URBAN

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Photos by Leslie Deacon

CREDITS

Sketch By Serena Li

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

They say image is everything.

If this is the case, it's doubly true in cities, where millions of people can coexist without directly interacting, and billions of dollars are expeditiously exchanged. Amidst the fiercely competitive, yet deeply interconnected global culture of the twenty-first century, cities from Dubai to Delhi and Los Angeles to London have gone to great lengths to carefully (or not so carefully) craft their images. Each has different methods, which beget even more varied outcomes, but many can coalesce over universal motivations: the pursuit of power, profit, global recognition, or reinvention.

In THE IMAGE ISSUE of **URBAN**, we explore the malleability of cities' identities and align them with the myriad ways people perceive their urban environs. Looking to the impacts of WWII, nuclear weaponry, and the ensuing hysteria, we retrace the country's steps to find urban dispersal tactics at the root of mid-century decentralization. Acknowledging the dark cloud in our history cast by military strategies' influence over government policies, one of urban sprawl's roots comes to the surface. Though that cloud has largely dissipated, the United States is still recovering from, and trying to gracefully manage, its population's movement away from city centers. We examine the role of media—in its film, television, digital, and print forms—and its implicit and explicit portrayals of the urban fabric, trying to understand what contributes to our psycho-social experiences. We investigate ways in which cities are managing waste and repurposing outdated infrastructure to promote themselves as centers of economic growth and environmental sustainability. We analyze the role of urban form as a determinant of cities' vitality, and explore how patterns manifest themselves in New York. We delve into the innards of today's housing market, distilling it into core components, for better or worse, and encourage conversation about the mythology of ownership. Being both observant and mindful of the dynamism of the built environment reminds us that a city, neighborhood, or the oft-stereotyped borough ought not be judged by its cover.

Planners face many difficult decisions as they grasp the paintbrushes that color the cities and neighborhoods in which they work. Since planning is neither prescriptive nor entirely scientific, we must explore the fissures that snake through the collective consciousness between what individuals want and what would benefit the whole. From here we can consider who creates a city's identity. Residents? Industries? Elected officials?

New York's landmark skyline, iconic yellow cabs, and lauded public spaces have helped cultivate the iconoclastic urbanism to which we have become accustomed, and within which we live. Because the conditions of planning and design are in flux, decisions must prioritize possibility and guide the city's evolution toward innovation and efficiency, while honoring the context that makes New York emblematic.

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

ZACHARY CRAUN MSAUD 2012

A large body of evidence connects Urban Dispersal strategies in the United States during the post-World War II economic expansion to military and government policies enacted during and after the war, including the GI Bill and the Federal Highway Act. An important, yet rarely discussed aspect of this complex development was the psychological repercussions of the deployment of nuclear weapons against Japan. Postwar depopulation of city centers and the subsequent growth of suburbia resulted, in part, from government policies enacted out of fear of a future thermonuclear war. Those who created these weapons and documented their destruction returned to the United States with a distorted perspective of the urban environment. Government officials, nuclear scientists, military strategists, and later civilians themselves began to see their cities and other urban environments not as places to live and work, but as potential targets. (See fig. 1)

The prescient statement by former U.S. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson in 1947 that the "atomic bomb was more than a weapon of terrible destruction; it was a psychological weapon," perhaps best summarizes the lasting psychosocial impact the atomic bomb had on US citizens, scientists, and government officials. Government policies which promoted decentralization can be seen beginning with the damage assessment conducted by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey on the atomic bombings of Japan. The U.S. conducted two

atomic bombings in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: the first on August 6, 1945, and the second on August 9, 1945. On August 15, 1945, President Truman requested the U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey to study the effects of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Towards the end of the report, the authors began to see "an inverted vision in which those same weapons turned against the United States."[1] The authors conclude that "the fate of industries in both cities again illustrates the value of decentralization…though a reshaping and partial dispersal of the national centers of activity are drastic and difficult measures, they represent a social and military ideal toward which very practical steps can be taken once the policy has been laid down."[2] Their fears about the possibility of similar devastation occurring in the United States were echoed in scientific and government communities.

In September of 1945, a group of scientific employees of the Metallurgical Laboratory of the University of Chicago founded an organization, the Atomic Scientists of Chicago. Membership was eligible to "any past or present scientific employee of the Manhattan Project."[3] Their publication, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, sought to educate citizens, policy makers, scientists, and journalists by providing non-technical, scientifically-sound, and policy-relevant information about nuclear weapons and other global security issues. Among its contributors were Albert Einstein, Ralph Lapp, Bertrand Russell and J. Robert

Oppenheimer. It was an extremely influential publication, especially as Vannevar Bush, a key member of the Manhattan Project, was the Chairman of the National Defense Resource Committee, a precursor to the Office of Science and Technology Policy, from 1939 to 1951. This and other connections meant that contributors had a direct line to policymakers in Washington D.C. The *Bulletin* was a strong advocate of the dispersal of cities and industries as a defense measure against nuclear attacks. Their campaign continued throughout the 1950s, devoting an entire issue to the topic in September of 1951. (See figs. 2 & 3)

During the same timeframe, the Cold War with the Soviet Union was escalating. This backdrop provided additional motivation for urban planning theories of dispersal. Decentralization was "actively encouraged by military strategists in order to reduce the United States' strategic vulnerability to a massive first nuclear strike by the Soviet Union."[4] The marketing of dispersal manifested itself in two intertwined, yet distinct ways: the push for specific government policies and the arousal of the general public's fear.

New urban planning policies were informed by former Manhattan Project scientists, *Bulletin* contributors, and WWII aerial bombardment strategists who acted as scientific and planning advisors in a variety of capacities in the new organizations created with the passage of the National Security Act of 1947. The National Security Resources Board, the Office of Defense

Fig. 1: Norbert Wiener's "Life Belts" in LIFE Magazine's December issue (1950)

Fig. 2: Ralph Lapp's study depicting a possible nuclear strike on Manhattan, NYC (1950, 1948)

Fig. 3: The September 1951 issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was dedicated to 'Dispersal.'

Fig. 4 & 5: Federal Civil Defense Administration poster & Bert the Turtle, their representative mascot

Mobilization, the Munitions Board, and the Central Intelligence Agency all spawned from this act. As Peter Galison observed, this development was a strange type of Lacanian mirroring; the advisors and policy makers, "having gone through the bomb-planning and bomb-evaluating process so many times for enemy maps of Schweinfurt, Leuna, Berlin, Hamburg, Hiroshima, Tokyo and Nagasaki, now the familiar maps of Gary, Pittsburgh, New York City, Chicago and Wichita began to look like them… targeting and dispersing became everyday reasoning… safety in space meant [to] avoid concentration at all costs."[5] Subsequent policies enacted prioritized decentralization. This is evident in the National Security Resources Board's policy for Industrial Dispersion and the corresponding statement of support by President Truman.

With the first Soviet atomic bomb test in August of 1949 and the United States entering the Korean War in June of 1950, the arousal of public fear was relatively simple compared to that of the creation of industrial decentralization policies. The Federal Civil Defense Administration was created in December of 1950 to distribute posters, programs, and information about communism and the threat of communist attacks. A seven-part television series about nuclear fallout called "Survival" was shown on NBC in 1951 and reached and estimated 12 million viewers. Furthermore, the film "Duck and Cover," about what to do during a nuclear attack, was shown to elementary school children. A cartoon booklet telling the same story was distributed

to at least 20 million readers. During this time, popular magazines also contributed to the public fear of thermonuclear attack. *Life, Colliers, Time, Reader's Digest* and *Newsweek,* the predominant forms of geopolitical news at the time, all dedicated issues to the topic.

As geographer Matthew Farish notes, through "a curious blend of graphic and sanitized language, magazines and the authorities they consulted produced 'nuclear fear.'"[6] Science fiction, comic books, and other popular forms of literature also helped stretch the narrative of thermonuclear destruction. The dispersal of industries and decentralization of cities was compounded by the Federal Highway Act of 1956. Ostensibly created for civilian purposes, its dual military applications have been well documented. In his prepared remarks to be delivered by his Vice President, Eisenhower condemned the existing road network as appallingly inadequate "to meet the demands of catastrophe or defense, should an atomic war come."[7] The campaign for civil defense and a mindset of imminent nuclear attack lasted well into the 1960s, when it arguably peaked during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (See figs. 4 & 5)

The impetus for creating an urban shift as major as the one the United States saw after WWII required a series of forces working in confluence. Postwar housing shortages, real estate prices, racial tension, the affordability of the automobile, and other issues pushed in the direction of urban dispersal. But perhaps the most startling reason for suburban growth was the mentalities and policies created by the

deployment and subsequent threat of The Bomb. This shift required not only "the transformation of architectures of infrastructure, computation, highways, and factories," but also the "the remarkable practice of training Americans to see themselves as targets."[5]

Today, the mindset of nuclear threat is no longer shaping our cities (although it is still shaping foreign policy). So why is this relevant to GSAPP students today?

As Winston Churchill famously said, "We shape our buildings, and then our buildings shape us." As the future generation of architects, urban designers, real estate developers, and planners, we have the opportunity to redirect fears about the architectural and urban environment, such as the current American post-9/11 shift toward what some have called "militarized urbanization." This can be seen in the closing off of public streets next to high-profile buildings, the installation of jersey barriers and bollards, and the shortening of proposed towers (as can be seen in the history of Trump's International Hotel & Tower in Chicago). Taking stances against fear does not require us to be naïve, as we should learn lessons from tragedies and mistakes. Rather, it requires a certain kind of informed optimism; one that firmly argues in favor of democratic public spaces and progressive buildings. We must always keep in mind that architecture, urban design, and planning are both an effect of social condition and a cause. ∪

[1] Galison, Peter. "War Against the Center" in Architecture and the Sciences: Exchanging Metaphors. Eds Antoine Picon and Alessandra Ponte. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.
[2] U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey: The Effects of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, June 19, 1946. President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers.
[3] "The Atomic Scientists of Chicago" in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Vol. 1, No. 1, (1945) 1.
[4] Graham, Stephen. "Cities as Strategic Sites: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics." in Cities, War, and Terrorism. Ed. Stephen Graham. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
[5] Galison, Peter. "War Against the Center" in Architecture and the Sciences: Exchanging Metaphors. Eds Antoine Picon and Alessandra Ponte. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.
[6] Farish, Matthew. "Another Anxious Urbanism: Simulating Defense and Disaster in Cold War America" in Cities, War, and Terrorism. Ed. Stephen Graham. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
[7] Address of Vice President Nixon to the Governor's Conference, Lake George, New York, 12 July 1954. Typescript courtesy of Richard Weingroff, Federal Highway Administration.

Lights, Camera, New York!

ALEXANDER MCQUILKIN MSUP 2012

On January 26, Mayor Michael Bloomberg joined Media & Entertainment Commissioner Katherine Oliver on the Queens set of "Gossip Girl" to celebrate the show's 100th episode and announce that 2011 was the biggest year ever for film and television production in New York City. Over 140 TV shows and 188 films were shot in the city last year, which employed approximately 100,000 crew members, and contributed an estimated $5 billion to the city's economy.

Film and television have enjoyed a long and storied past in New York City, from Macy's starring role in "Miracle on 34th Street", to the cupcake craze inspired by "Sex and the City's" Carrie Bradshaw. But the city resents its reputation as an expensive shooting location and its perennial backseat to Los Angeles.

So in 1966, the City of New York premiered its Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting in an effort to promote film and television production via tax breaks, free permits, and free police assistance. Its "Made in NY" program even includes a production assistant training program and a discount card valid at participating local vendors.

But the "Made in NY" program is hardly unique. In the last few years, cities and states nationwide have developed incentives designed to lure the glamorous industry, in what has become a vicious battle for what some consider an expensive pursuit of a rather tenuous source of tax revenue. In 2010, 40 states spent a combined $1.4 billion on film production incentives. But with so many states playing, this subsidy battle really only benefits the filmmakers themselves, since purported job creation benefits are in fact quite limited spatially and temporally.

In 2008, Michigan launched the most generous film incentive program to date, offering to rebate up to 42 percent of a film's production expenditures. The state envisioned a bustling Hollywood North of sorts, hoping to retain the state's fleeing young creative class and put laid-off auto workers back to work. But amidst a severe fiscal crisis last year, the program was drastically scaled back, and film subsidies, once uncapped, weren't to exceed $25 million per year. The $500 million that was spent by filmmakers in the state in 2010 had slowed to a trickle by the end of last year. The program's detractors point to a Senate Fiscal Agency study claiming the state made back just 17.5 cents in tax revenues for every dollar spent on film incentives.
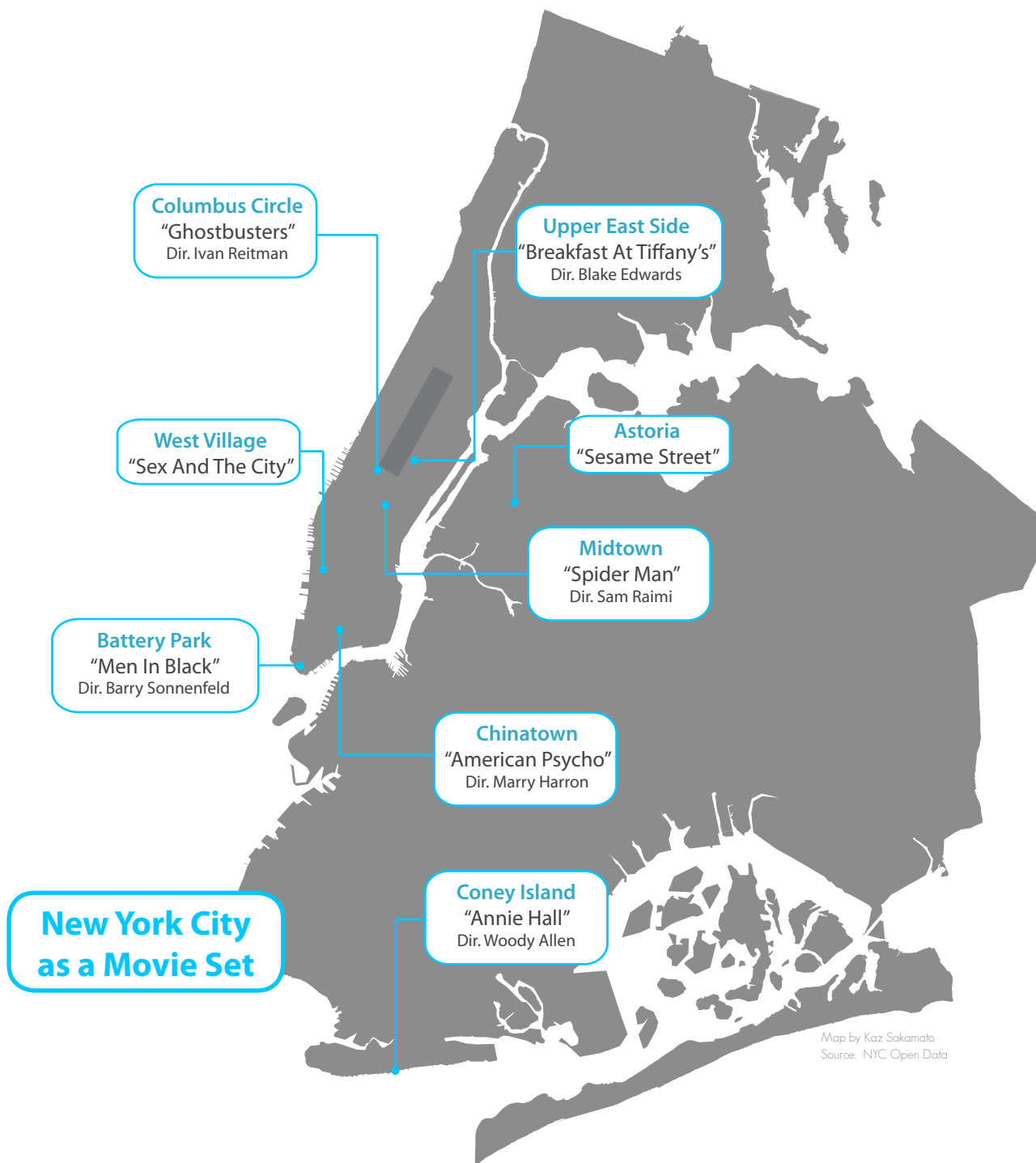
But defenders of these incentive programs claim there is a goal beyond job creation and tax revenue: the much-hyped, yet hard-to-measure concept of place promotion. Film commissions in Michigan and Louisiana hoped a starring role in a Hollywood production might help boost sagging reputations as well as tourism figures. Unfortunately, they lacked the power to veto films like "8 Mile" and shows like "Treme" that painted those places in a less-than-flattering light.

"Films and TV shows set in the city serve as a postcard to the world," says Marybeth Ihle of the Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting. You don't need to take a "Sopranos"- or "Law & Order"-themed bus tour to know that New York City doesn't have an image problem.

The website of the Office of Media and Entertainment features a quote attributed to film director Spike Lee: "Toronto, I'm sorry, it's not New York City." Toronto and other cities have been offering themselves as cheap stand-ins for New York's rugged urbanism for years, while New York City itself languished under a reputation of crime and grand expense. But when a place takes a central role in a film's story, its authenticity is near impossible to match, especially to today's sophisticated audiences.

So wouldn't filmmakers who desired New York as a setting have to shoot in New York to achieve the desired effect? They should be willing to pay the price, however high, irrespective of any of the city's efforts to lure them. Filmmakers elect to set their stories in New York because of its distinct position in our collective consciousness and its unique visual appeal. They're less

New York City as a Movie Set

Columbus Circle
"Ghostbusters"
Dir. Ivan Reitman

Upper East Side
"Breakfast At Tiffany's"
Dir. Blake Edwards

West Village
"Sex And The City"

Astoria
"Sesame Street"

Midtown
"Spider Man"
Dir. Sam Raimi

Battery Park
"Men In Black"
Dir. Barry Sonnenfeld

Chinatown
"American Psycho"
Dir. Marry Harron

Coney Island
"Annie Hall"
Dir. Woody Allen

Map by Kaz Sakamato
Source: NYC Open Data

motivated by the promise of cheap land and labor; Hollywood offers enough of that.

In fact, many of the office's most laudable programs cost almost nothing, and other city agencies would do well to replicate them. The office's website features a location scouting directory, paperwork minimization and expedition, and an industry job board. The office has customer service down pat, and their staff is praised by local filmmakers.

But New York City has its sights set beyond merely standing in as a sexy backdrop. City officials, especially under Mayor Bloomberg, want to make New York into a digital media hub—a "Silicon Alley" of web design and production, animation, digital effects, video game design, and graphic arts. This will prove difficult, though potentially very rewarding. In 2000, the city commissioned the Boston Consulting Group to conduct a study measuring the condition of its digital media sector. Availability of talent was the challenge most cited by local industry

respondents. Clustering—of both firms and talent—is of crucial importance to this sector and "New York lacks the critical mass to supply a strong job network," laments one digital media executive quoted in the report.

But New York City can attract this desirable bunch not by building new tech campuses and offering tax incentives, but by merely being itself. New York is and always will be a top choice among the young, creative crowd. And if time is any lesson, they will bear the cost. ᴜ

Ludwig Bemelmans

PBS Kids

PBS Kids
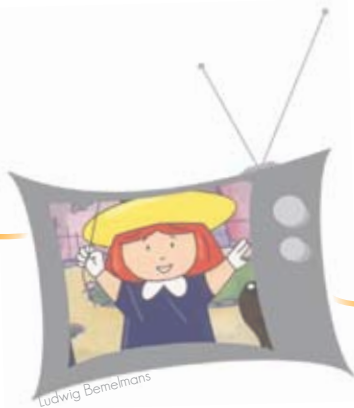
Hey, City!

LUCY ROBSON MSUP 2013

You would think that the hero of the 8-year-running Nicktoon "Hey Arnold!" is Arnold, the street-smart fourth grader with a distinctly football-shaped noggin, but you'd be wrong. Nor does it revolve around his lovesick nemesis Helga, his best friend Gerald, or even the assorted characters in his grandparents' boarding house, the Sunset Arms. Instead, the urban form is the real star. It drives the plot, provides humor, tragedy, and ultimately is responsible for retaining a healthy fan base more than ten years since its last episode was broadcast.

"Hey Arnold!" inhabits the fictional city of Hilltown, an amalgam of Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; and New York City, from which creator Craig Bartlett draws. It's impossible to forget that it's a show that takes place in the urban environment because each episode illustrates the small-scale "ballet of the street" dynamic championed by Jane Jacobs. Arnold and his friends juggle the realms of school and home, while exploring a third type of place where they test their ideas and identities: the street.

THE LIFE OF THE STREET
Did Bartlett know that his animated creation embodied this urban planning archetype? Whether or not Jacobs' philosophies overtly inspired "Hey Arnold!'s" creation, the show functions as a fantastic paen to the life of the street, whose place of pride as a venue for life is evident from the opening title sequence that ushers the viewer into every episode.

Our scene opens with an alley view, looking onto a group of girls jumping rope on the sidewalk in front of the neighborhood's brownstones. It's twilight, and a strident voice calls out: "Hey Arnold!" He flings open the door to his grandparents' boarding house armed with a flashlight to transform the unknown urban environment into known situations. He strides down the front stoop and out into the neighborhood, populated by friends and antagonists. Menacing sounds in an alleyway turn out to be a clumsy friend's encounter with a trashcan, and leering faces are those of friends.

Arnold wordlessly gathers his crew, and they mark the third place as their own, where they're not only their parents' kids; they have the power to create their own conflicts and power struggles.

They're perfectly matched, and the boys and girls stare each other down in the alley as inquiring heads crane out of windows. Eyes on the street, indeed. To the kids, the conflict could be epic, and it's happening everyday specifically because of the urban form. Parents and guardians let their children roam without fear because they can watch from the windows.

CONTRAST: "RUGRATS"
In the 1990's, Nickelodeon created "Nicktoons," the first of which to air was "Rugrats" in 1991.

"Rugrats"'s supreme suburbanism provides an excellent contrast to the city-driven "Hey Arnold!." The show follows the adventures, imaginings, and general mishaps of a group of babies and toddlers in an unnamed suburb, and is a testament to the power of imagination, the babies' only line of action in a place that is ill-suited to their independence. "Rugrats" doesn't share the strength of the street with "Hey Arnold!," and suffers for it.

Both shows cover the day-in, day-out happenings of an ensemble of children. They are the focus, and it is their wishes, desires, and dreams that the shows privilege. "Rugrats", which ran until 2004, is lauded for inventive storytelling, but lacks the place-based maturity that raises the storylines in "Hey Arnold!" to great heights.

The babies and their older siblings are limited to where their parents take, enclose, or corral them. The show becomes

Nickelodeon
Nickelodeon
Nickelodeon
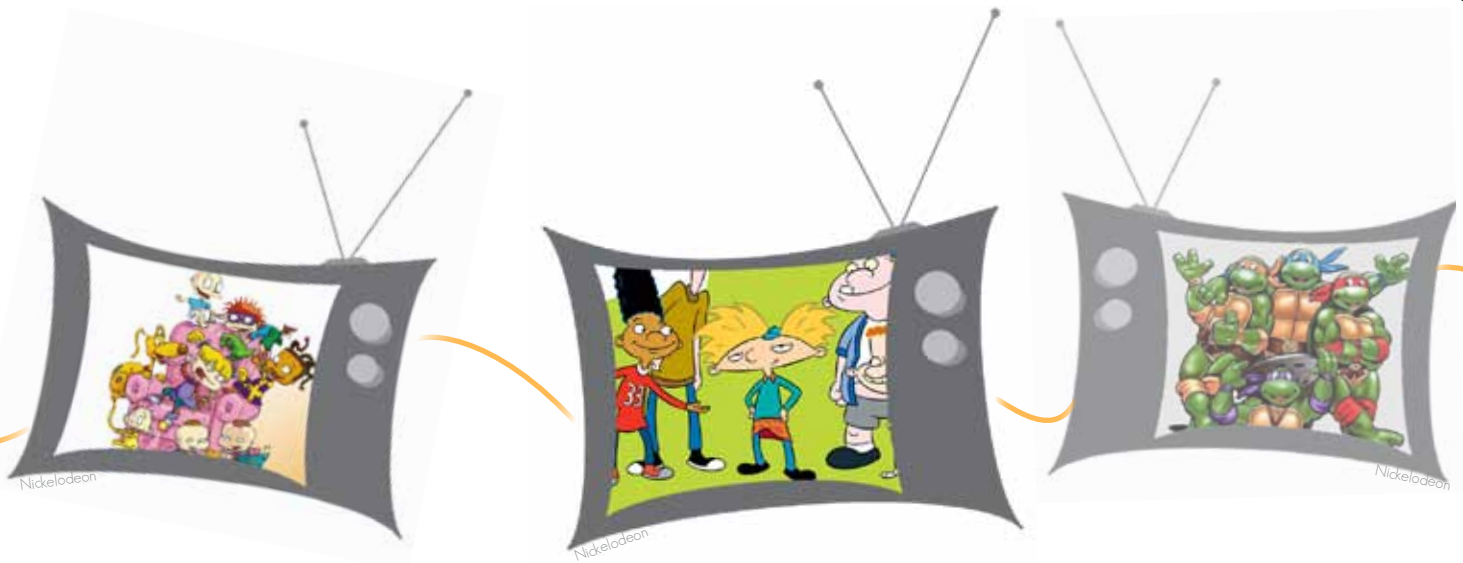
one about the life of the mind, not the possibility of the physical fabric, because the physical fabric is so limiting to the character's abilities and actions. As a result, the landscapes in "Rugrats" are either banal or extraordinary. Home life (the playpen, the backyard, the car, the coffee shop) is nondescript, whereas the landscape of imagination (dinosaurs, desert islands, and dungeons) allows the story to unfold.

With "Rugrats" as the model, children are primed to explore the depths of their thoughts, but must retreat into their minds in order to create a place of their own. The city street allows Arnold and his compatriots to have their own physical space, a place pioneered in children's television by Jim Henson.

SESAME STREET: THE FIRST KIDS PLACE ON THE BLOCK

Created by Jim Henson Studios in 1969, "Sesame Street" was aimed at younger children, which gave it an overt educational focus. The concept of the city street was chosen to empower children impoverished in the inner city to show them that their living space could, and should be a neighborhood.

What goes unsaid is that the show was an example of Jane Jacobs' ballet of the street concurrently as she was writing it. "Sesame

Street" is largely about the interactions that good urbanism creates: running into neighbors; socializing from one's stoop; doing chores; and shopping. These are the same elements that color the action of "Hey Arnold!," and their similarities are remarkable.

Almost every American born between 1965 and today knows of "Sesame Street" the place; they can describe what it looks like, they could tell you what it feels like, who lives there, and what they do. Sesame Street doesn't exist on any maps, but might as well be a Main Street in any American town or city. Perhaps if people recognize the good urbanism inherent in "Sesame Street," they would be more inclined to work to make Main Street resemble "Sesame Street."

"HEY ARNOLD!"'S LESSON AND LEGACY

"Sesame Street" has a definite legacy and an indelible place in the hearts of millions, a claim that "Hey Arnold!" can't duplicate. So why raise it to this high level of praise? After all, you can make the claim that it's just a children's show that ran for a few years in the 90s. It didn't even run on basic cable.

"Hey Arnold!"'s greatest strength was its storytelling, which was heightened by

the presence of the urban form, since it introduced elements of good urbanism and planning issues to elementary and middle-school-aged children with maturity and enthusiasm.

There's a danger in children's television programming today because there is no show that privileges the urban form besides "Sesame Street." Although toddlers and preschoolers are an important demographic to serve with television programming, providing good city-privileging information, the inquisitiveness and learning mentality of elementary- and middle-school-aged children makes them more responsive to material that is potentially different to their own experiences.

Public television has the potential to reach across socio-economic and cultural boundaries; it is positioned to give them a language to understand urbanism and activism, and highlights the elements of good urban form in peoples' daily experiences. At this moment, there's a crucial need to use television—an extremely visible medium—to reintroduce these to young children. They deserve nothing less, and Arnold, always recognized for his level judgment, would agree. ∪

HURRICANE IN NYC?

BECCA GOURLEY MSUP 2013

Although Irene hit New York as a tropical storm, the city is still at risk from hurricanes. This map, created using HAZUS-MH, a FEMA-produced storm modeling program, shows the potential debris generated from wind damage resulting from a 100-year storm based on the 1938 Hurricane storm path, which touched ground in Long Island.

TONS PER CENSUS TRACT (2000)
0 - 149 | 150 - 299 | 300 - 499 | 500 - 999 | 1,000 - 3,300
SOURCE: FEMA

Digital City

ALLEY LYLES MSUP 2013

Social media facilitates a two-way conversation where New York City and its citizens can engage in a dialogue on how to improve quality of life. The success of the digital reach was observed this past fall during Hurricane Irene. Most notably, one of New York's official *Twitter* accounts, @NYCMayorsOffice, led the way in terms of safety updates and evacuation plans. The *Twitter* handle's following more than doubled in the days leading up to the storm, growing from 24,507 followers to 52,228 followers in just four days. For the city's government, the event emphasized the importance of leveraging social media as an effective medium for public outreach.

> Since Hurricane Irene, New York City has taken strides to promote transparency and open government.

In February, NYC.gov launched four official channels via *Facebook*, *Foursquare*, and *Twitter*. All were debuted during Social Media Week at a press conference appropriately held at *Tumblr* Headquarters in the Flatiron District. Additionally, on March 7, New York City became the first local government to pass legislation ensuring public access to government data—a high watermark in the open data movement. Nowhere is the impact of this trend more apparent than in cities, where data is the densest and networks most complex.

Originally, the term "Silicon Alley" was coined to refer to start-up technology business in Manhattan's Flatiron and SoHo neighborhoods during the 1990s dot-com boom. It has since grown to include technology businesses developing in all five boroughs. Since 2007, *Buzzfeed*, *Livestream*, *Buddy Media*, *Tumblr*, and dozens of social media companies have flocked to New York in an attempt to capitalize on the burgeoning tech start-up scene. The attraction clearly lies in the intellectual capital and culture of idea sharing fostered in the city. One representative of a social media platform that enables the recording and sharing of audio content via a map-based interface explained, "There is definitely a nurturing scene here."

> New York City maintains 250 social media channels and over 4,000 points of engagement with citizens ranging from *tweets* to verbal input at city-wide Meetup.com assemblies.

The city's efforts to create a twenty-first century applied sciences campus on Roosevelt Island will only further expand New York's base of tech-savvy human capital. Cornell University and Technion-Israel Institute of Technology will welcome their first class of students in 2017, allowing the city to embrace a new class of engineers and technology enthusiasts. Such targeted initiatives show that, in New York, fostering innovative technology is hardly a passing fad. ◗
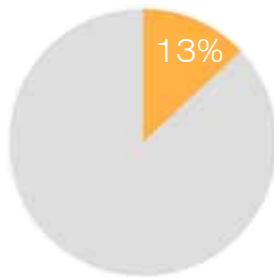
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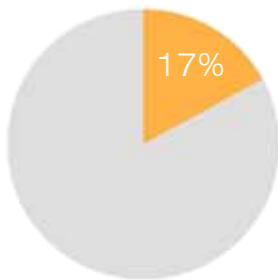
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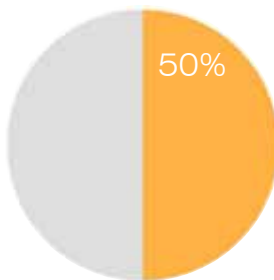
PERCENT OF WASTE RECYCLED

16%

NEW YORK CITY

13%

LOS ANGELES

17%

HOUSTON

50%
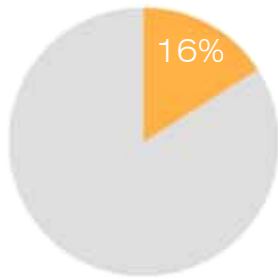
SAN FRANCISCO

It's Wednesday morning and you're late for work. As you rush out your front door, you nearly collide with a 3-foot stack of black plastic bags piled outside and marvel at how, just seven hours before, the sidewalk was bare.

In New York, eight million residents throw away 11,000 tons of waste every day, which is enough trash to fill the interior of a hollow Empire State Building. The city faces a constant battle to maintain a reputation of cleanliness while maintaining a prosperous economy. Shortly before the city's formal incorporation in 1881, the State Legislature formed the Department of Street Cleaning which, 49 years later, became the Department of Sanitation. Today it has an annual budget of $1.3 billion, and reportedly collects more waste than any other municipal garbage operation in the world.

The city spends 70 percent of its annual sanitation budget to remove waste quickly and non-intrusively. Garbage is collected three times per week in all five boroughs during off-peak hours; most other American cities collect residential garbage weekly. New York is unique in its requirement of sanitation staff to manually handle trash bags instead of using more efficient technologies that could save time, money, and strenuous work.

In contrast, a mere 0.2 percent of the sanitation budget is spent on waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. Less than .05 percent of the annual sanitation budget, $20,027 is allocated to informing the public about the value chain of waste

Anna Oursler

and trash can be reused or recycled. Unfortunately, the Department of Sanitation recently made cuts to its already emaciated recycling outreach budget for the 2012 fiscal year.

Where exactly does all of our trash go? For decades, New York City dumped its garbage into the ocean. Trash was used to fill many of its waterways and wetlands, creating the land mass under lower Manhattan, Brooklyn's Red Hook shoreline, JFK, and LaGuardia airports. A United States Supreme Court injunction ordered the city to stop ocean dumping in 1934 after complaints from seaside communities. Incineration was the next answer, leading to a series of landfills and incinerators opening throughout New York and New Jersey.

Fresh Kills should be a recognizable name; it's both the Staten Island bird estuary and our nation's largest landfill. The 2,200-acre site was opened in 1947 as a temporary trash holding pen, but when the 1970 Clean Air Act forced the closure of most of New York's incinerators, Fresh Kills became the city's permanent landfill. After some 50 years of operation and many years of public outcry, the State Legislature finally ordered its closure in 2001.

Today, New York City either hauls its trash via truck and rail to landfill sites in Ohio, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, or to a waste-to-energy incineration plant in Essex County, New Jersey. For New York, this increases the cost of waste disposal from $42 per ton during the Fresh Kill era, to between $70

and $100 per ton. For financially-stressed states that receive New York's waste, however, it's a lucrative business. The state of Virginia, for example, generates an annual cash flow of $76 million in return for being the host to just 14 percent of our waste.

The story of waste in New York has been about finding the most cost-effective disposal solutions that will uphold our highly consumptive urban lifestyles. Manhattan's relative wealth prevents us from having to deal with the environmental and health problems associated with the long-term storage or combustion of waste, but not all cities have this choice.

As our waste problem grows, and as New York continues to become technologically innovative, how can we begin to see waste recovery as a business opportunity and a choice that benefits quality of life for humans and nature?

Cities, and indeed whole countries, have found cost-effective ways to reduce the amount of waste produced and reclaim resource value through reuse and recycling. On this one, the train has left the station, and New York City is far behind. ∪

CANADA 12%
US 17%
SPAIN 30%
JAPAN 49%
SWITZERLAND 53%

Data Source: Waste and Recycling News & M.J. Clarke et al

The Myth of the Housing Recovery

JEFFREY YUEN MSUP 2012

The discourse around the housing crisis has seriously missed the point. It has been nearly five years since the onset of the financial meltdown and the housing sector is still in tatters. Since 2007, banks have foreclosed on over eight million homes with another 11 million households currently underwater and at serious risk of default. Meanwhile, housing affordability is worsening due to declining wages. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies, 50 percent of renters and 37 percent of homeowners are now cost burdened (paying over 30 percent of income on housing). Despite this grim reality, the focus has been on the misplaced notion of a housing "recovery" and a speedy return to a "healthy" housing market. But what does a "healthy" housing market look like?

A good description can be gleaned from President Obama when he announced the Home Affordable Mortgage Modification Program in 2009: "It will prevent the worst consequences of this crisis from wreaking even greater havoc on the economy. And by bringing down the foreclosure rate, *it will help to shore up housing prices for everyone.*"

Thus, a "healthy" housing market is one where prices go up, and in essence, housing recovery = expensive homes. This myth must be dispelled if we are to address the roots of the housing problem.

There's general consensus that excessive greed led to the housing crisis. The Right blames greedy homeowners who took out mortgages they couldn't afford, either to flip, or to refinance for easy cash. The Left blames the greedy financial industry whose predatory practices pushed exotic and unnecessary loan products onto unwitting families. Curiously missing from the discourse is a deeper critique of the roots of this pervasive "greed" incentive. Residing at its core is a housing system that treats the home primarily as a vehicle for private profiteering, and only secondarily as accommodative shelter.

Let us be clear: The housing crisis is not about declining home prices, but the fundamental and ongoing failure of the housing system to provide adequate shelter for all. This is the root of the subprime crisis, the foreclosure crisis, and the housing affordability crisis.

Yet, America still adamantly believes in the virtues of expensive housing. The latest census data indicates that national housing prices have declined roughly 35 percent since the peak in 2007, but it is equally true to say that housing affordability has increased by 35 percent. What is wrong with that? Of course this price correction has resulted in significant loss of equity for many families. But rather than address the underlying issue through systemic reform, current policies are designed as a crutch to artificially prop up home values. This simply is not sustainable. The following are three tenets that support this misplaced faith in the "healthy" housing market.

1. There is a pervasive, culturally-ingrained ideology of homeownership as an embodiment of the American Dream. But homeownership has many dimensions and the primary benefits—security, autonomy, and legacy—can be separated from speculative profiteering. The idea that "housing is always a good investment" has clearly been proven wrong, especially for lower income households. Further, a fundamental contradiction arises when the profitability for one homeowner comes at the direct expense of affordability for the next. Part of the problem stems from our bifurcated system of homeownership and rentals that has few options in between. This is not a competitive scenario. Many alternative forms of tenure exist that can augment the range of choices in our housing system.

2. Housing is the primary wealth accumulator for many families, especially for moderate income and elderly households, but that wealth stems from two distinct sources. First, mortgage payments are in effect a forced savings account. A homeowner "deposits" equity into a mortgage that can be accessed later (as with seniors who sell a home for retirement). This is an ineffective savings system, as the first five years of a mortgage—about the average duration that Americans stay in a mortgage—is mostly payments towards servicing interest with almost no equity being accrued. Savings accounts can be managed in many other ways that are more liquid and don't require excessive mortgage servicing interest rates. Second, profits also stem from land speculation, which are essentially private appropriations of socially-created wealth. Land speculation also tends to fluctuate wildly, just look at Las Vegas where the Case-Shiller home price index has dropped 60 percent from peak. Policymakers are rightfully concerned about families with equity lost in their homes, but it isn't logical to simply re-inflate housing prices. There are alternative schemes that can transition distressed homeowners into decommodified housing, but we cannot discuss them until we relinquish the "recovery" myth.

3. Housing is widely seen as a driver for the national economy by boosting consumer spending and "creating" jobs. In effect, the housing sector is a perpetual stimulus package—with ample government subsidy—that systematically overinvests in speculative housing with very real opportunity costs to the rest of the economy. For example, highly regressive tax expenditures for homeowners accounted for $185 billion in 2010 alone.

At its core, our belief in a "healthy" housing market is tautological; we need housing to be profitable in order to extract profits from housing. But what if our assumptions are severely misplaced? What if we could limit the speculative component of homeownership, and instead focus on security, autonomy, passing on property to heirs, and building limited equity? What if we could move beyond superficial stopgap measures and address the roots of the crisis? Our insistence on dogmatic ideology has led to ineffective policies that tinker at the edges of a flawed system.

If we are serious about a truly healthy housing sector, one that serves the needs of all Americans, it must be decommodified in a way that prioritizes accommodation over accumulation. There are many alternatives—community land trusts, mutual housing associations, limited equity coops—that can preserve the best aspects of homeownership while removing the notion of unlimited profiteering. But the public discourse cannot debate the relative merits of these alternative strategies until we relinquish the myth of the housing "recovery" and focus on the roots of the crisis. ⋓

Foreclosed!?
PETE HARRISON   MSUP 2013

Foreclosures continue to destabilize and stress communities nationwide. The Center for Responsible Lending estimates approximately six million families lost homes to foreclosure, and various projections indicate another 12 to 15 million families could lose homes before the crisis ends, with communities of color being hit the hardest. Nationally, about eight percent of African-American and Latino families have lost their homes, compared to 4.5 percent of white families, exacerbating wealth disparities and increasing poverty. In New York City, over 50 percent of all foreclosures are located in just nine percent of community districts in Brooklyn and Queens heavily populated with communities of color. Finding a long-term solution to the foreclosure crisis that provides relief to families under threat of losing their homes, while establishing permanent affordability has never been so important.

This spring, the Mortgage Foreclosures & Community Land Trust Studio has been working with the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP), a resource and advocacy center that engages community groups to achieve financial justice in this city's low-income communities and communities of color. The studio is looking to determine whether the community land trust model (CLT) is a viable option for advancing fundamental change in New York. CLTs remove speculation and increase shelter and area stabilization by separating ownership of the land from that of the home. This model might prove particularly beneficial for residents in East New York, an area hit especially hard by the foreclosure crisis.

Although successful CLTs exist in Burlington, VT and Boston, MA, it remains to be seen whether NEDAP's vision of permanent affordability could be achieved with this model amidst the unique political and economic environment of New York City. While such solutions may seem alluring, the crises of foreclosures and affordable housing remain incredibly complex. Over the course of the semester, the studio studied the legal, financial, and community factors that might make a community land trust work, using East New York as a case study. The studio has produced a roadmap for NEDAP to give to community groups interested in CLTs along with several policy recommendations that should be a priority for NEDAP to advocate for greater awareness and encouragement of CLTs on a city-wide level. The roadmap is hopefully just one of many steps in the direction of a community-first housing market without speculation in New York City that will ultimately solve the foreclosure crisis and prevent another in the future. ⋓

Trial & Tribute For Public Right of Way

SARA BETH ROSENBERG   MSUP 2012

In January 1992, crowds gathered along Main Street in Venice, Fla. to watch the last parade of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus animals from the Venice Train Depot to their winter training quarters.

In the decades following the end of passenger service on the Seaboard Air Line/Legacy Corridor in April 1971, the rail line was shared between CSX for cargo deliveries and Ringling Brother's Circus, which used the line to transport the animals and equipment to Sarasota on their way to Tampa. The last run of CSX cargo trains in 2003 marked the end of two centuries of rail service on the Gulf coast of Florida, linking Sarasota County directly to the historical port city of Tampa.

In the centuries following the heyday of the Palmers and Potters, early European settler families in Sarasota divided and sold their large homesteads to private developers. Cattle was shipped off to greener pastures, and residential neighborhoods, shopping malls, light manufacturing, and cargo distribution centers have sprouted in their place. Besides a few small county parks and Oscar Scherer State Park, most of this land remained private, in keeping with the Palmer/Potter heritage.

Enabled by the National Trails System Act of 1983, which allows railroads to abandon unproductive lines by relinquishing them to "sponsors," such as Sarasota County, the derelict Legacy Corridor rail line was purchased in December 2004 for $11.75 million through a partnership between Sarasota County and the Trust for Public Land.

Sarasota County has spent $30 million to develop the largest public recreation project ever constructed in the area, the Legacy Trail. The 12.8-mile linear park is built along the abandoned CSX rail line from just south of the city of Sarasota to Venice following the former rail bed. The trail draws about 120,000 visitors a year and nearly rivals Siesta Key Beach as the most frequented park in the county.

Trail heads at Bay Street Park, Laurel Park in Laurel, Nokomis Park in Nokomis, Oscar Scherer State Park in Osprey, Patriots Park and the historic Venice Train Depot effectively create a network of public parks throughout the corridor. The Legacy Trail is the backbone of a larger network of trails planned in Sarasota County.

Community support and advocacy groups such as Legacy Trail Friends were so outspoken that they gained momentum to push through plans for a vital link in the trail—a ped/bike overpass over a six-lane major highway—in time to beset when the state was looking for shovel-ready projects to fund with federal stimulus dollars.

This great public space victory is threatened, however, by private land owners abutting the corridor who have brought a case to Federal Claims Court demanding "just compensation" for the land now in the hands of the county and public land trust.

Transforming the Tappan Zee?

DANIELLE DOWLER MSUP 2013

Inspired by the ongoing movement towards adaptive reuse and sustainability, the Tappan Bridge Park Studio has spent this spring advancing a proposal to convert the existing Tappan Zee Bridge in New York's northern suburbs into a one-of-a-kind park over the Hudson River. Working closely with the Tappan Bridge Park Alliance, a coalition of politicians and advocates supporting the conversion, the studio has unfolded amidst an extremely unique political environment.

Nicole Buchholz

In the initial plans for a replacement crossing, state officials made no mention of their future plans for the aging structure, which was built in 1951 and is carrying traffic volumes well beyond its original design capacity. However, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released in February, made the intention to demolish the existing bridge explicitly clear. Adding a further challenge, the Obama Administration has fast-tracked funding for the replacement Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing, which has been prioritized by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

In a striking twist, Governor Cuomo spoke in late February of the "exciting" potential of preserving and converting the existing bridge, and stated that officials would actively evaluate whether such a project would be structurally and financially feasible. With the proposal for a new crossing inspiring feverish debate amongst local residents, politicians, and special interest groups, the list of supporters and skeptics of a potential Tappan Bridge Park has been ever-changing. Based on precedents set by Poughkeepsie's Walkway Over The Hudson and Chelsea's High Line, the studio identified a sizeable potential for economic growth as a result of an adaptive reuse project. However, its myriad challenges include an unclear ownership structure, growing structural deficiencies, and undetermined funding sources, not to mention a fluctuating level of political will. ◑

The plaintiffs claim that when CSX Transportation abandoned its local line in 2004 to Sarasota County, the action nullified the 1914 easements for rail use. Thus, the property reverts to whomever subsequently bought it. Considering that the Legacy Trail comprises a 100-foot swath along the original rail line, the federal government has to compensate those 122 property owners along the trail for the "taking" of their land.

Even the owners of standard 80-by-120-foot lots could win judgments of $75,000 to $100,000, based on appraisals of land values in 2004 prices. The bill to federal taxpayers ranges from $40 million to $50 million.

Ironically, Palmer Ranch developer Hugh Culverhouse stands to be a major beneficiary. He estimates he will get $5 million to $7 million as the successor to much of the property owned by Adrian Honore, who granted an easement in 1914. ◑

Sara Beth Rosenberg
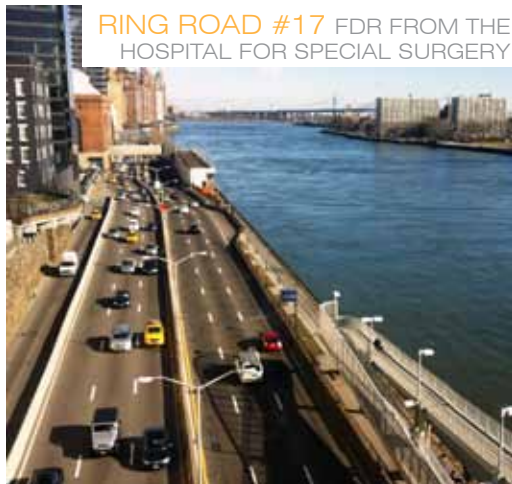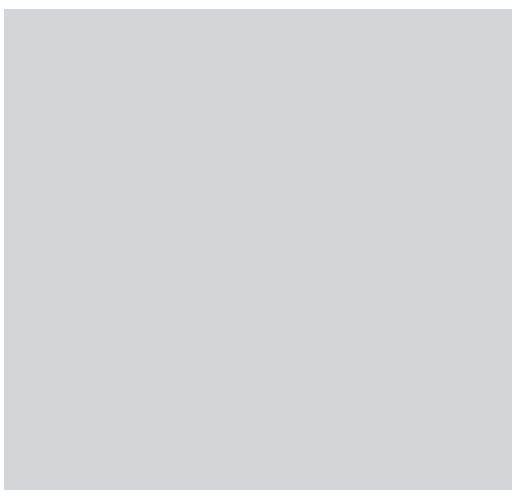
RING ROAD #17 FDR FROM THE
HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY

Urban Planning, in both practice and study, has always been a field in flux. Over the past century, orthodox practice has evolved from the City Beautiful movement to the era of Rational Planning, from Urban Renewal strategies to Participatory Planning, and from Euclidian Zoning to Transit-Oriented Development. Planning students are trained to see these paradigm shifts as responses to the mistakes of a previous era. The pattern began at the birth of the discipline itself, which arose as a response to the public health and safety threats created by rapid and haphazard industrial development. Arguably, at the core of each of these different iterations is a search for what makes development models "work" and, equally, what makes them fail. This idea speaks to another pattern present in the evolution of planning practice: the search for a set of qualities that guarantee the success of a development model.

Like Le Corbusier, architect Christopher Alexander is one theorist who attempted to define these qualities in an all-encompassing theory. His 1977 book, "A Pattern Language," defined the entire built environment as a series of 253 patterns that persist across cultures and time. The patterns range in scope from regional development principals down to the minutiae of home furnishings.

Alexander writes in a very prescriptive fashion, asserting that "many of the patterns here are archetypal—so deep, so deeply rooted in the nature of things, that it seems likely that they will be a part of human nature, and human action, as much in give hundred years, as they are

Pattern Language
a photo essay

CAROLINE BAUER MSUP 2012

today," continuing, "at least a part of the language we have presented here is the archetypal core of all possible pattern languages, which can make people feel alive and human."

Give or take a few, 75 of the patterns pertain to planning. Each is written prescriptively, in that Alexander first defines the problem, and then the pattern is used to solve it on a human scale. For example, Pattern 22: Nine Percent Parking, reads: "Very simply: When the area devoted to parking is too great, it destroys the land."

Therefore: Do not allow more than 9 percent of the land in any given area to be used for parking. In order to prevent the "bunching" of parking in huge neglected areas, it is necessary for a town or a community to subdivide its land into "parking zones" no larger than 10 acres each and to apply the same rule in each zone. Rather than just pointing out that parking lots erode neighborhood character, Alexander provides a design rule to correct the problem in order to prevent its future proliferation.

A primary component of the "Pattern Language" is defining the parts of what makes something feel "whole" in concrete, mathematical terms. For example, a public park (the whole) is used more frequently if it contains benches, large trees, gathering spaces, etc (the parts). In turn, the more patterns a city contains, the more "whole" it feels. In this way, Alexander created a formula to describe the abstract qualities that make Las Vegas different than Paris or

Midwestern suburbs different from New England towns.

He argues that the qualities that make whole cities and individual developments work cannot be pinpointed; indeed, he calls them "Qualities Without a Name." "This oneness, or the lack of it, is the fundamental quality for anything. Whether it is in a poem, or a man, or a building full of people, or in a forest, or a city, everything that matters stems from it. It embodies everything. Yet still this quality cannot be named."

Surprisingly, New Urbanist pioneer Andres Duany considers New Urbanism to be derived from the principles of Alexander's "Pattern Language." While New Urbanism adheres to many of the patterns, it is often criticized for feeling artificial, for lacking the quality of wholeness that cannot be named. Alexander argues that the ticket to wholeness comes in the spontaneous development of the urban geometry. In other words, overly planned communities are doomed to fail. In a 2012 interview for the Center for Environmental Structure, Alexander criticized New Urbanism:

"Instead of thinking about the deeper issues, they take the issues that they believe in and define them and formulate them in terms which can fit into the activities of a typical and reasonable developer. They've constructed a set of tools ideology and formulation of process which permit that kind of world to be built. But it is in very large degree based on shape. If there's an echo, shall we say,

of past arrangements, it's still going to be built from massive development and construction drawings."

His issue is primarily that the project would be "a commercial product with a slightly different physical flavor" that still has no real connection with the people in the communities and shops and houses that they build for.

Another example of the patterns' transformative effects is reflected in New York's development. While its growth was based on a rigid grid and real estate speculation, it also contains this elusive, unnamed wholeness. Alexander's pattern for this phenomenon? Number 10: The Magic of the City.

Alexander believes these patterns emerge from our animalistic needs and qualities: as long as a development follows the pattern language, success will follow. Another well-documented aspect of human nature is the need for hard and fast rules that define what is right and wrong, good and bad. Thought of in this way, Alexander's theory repeats the same mistakes as the Modernists. Planners, and anybody for that matter, should always be wary of all-encompassing and prescriptive theories. While the "Pattern Language" is by no means a panacea to the development challenges of our era, Alexander's notion of wholeness is crucial for future planning practice. What gets lost in translating theory into practice, especially in the case of New Urbanism, is planning for the parts to create their own distinct, successful whole. ∪

#93 FOOD STAND MADISON SQUARE PARK
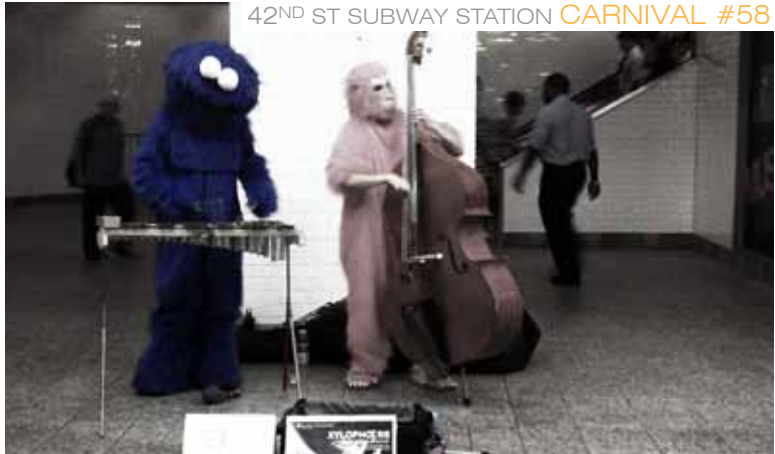
WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK SLEEPING IN PUBLIC #94   #21 FOUR-STORY LIMIT GREENWICH VILLAGE
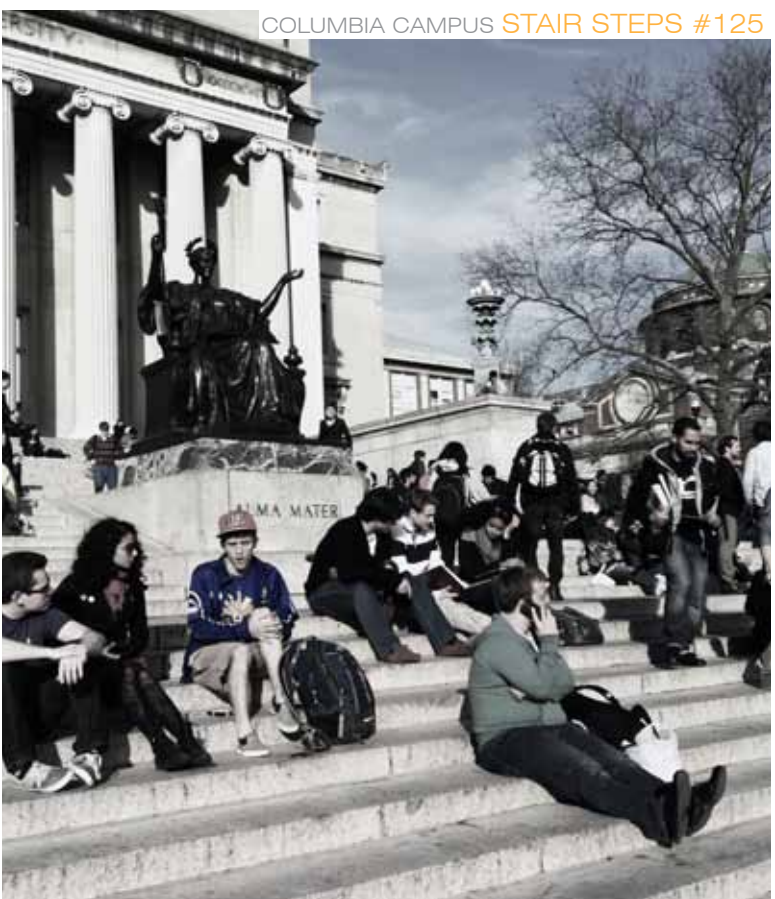
#125 ACCESS TO WATER CONEY ISLAND FROM WALL STREET FERRY

42ND ST SUBWAY STATION **CARNIVAL #58**

**#32 SHOPPING STREET** SOHO

COLUMBIA CAMPUS **STAIR STEPS #125**

All Photos By: Caroline Bauer

Liars & Outliers

KAZ SAKAMOTO MSUP 2013

Take a moment and think about the number of people you trust. How many people you have counted? What you may find is that, while people you wholly trust may be few in number, day-to-day survival actually depends on trust that you impart to countless strangers in society. As a species we have accomplished what few have: the ability to trust and cooperate within groups.
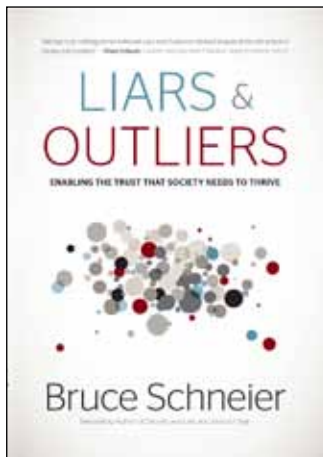
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In "Liars & Outliers," Bruce Schneier expertly navigates society's need for trust through wide-ranging disciplines and historical examples. Trust as a complex idea undoubtedly comes with quite a contentious history that Schneier aptly narrates. Through happenstance or natural selection, our species has evolved robust neocortecies in comparison to our closest primate relatives. With this anatomic advancement came an increased ability to sense and understand our milieu much better than previously possible. For example, the Dunbar number created from the study of 38 primate genera shows a correlation between larger social groups and increasing neocortex sizes.

In order to manage our ability to trust and cooperate as our social groups and societies swelled, four classes of societal pressures have been identified. These pressures are moral, reputational, institutional, and security measures, which affect all facets of life.

With the ability for humans to manage larger social groupings, societal pressures had to evolve new means to define social mores in order to prohibit defectors. The larger society and groups became, the more likely it was for emotional and social ties to degrade, which created new obstacles for societal pressures. Another setback to a larger grouping is the loss in dexterity and ability to make quick changes. We also currently live in a time where technological advances have steadily sped up, and these advancements have kept those in security fields at the edge of their seats. As new planning tools like satellite imagery and cell phone data become available, balancing between the fears of sensitive information ending up in the wrong hands and the benefits of opening up data for the public needs to be addressed.

In "Liars and Outliers," Schneier emphasizes the dual role of societal pressures; they are both a process and product. This process needs to constantly juggle different stakeholders, actors, and technological advancements in order to work. It can be akin to evolution and the Red Queen Effect. Rabbits and stoats push each other and balance each species in order to remain competitive in a dog-eat-dog world. As Lewis Carroll stated, "it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place," and for the liars, outliers, and cooperators in society it's an arms race to keep the sense of security operative.

Sissela Bok wrote that trust should be seen as any other commodity, much like water or air. As urban planners, we need to keep trust in communities and society alive. Cities have been able to flourish through societal pressures and technological advancements, but we can't rely solely on technology. We need to create innovative ways to align societal pressures with security measures for a viable urban future. ᴜ

There has been ample discussion of renovating the Urban Planning Studio, so **URBAN** sat down with GSAPP Facilities Director Mark Taylor and architect Robert Marino to chat about a two-part tech elective they're teaching called Design/Build: Design. The class used Fayerweather 201 as its focus. Their redesign plans call for a reconfiguration of the spaces within which we've worked, but with renewed fluidity.

URBAN: *How many times have these students been to the studio?*
Mark Taylor: I'd guess between 10 and 12. We sent them there to look at existing conditions, to see how the planning students use the room.
Robert Marino: They frequently go on their own. Many of them use the computer lab for their own work, so they're users as well.

URBAN: *How is natural light being incorporated into the design?*
Mark Taylor: Current design calls for nearly 50% of the demising walls to be clerestory.

Planning For Planners

FRANCESCA CAMILLO MSUP 2013

URBAN: *Will the ceiling be lowered?*

Mark Taylor: No. We know that one of the first points that everyone from the planning side articulated was the environment, so the redesign will happen in two phases. Phase One is the architectural fit out. This would potentially include replacing both window units with more efficient, quiet units. I'd like to replace the double-hung windows to give students more environmental control. We're also trying to incorporate ceiling fans in all 3 spaces. Adding exchange fans between the 3 rooms would help move air through as well. A second phase has been proposed, but has not yet been approved. A feasibility study still needs to be done.

URBAN: *How will the space be different?*

Robert Marino: We're more than doubling the existing collaboration space, and a portion of the wall will be pin-up ready.

Mark Taylor: We're also introducing erasable note taking options, with wall-mounted dry erase boards.

URBAN: *How many stations will be in the computer lab? And will cables have enclosures?*

Robert Marino: Twenty-four was the magic number.

Mark Taylor: The current design has the electricity in the floor at each desk and when the computers are installed, a cable management system will be introduced so that they're all tightly bundled.

URBAN: *That would mean that classes with lab requirements would likely be split into (at least) two sections. Will the decrease in stations and the need to increase required class lab time restrict free lab use?*

Mark Taylor: Probably, but, we're simultaneously proposing a renovation of Fayerweather 202. If we improve the UP lab, my guess is that demand will go way up. We're also introducing more robust wireless internet access.

URBAN: *When is this set to begin?*

Mark Taylor: Nothing's ever set in stone. We brought Planning faculty in to articulate their desires for the space, and now we want to show them the ink on paper. If the funding is secure, it could happen this summer.

URBAN: *Who would do the work?*

Mark Taylor: That's the Build side of this class sequence. We're trying to incentivize people to commit for the summer, while also leveraging the educational opportunities. We're thinking about letting the build out be part of the class (3 hours a week), with the rest paid.

> "Since working with others is a large component of your learning, it was important to have collaborative space. The space should be as generous as possible and be programmed as minimally as possible, so that it's as flexible as it needs to be."

Robert Marino: We're trying to achieve a very high degree of identity for the department, within reasonable expenditure, which is a hard design and task. If all goes well, I think we've achieved this. **U**

Sketch By
Serena Li

Perspective: The Bronx

STEVEN LOEHR MSUP 2013

Since the dawn of storytelling, "fish out of water" tales have captivated audiences far and wide. From the "Beverly Hillbillies" and "Green Acres," to "The Big Lebowski" and "The Simple Life" (fine, if you won't admit to watching it, I will), these scenarios make for seemingly effortless entertainment, subtly hiding fuzzy life lessons in outlandish comedic packaging. They are always harmless and in good fun, that is, until you find yourself as the proverbial fish.

First, some necessary backstory: for the better part of the past twenty-three years, I've been fortunate to live a relatively idyllic lifestyle on suburban Long Island. This means attending private school, making regular pilgrimages to Florida, and driving an SUV to Target every other day. Just for fun. I eventually left behind the land of Lexuses and luxury malls to pursue a bachelor's degree in Boston, also known as the snobby cultural, academic, and financial capital of New England elitism. Even as a college student, I lived in a state-of-the-art high-rise dormitory along the Charles River, with skyline views from my floor-to-ceiling glass windows, Muzak in the lobby, and dimmers built in to all of my light switches. I'm not quite a Real Housewife, but you surely get the picture.

So naturally, I found myself embarking upon my all-too-expensive post-baccalaureate Ivy League education last fall by moving into the Bronx. Yes, that Bronx. As in, the national symbol of neglect, crime, poverty, disinvestment, and urban decay. I suddenly found myself as the Reverse Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (though I must say I never came even remotely close to having a butler). At least this predicament would make for some entertaining stories to tell later in life, right?

Eight months later, I've actually discovered just how much more there is to the Boogie Down than meets the eye. Sure, statistically, the Bronx remains New York's most impoverished, underemployed, and obese borough, with the city's lowest levels of household income and educational attainment. But it's also the greenest borough—roughly one-quarter of its land is devoted to park space—and had surprisingly fewer reported murders, burglaries, and assaults in 2011 than ever-trendy Brooklyn. Furthermore, its subway coverage is arguably the best of any outer borough, and its under-appreciated attractions include Arthur Avenue, City Island, and the New York Botanical Garden, in addition to the oft-heralded Bronx Zoo and Yankee Stadium.

The revival of the South Bronx has been heralded for its sparkling new retail complexes, attractive residential developments, and millions in government investment. Although the physical improvements are certainly impressive, the South Bronx's poverty and unemployment rates remain among the nation's highest.

But while the Bloomberg Administration has devoted much of its attention to boosting affordable housing in these impoverished neighborhoods, the lack of private investment across the borough remains one of its largest perennial challenges. This is most evident via the countless national retail chains that continue to ignore the Bronx's 1.4 million residents. Among the dozens of New York City mainstays without a single Bronx outpost are Chipotle, H&M, Jamba Juice, and American Eagle Outfitters.

Ultimately, such businesses could play a huge role in what I (as your typical hopeless suburban urbanite) see as the Bronx's biggest physical shortcoming: the lack of a walkable, attractive mixed-use neighborhood; a destination for residents and visitors alike; and an iconic face to the rest of the city.

The candidates? The Bronx Civic Center is a governmental and employment hub, but it's hardly a leisure destination. Fordham Road is among the busiest retail strips in the city, but it's as ugly a corridor as you'll find anywhere in New York. Co-Op City has a tremendous residential population, but its sizeable retail areas are soulless big-box power centers. What's the best option for a leisurely after-work stroll and casual dinner in the Bronx? Go to Manhattan or Westchester.

During a meeting of Bronx Community Board 9 last fall, longstanding residents spoke passionately about the need to boost area tourism, attract more widely-known retailers, and bring more young professionals (read: me) to the borough. While many Bronxites feel slighted by the concentration of government action and media attention on its southern neighborhoods, that spotlight has provided the greatest opportunity to change the borough's public perception in decades. If I find myself compelled to alter this perception after just eight months, one can only imagine the feelings of lifelong residents who've spent years struggling to express their community pride.

In a city as diverse as New York, it should come as no surprise that every borough has areas of wealth and pockets of poverty; the Bronx just has the misfortune of being best known for the latter. Recent history has demonstrated that a single revitalized neighborhood can go a long way towards boosting a borough's image. Be it Mott Haven, Riverdale, or somewhere in between, here's hoping the Bronx gets a version of Astoria or Williamsburg to call its own. U

Fordham Road: I learned during my first week in the Bronx to not sit in the back corner of the bus, as that's the preferred spot for selling fake social security cards, rolling joints out of wet newspapers, and pulling down your pants in public. Amazingly, it was all done by one person on the same bus ride. Since that day, the Bx12 Select Bus has gotten me safely and (more or less) speedily to Columbia.

Arthur Avenue: Home of New York's most authentic Italian cuisine. So authentic that restaurants here sometimes don't use menus and bargain with you over your order. You want chicken with broccoli over penne pasta? Well, here's a chicken and broccoli rabe panini with a side of linguini!

Westchester Square: The subway stop where I essentially gifted my iPod to a bunch of teenagers after being held up against a wall. After my mom found this out on *Facebook*, she reminded me that this is called "being mugged." Based on this experience, I recommend not being careless with your electronic devices or riding the subway home alone at 3a.m. Also, try to avoid falling asleep on the subway with your wallet on your lap.

Morris Park: My neighborhood is a traditional Italian enclave, home to lots of people with names like Emilio and Patricia and lots of restaurants with names like Emilio's and Patricia's. It's also where Regis Philbin and Ronnie from "Jersey Shore" grew up. Though I don't see many celebrities on the streets nowadays, I have grown quite fond of the lady at my bus stop who grooms her hair with her own saliva. I suppose she would argue that public perception is overrated.

Melrose: Every now and again, the MTA is forced to suddenly suspend service due to equipment malfunctions or track conditions. In Manhattan, this means grumbling and taking a cab, or walking over an avenue to take another subway line. In the Bronx, this means being stranded beneath the 2 train in an angry mob. Never a gypsy cab around when you need one.