of 2010. Megan and Daniel are both MFA candidates in Hunter's Integrated Media Arts program, and together the three are co-producers of the upcoming documentary, *The Domino Effect*.

Their creative union was first made possible by random pairing in Hunter's multi-disciplinary class. By profession, Brian is an activist urban planner and public policy journalist. He never set out to make a full-length documentary, but when grouped with Phelps and Sperry, he says everything fell into place. Earlier that year, Brian had researched and written extensively about rezoning in Brooklyn. At his suggestion, the group decided to take advantage of a proposed rezoning of the Domino Sugar Factory to further explore the issue in a short project. But according to Brian, the project quickly snowballed. "It was all luck. These were supposed to be 20-minute quick and dirty one-offs. But we soon realized this was more than just a student film. The documentary, which focuses on the approved rezoning and redevelopment of the Domino Sugar Factory in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, has become a passion project for all three.

The Domino Sugar Factory was once a symbol of industrial prosperity in a working-class neighborhood. The New Domino Project, which will convert the factory into a 2,200 unit "village by the sea," is slated to begin construction at the end of 2011. While plans will preserve historical components of the façade (including the iconic Domino sign) the main building and two new bookended towers will be converted into housing at a price point mostly out of the reach of original residents from the surrounding Brooklyn neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Greenpoint. Change has filtered through the neighborhoods, slowly reaching the water's edge. The factory, which sits on the waterfront to the north of the Williamsburg Bridge, is not the first local building targeted for development as a consequence of rezoning (and vice versa). It is this larger picture and the consequent ramifications of development which Brian, Megan, and Daniel seem to be focusing on in

their film. In 2005, rezoning left the neighborhood with a glut of newly built luxury housing. Much of the recent development is out of place in a community more accustomed to side-by-side townhouses and modest apartment buildings. Still, even more worrisome than the aesthetic disparity, is the fact that many units remain vacant due to the faltering economy. Williamsburg itself can claim the highest number of stalled construction projects in New York City.

However, in the face of distressing prospects of other recent developments, community leaders and activists generally ended up campaigning in favor of the rezoning. These local dynamics are what originally drew the Hunter students to the issue as a full-length documentary. "At first we found the local politics confusing," said Brian, and it caused them to further dissect the interests of the local stakeholders. "There were residents standing up at the Community Board meeting and demanding, '660 units are 660 hopes for people like me!' But we knew that this plan was basically just an extension of the 2005 rezoning, and we knew that model didn't work, so what was going on here?"

In the end, promised sections of affordable housing won over community housing advocates and local politicians alike, all of whom are concerned about relocating displaced long-time residents in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. But Brian, Megan, and Daniel want to know: what if these small concessions to retain affordable housing are not enough? And furthermore, what if they are part of a larger system that actually spurs gentrification? The Domino Effect posits that as long as the city links affordable housing with the market-based economy, partnering developers will continue to gentrify neighborhoods beyond affordable, while their major affordable investments remain in areas already segregated from the rest of Brooklyn. The issue is up for debate, but the producers of the *The Domino Effect* have so far made a convincing argument that as a city we need to reassess how we do business.

What I found most impressive in talking to the three producers, was how well they honed in on some fundamental issues within the community itself, perhaps an effectual result of a class which paired planners and filmmakers. In talking to local residents, politicians, and ac-

tivists, the documentarians have realized that everyone conceives the problem on a different scale, sometimes accepting the forces creating the problem as separate from the symptoms. A community may witness gentrification and development, but it does not always recognize the prevailing structures that create the environment. Therefore, while current real estate and business interests might be responsible for the woes of the neighborhood, residents are more likely to first acknowledge the symptoms. Locals note the groan of the L and G trains as they carry more and more new residents and, slowly, communities recognize friends and family have been pushed out or local businesses can't keep up with the rents. But, at this point it is hard to point fingers at the institutions now offering the solutions. In this case, the developer's promise of 30% affordable apartments- the 660 units, the 660 hopes.

As Jane Jacobs said, "Although city planning lacks tactics for building cities that can work like cities, it does possess plenty of tactics. They are aimed at carrying out strategic lunacies. Unfortunately, they are effective." And that is why housing non-profits and politicians find themselves between a rock and a hard place, unable to turn down a seemingly generous compromise fully backed by the city and the Mayor's agenda. It's not an unattractive offer, either, when you consider the public plaza, the grassy knoll, 147,000 square feet of community space, and a waterfront finally open to the public's use. As was also the case with Atlantic Yards, we have seen community leaders all over Brooklyn bargaining with developers to receive community benefits.

But are we responsible citizens when developers' interests come first, and "community benefits" are left on the table as a negotiating chip? Brian, Megan, and Daniel have concluded that we might be bargaining away all we have left and it isn't necessarily our only option. Affordable housing needs in New York are very real and as professionals with a responsibility to our community we may need to hold ourselves accountable and realize the fight doesn't stop at thirty percent.

The Domino Effect will be released late summer/early fall 2011. You can find the film's website at www.thedominoeffectmovie.com. ■



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