

U R B A N U R
R B A N U R B
B A N U R B A
A N U R B A N
N U R B A N U
U R B A N U R
R B A N U R B
B A N U R B A
A N U R B A N
N U R B A N U
U R B A N U R
R B A N U R B
B A N U R B A
A N U R B A N
N U R B A N U
U R B A N U R
R B A N U R B
B A N U R B A
A N U R B A N
N U R B A N U
U R B A N U R
R B A N U R B

URBAN

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S URBAN PLANNING MAGAZINE
FALL 2012**

**CONTACT URBAN
URBAN.SUBMISSIONS@GMAIL.COM
[HTTP://BLOGS.CUIT.COLUMBIA.EDU/URBANMAGAZINE](http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/urbanmagazine)
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING & PRESERVATION**

CONTENTS

U R B A N
R B A N U
B A N U R
A N U R B
N U R B A
U R B A N

- 5 LETTER FROM THE EDITORS
- 6 PLANNING PROJECTS IN QATAR
LISSA BARROWS // MSUP 2014
- 8 LOW LINE, HIGH EXPECTATIONS
STEVEN LOEHR // MSUP 2013
- 9 THE FUTURE OF AUTONOMOUS TRAFFIC
MATTHEW MUELLER // MSUP 2014
- 11 KEEPING AUSTIN WEIRD: ONE PIECE OF JUNK AT A TIME
ALLEY LYLES // MSUP 2013
- 12 EAST MIDTOWN REZONING
LUCY ROBSON & FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013
- 14 BUILDING A MILLION DOLLAR NEIGHBORHOOD
ISABELLE HAZLEWOOD // MSUP 2013
- 17 BOOK REVIEW: HARLEM IS NOWHERE
BECCA GOURLEY // MSUP 2013
- 18 BOOKS FOR SMALLER PLANNERS
LUCY ROBSON // MSUP 2013
- 19 DESIGN IN THE FACE OF OBSOLETE TECHNOLOGY
DANIELLE DOWLER // MSUP 2013
- 20 PLANNING AFTER HURRICANE SANDY
FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013
- 25 MAKING WAVES
DANIELLE DOWLER // MSUP 2013
- 26 GREENEST CITY?
ALEXANDER McQUILKIN // UP ALUM
- 27 GEO-GEEK SUMMIT
DANIELLE BERGER // MSUP 2013
- 28 SMALL APARTMENTS: A BIG SOLUTION?
STEPHANIE SHELLOOE // MSUP 2013
- 30 UP STUDIO UPDATE
FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013

CREDITS

FRANCESCA CAMILLO
CONTENT EDITOR

STEVEN LOEHR
PUBLISHING EDITOR

LESLIE DEACON
GRAPHICS EDITOR

LAUREN PEREZ HOOBKAMER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

KAZ SAKAMOTO
ASSISTANT GRAPHICS EDITOR

CONTRIBUTORS

KUSUM ANANTHANIAH
LISSA BARROWS
DANIELLE BERGER
DANIELLE DOWLER
BECCA GOURLEY
ISABELLE HAZLEWOOD
SERENA LI
ALLEY LYLES
ALEXANDER McQUILKIN
MATTHEW MUELLER
LUCY ROBSON
STEPHANIE SHELLOOE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & PRESERVATION
[HTTP://BLOGS.CUIT.COLUMBIA.EDU/URBANMAGAZINE](http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/urbanmagazine)

SEND YOUR LETTERS, ARTICLES, PHOTOS, GRAPHICS, ARTWORK, OR CARTOONS TO:
URBAN.SUBMISSIONS@GMAIL.COM

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

At its core, planning's responsibility resides at the intersection of the living and the built environments. In practice, planners mediate the interplay between these two realms, crafting and contouring the quality of the experience of those residing within them. As students and scholars, we analyze. However, never before has the relationship between these two interrelated spheres been so complex.

Currently, New York has a variety of initiatives in the pipeline that seek to transform the built environment to both respond to human behavior and transform its evolution by regulating the built environment. In this issue of **URBAN**, several pieces critique the merits and motives of proposals to redesign housing units, rezoning East Midtown, and reusing New York's subterranean spaces. Each of these developments addresses one of planning's fundamental challenges: how to avoid reactive planning, responding to stimuli through being proactive, and setting trends in response to specific patterns, all while maintaining a degree of grace that guides the impacts set forth when a longitudinal perspective is primary.

However, even the most well-intended alterations to the built environment may have consequences that cannot be foreseen. For instance, the social and economic effects associated with autonomous vehicles have gone largely unexplored, despite recent leaps in technology and gradual support from a few states. Exploring the transformative

potential of large-scale city building projects in Doha, Qatar reveals that the built environment still leads the human sphere in twenty-first century development. We navigate through DUMBO's evolution from a bustling industrial hub to an undiscovered artist colony to a luxury real estate hotspot and try to anticipate what could happen next.

As always, we find ourselves asking: Who benefits from such changes? At whom are these initiatives targeted? Are they effective? Are planners actively changing the course of human behavior? Or are we merely enabling society to transform itself?

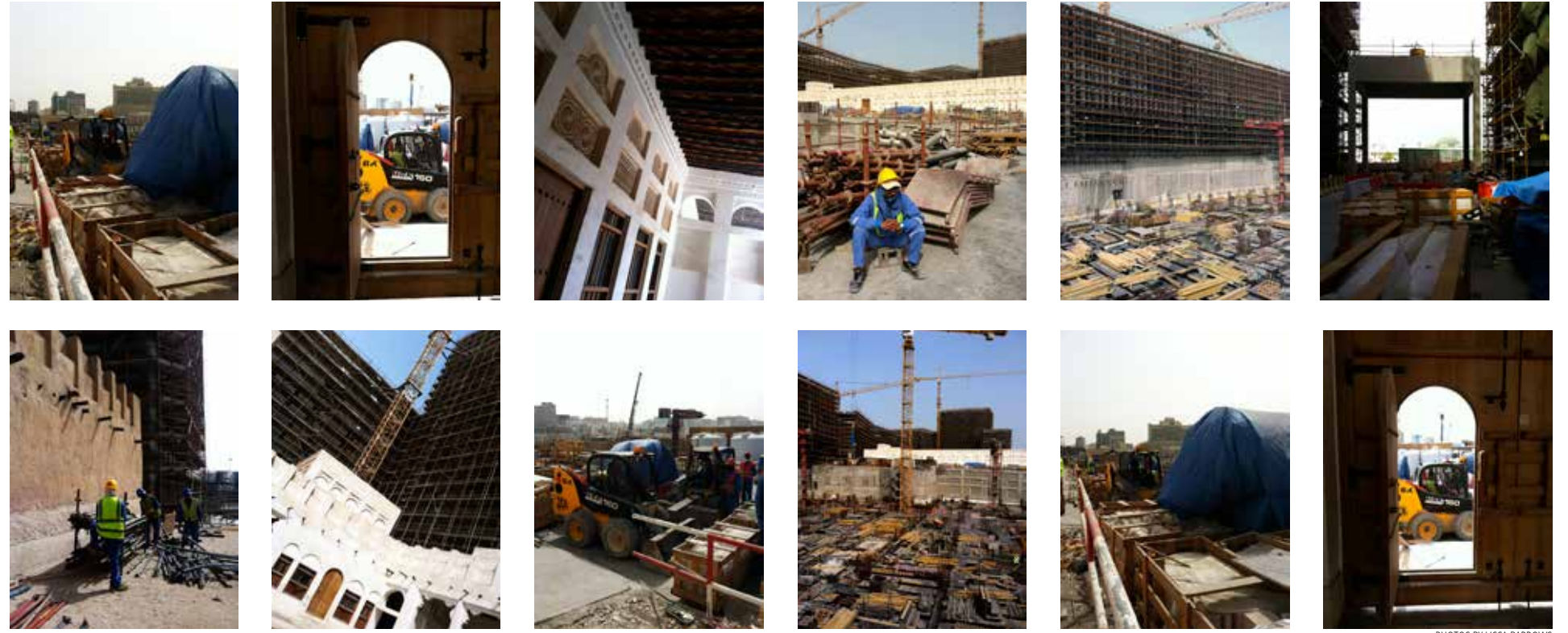
While there are countless examples that illustrate the power of planning in simultaneously shaping the built and living environments, Hurricane Sandy will undoubtedly serve as a lasting reminder of the precedence of the natural world. As communities across the Northeast redevelop and families rebuild, the unprecedented urban devastation wrought by Sandy may be the impetus needed to drive meaningful discussion regarding climate change and disaster planning in cities worldwide.

In the wake of Sandy, it is abundantly clear that human transformation of the built environment has altered the natural precipitously. It remains to be seen whether technology, creativity, political will, and ingenuity can mitigate some of these changes moving forward. ■

PLANNING PROJECTS IN QATAR

LISSA BARROWS // MSUP 2014

AFTER GRADUATING FROM GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY IN 2009, LISSA BARROWS LIVED IN DOHA, QATAR BETWEEN 2010 AND 2012, WHERE SHE DIRECTED A MATHEMATICS TUTORIAL SERVICE. HER INITIAL CONNECTION TO THE AREA WAS GEORGETOWN'S SATELLITE CAMPUS LOCATED THERE.



PHOTOS BY LISSA BARROWS

DOHA, QATAR

When I was young, I used to watch “The Jetsons” on television and wonder if a space city such as theirs could ever exist. I found my modern space city in Doha, Qatar. During the two years that I lived there, it was fascinating to watch Doha change from a quiet, unassuming town to an exciting urban center. Constant construction by this industrious community transformed the city daily; roads, buildings and land reclaimed from the Arabian Gulf seemed to appear overnight. While driving to work each morning, a road that I might have used the day before would no longer exist the next day. Despite 100 to 120 degree weather for almost half the year, Doha is accomplishing amazing things—and just in time because the city applied to host the soccer World Cup in 2022.

MUSHEIREB

I lived in the older portion of the city, which is home to the new Musheireb project, a multi-use development that will include residential units for 27,000 people, offices, shopping, a museum, and more. As one of the newest projects in Qatar, construction began in early 2010, shortly after I arrived, and I was thrilled to watch the step-by-step growth daily. The plan for the community is a reversal of previous trends in development and growth which so often has resulted in urban sprawl and heavy car usage.

The project also emphasizes sustainability, and innovations are being developed for water and energy efficiency, waste management, and carbon emissions reduction. To battle the intense heat, strategies for creating shade are in the works, including traditional patterned decorative screens and deep roof overhangs that are intended to create cool shade even on the hottest days. The Musheireb project incorporates the architectural heritage of Qatar, thereby contributing to an important goal of preserving the traditional Bedouin culture.

THE PEARL-QATAR

Inspired by the Mediterranean, with Venetian-style canals and Riviera-like white sand beachfronts, the Pearl-Qatar is another multi-use community with residential units, marinas, restaurants, shopping, five-star hotels, and a platform for cultural events. Construction began in 2006 and is ongoing. It has become a popular hot spot for living and hanging out and I loved visiting friends there, enjoying the international cuisine, and walking alongside the sparkling waters. The community is a huge man-made archipelago in an artistically swirled shape that forms a picturesque landscape. The islands are walkable and connect the homes, restaurants, and shopping with European-style bridges and cool breezes from the Arabian Gulf. Once finished, the project will be home to more than 41,000 international residents and have a yachting hub.

LUSAIL CITY

The coastal Lusail City project, just north of Doha and the Pearl-Qatar, is an entirely new city. Construction began in 2006 and will ultimately result in schools, retail stores, marinas, golf stores, and a hospital, as well as over 200,000 residents. The project’s ambitious vision incorporates mixing uses and sustainable resources. Another highlight is its focus on environmental protection, with energy and water conservation, renewable energy, and alternative transportation all incorporated in the project’s master plan. Solar energy from the dazzling Doha desert sun will power the Lusail National Stadium that will host the opening and final games in the 2022 World Cup. When visitors arrive by the city’s new metro system (also under construction), Lusail City will be a model in sustainable city design for all of the Middle East and the world. ■

LOW LINE, HIGH EXPECTATIONS

STEVEN LOEHR // MSUP 2013

Forgotten piers. Abandoned rail lines. Decrepit highway underpasses. Sprawling landfills. Chaotic intersections. In recent years, all of these poorly-, under-, or simply un-utilized public spaces have been converted into nontraditional urban green spaces via a wide variety of city initiatives. What's next?

The Lower East Site never lets a trend pass by. Designer James Ramsey and engineer Dan Barasch have proposed to convert 60,000 sq ft of the former Essex Street Terminal of the Williamsburg Trolley—unused since 1948—into a one-of-a-kind, one-and-a-half-acre subterranean park. By using fiber-optic technology to redirect natural light below ground, the proposed green space, wittily named the “LowLine,” could become the city’s most buzzworthy (and high-tech) park if it comes to fruition.

Attention surged this September, when the “Imagining the LowLine” exhibit, funded with \$150,000 in donations raised through the Kickstarter website, drew 10,000 visitors. The combination of savvy marketing, grassroots support, and demonstration technological feasibility made the LowLine a national media sensation, while earning praise from local politicians.

It should come as no surprise that these early implementation strategies closely mirror those of the LowLine’s elevated cousin, the High Line. The LowLine team has worked closely with Friends of the High Line, although Ramsey and Barasch are careful to indicate that their project is not merely an inverted manifestation of the High Line. However, while Ramsey and Barasch have focused on showing *how* such a project technically *can* happen, they have yet to convincingly demonstrate *why* it *should* happen.

Executive Director of the Lower East Side Business Improvement District (BID), Bob Zuckerman, has hailed the project as “transformative,” citing inevitable increased visibility and visitor activity for the neighborhood. Although local city council members and Community Board 3 have already pledged their support, it seems implausible that the re-development could garner either

the government support or the private sector funding needed without touting increases in jobs, local revenue, and visitors.

Across Manhattan, the High Line attracts four million visitors annually, making it this year’s tenth most popular worldwide tourist attraction, according to *Travel + Leisure Magazine*. It has contributed \$2 billion in economic activity, and projections suggest it will be responsible for \$900 million in additional city tax revenues during its first 20 years of operation.

However, while the High Line’s success serves as ammunition for LowLine proponents, it may also be the project’s greatest obstacle. As luxury residential towers and high-end businesses have moved into West Chelsea, property values have risen 103 percent between 2003 and 2011 and many small industrial businesses have been forced to close, relocate, or suffer from declining profits. Opponents are likely to argue against similar changes in the under-gentrified Lower East Side.

Moreover, it is difficult to fathom such a unique project as anything but a destination park. With the High Line joining Central Park, Hudson River Park, the developing East River Greenway and similar spaces, one has to wonder at what point these regional recreational attractions begin to siphon visitors from one another, compromising their projected civic and economic benefits.

Surely, a multitude of obstacles remain, but in spite of these uncertainties, there’s much to like about this proposal—from the use of innovative technology and promotion of sustainable design, to the garnering of grassroots support and the ability to provide public space and local pride for one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Manhattan. Most importantly, it creates both a local and regional asset from a completely unused space. The LowLine’s supporters have taken the proper steps to show the public that this seemingly radical idea *can* happen. Moving forward, it’s time for them to show us just *why* it should. ■

THE FUTURE OF AUTONOMOUS TRAFFIC

MATTHEW MUELLER // MSUP 2014

The United States has a long tradition of comprehensive urban and regional planning expressing grand visions for the future. With events like the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition and the 1939 New York World’s Fair, coupled with visionaries such as Daniel Burnham and Robert Moses, grandiose plans have shaped our policies and the direction of development in cities. The modern orthogonal street grid, the Transcontinental Railroad, the City Beautiful Movement and the freeway system are all derived from comprehensive plans of the past that have greatly impacted our country and its cities.

With each new major technological advance in transportation, new visions have been presented that serve as a guide for local regional and national policies. Our cities and transportation systems have evolved from relying on ships and wagons, to barges and railroads, to cars and trucks, and now we’re on the verge of the Autonomous Vehicles (AV) era.

The notion of an autonomous car first debuted at the 1939 New York World’s Fair as part of a futuristic automated highway system in the Futurama exhibit by General Motors Corporation. Since its debut, technological advancements have brought us closer to bringing them to fruition.

More recently, promising advances have occurred in the last decade with competing developments and breakthroughs happening at traditional car manufacturers like General Motors and technology companies like Google. Already, Nevada and California have started to support the reality of automated vehicles by passing legislation designed to allow AVs to operate on select roadways. Furthermore, experts predict their commercial availability by 2015.

AV articles about the design and culture-shifting possibilities of AVs are common, but rarely are they broached by planners. Seemingly, discussion of the viability of AVs and their impact on society is being led by engineers, corporations, and politicians. While developing their policies for AVs, Nevada and California

consulted with engineers and executives from Google and other technology companies, leaving many communities out of the discussion and decision process. Even with policy on the table there has been no national dialogue on whether or not AVs should be integrated into the existing transportation system. This is a perfect opportunity for urban planners to enter the discussion and facilitate smart policy decisions while not leaving out the populations that will be directly affected by these vehicles.

Planners are necessary to the discussion of the impacts this technology could have on driving and parking, right-of-way usage, and congestion policies, among other issues. Debates in which the public has a voice are important because they will coexist with this technology, and be directly affected by it. Should an AV be able to drop off and pick up its owner at a business? Should AVs be allowed to park in the front of a parking lot? Should owners receive a handicap parking stall if they never have to walk to their vehicle? What about congestion, should there be an extra charge placed on vehicles which operate on roadways or tollways without a passenger inside? What regulations will be necessary to govern autonomous taxis?

Already, numerous articles and white papers about the future of AVs have been released. The most comprehensive vision was developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), an organization committed to advancing technological innovation for society. While theirs and other’s visions create an exciting future for technological progress, the real potential social and economic impacts of AVs have neither been explored nor addressed by a comprehensive plan that reflects what the public wants or needs. If AVs will be on our streets in the next decade, the discussion needs to happen well before they arrive.

It’s time to start planning for the future instead of reacting to the present; we must embrace change, but ensure that it reflects what society wants and needs. ■



KEEPING AUSTIN WEIRD: ONE PIECE OF JUNK AT A TIME

ALLEY LYLES // MSUP 2013

In 2010, the City of Austin, Texas asked Vince Hannenmenn, the self-proclaimed “Junk King,” to dismantle the 30-foot tall construction of found-art in his backyard, aptly called “The Cathedral of Junk.” The structure violated city ordinances and many claimed that it disturbed neighbors. However, to many unhappy Austinites, merely *asking* to take down the Cathedral of Junk equated to the chipping away of what keeps Austin weird. With the support of many locals, Hannenmenn refused to back down; his fervent back-and-forth with the city lasted several years and included multiple lawyer consultations. Ultimately, he prevailed, acquired a building permit and, the second time around, he—along with hundreds of volunteers—made sure to build his display stronger to withstand Texas’ sparse but intense storms.

Hannenmenn constructed the Cathedral in 1988 and has steadily added to it since, estimating that the massive installation contains nearly 60 tons of junk. Chicken wire holds unwanted cast-offs, including lawnmower wheels, car bumpers, kitchen utensils, ladders, cables, bottles, Barbie dolls, beer signs and clocks, among other things. He hand-picked most of the items himself, but some were gifted by locals showing their support.

The artist maintains a day job, but is happy to give tours to drop-ins. In the past, the Cathedral of Junk has hosted music release parties, weddings, and bachelor parties. He has also greeted groups of school kids and senior citizens. Hannenmenn, an eccentric person, is an attraction as well. Visitors are interested in knowing what inspired such a quirky interest, since to many, garbage is garbage.

He says, “I just did it because I liked it. And, when I stop liking it, I’ll take it down.” ■



ALLEY LYLES

EAST MIDTOWN REZONING

LUCY ROBSON & FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013

How does a three-term mayor with major notches in his belt end his tenure on a high note? With a grand project like the East Midtown Rezoning, if things go according to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan. This project has been the topic of much discussion, and has permeated many layers of New York's dense fabric. Academia, multiple news outlets, and Community Board 6—whose district the rezone is slated to occur—has been engaged in discussions about it. It was even a topic of discussion at the 2012 MAS Summit for New York City held in October.

At the Summit, Thomas Woltz, Principal of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, as well as a Municipal Arts Society Board Member, asked a string of thoughtful questions—posted by partner Untapped New York—about the spaces we traverse daily:

“How do we continue to create civic spaces and design places that are reflective of our values? How do we build upon our history? How do we plan carefully and ambitiously—maybe even daringly to meet infrastructure needs? How do we build buildings that will inspire us?”

Mayor Bloomberg's East Midtown Rezoning project is one of many ways to reinvigorate the built environment and public realms, and has attracted a great deal of attention along the way.

The planned rezoning, a New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) initiative, spans 78 blocks of East Midtown office space and will increase density around Grand Central Terminal. This would work in tandem with the MTA's East Side Access project, which provides a connection for the Long Island Railroad's Main and Port Washington lines in Queens to a new station beneath Grand Central Terminal, according to the agency's website. Increased commuter traffic at Grand Central with the current plans calls for a tiered

set of regulation changes aimed to keep East Midtown a commercial district and allow it to reach, literally, new heights with signature office building construction.

The rezoning would increase all base as-of-right, allowable floor-area-ratios (FAR) by at least 20 percent for an area “located between Fifth and Second/Third avenues, and East 57th and East 39th streets with Park Avenue as its central spine,” according to the overview in DCP's East Midtown Study presentation. The boundaries exclude residential areas close to Turtle Bay.

The members of Community Board 6, within which this initiative is located, are concerned about many aspects of the project, and have conveyed their sentiments in much correspondence with DCP. Without wholly disagreeing with increasing density, the members don't believe that upzoning is the answer to their vision, and wonder about what public purpose would be served by a zoning change.

At the very least, existing buildings can be improved and made bigger, especially office buildings, apartment buildings and retail centers. The initiative is an attempt to incentivize property owners to build newer, better buildings in order to propel New York into the future as a global destination. Preserving its ability to compete with other cities, within an international social and economic framework, is imperative. Without the ability to construct larger buildings, many property owners in East Midtown are reluctant to build new structures on their lots because of the low cap on current building standards. Many of the area's office buildings have a median age of 70 years, high vacancy, and small floor plates—making them particularly suitable for residential conversions. Like Lower Manhattan, East Midtown is becoming increasingly residential.

However, the resemblance to Lower Manhattan stops here. East Midtown holds one of the metro region's

largest transportation hubs and delivers hundreds of thousands of commuters to their jobs daily. Although converting buildings is no small feat, amending the quality, integrity and interconnectedness of a massive transportation system requires a very specific formula of grace, providence, efficiency and projection. Holistically, the project must be guided by its perceived long-term benefits and its phases must make explicit incremental payoffs. These clear benefits encourage residents, community boards, committees and other stakeholders to support the project and ensure its smooth execution. Mayor Bloomberg and DCP are betting on the commercial future of East Midtown; by allowing larger building sizes, they hope to keep East Midtown a commuter-ready, transit-rich commercial hub.

In order to keep East Midtown commercial and allow its density to rise, the Mayor's administration must pledge to mitigate the effects of the increased demand on roads and transit systems. This, of course, translates into money and resources needed.

Commercial sites with at least 25,000 square-feet and 200-feet of avenue frontage are eligible for further as-of-right FARs. Sites that meet eligibility qualifications can either transfer landmark floor-area, to get this additional allowable FAR, or make a per-square-foot contribution to a purpose-created East Midtown District Improvement Fund (DIF).

Although it sounds complicated, the idea is quite simple. If Developer A wants to build a larger building than is allowed by the base FAR, he or she can purchase additional FAR, up to a limit, from either officially landmarked buildings with extra unused floor area or from the city.

The latter choice, by default, is a contribution to the DIF, which creates a stock of money earmarked for pedestrian-level improvements.

There's a growing consensus that East Midtown's pedestrian realm could use improving, but within that sentiment there's significant stratification. It's unlikely that schemes as dramatic as those presented at the recent MAS Summit by firms like SOM, WXY Architects, and Foster and Partners will come to life—although planners love transit, does Grand Central really need to be augmented and stretched? To East Midtown residents, active members of Community Board 6, or passersby, the preferred mechanisms for growth in this area of New York vary greatly. Sure, a change is needed, but how much and at what rate should the proverbial ceiling be raised?

The most dramatic impacts of the rezoning are likely to come from the third tier of regulations presented by the East Midtown Rezoning plans; a special permit opportunity has been created for buildings up to 30 FAR around Grand Central and 24 FAR along Park Avenue. Bloomberg would be able to say that he enabled New York's next generation of avant-garde skyscrapers—a Gherkin, Shard, Torre Agbar, or Burj Khalifa—to link the daring buildings of yesteryear, such as the 30 FAR Empire State Building, with a new and emphatic addition to the city's skyline.

Often taken for granted, East Midtown is finally having another turn in the spotlight. Although it's understandable that Mayor Bloomberg wants a visible token of his administration, it speaks volumes about the state of planning in New York City. ■



BUILDING A MILLION DOLLAR NEIGHBORHOOD: THE HISTORY OF DUMBO, BROOKLYN

ISABELLE HAZLEWOOD // MSUP 2013

Time is of the essence in real estate development. How fast can a house flip? How quickly can a new apartment building go up? But as we learned from the 2007 housing crisis, emphasis on immediate returns instead of investment longevity can have devastating repercussions. Foresight and patience can reap huge rewards, and the course of development in Brooklyn's DUMBO—the District Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass—provides lessons in both.

DUMBO, a mixed-use neighborhood along the East River in Brooklyn, wasn't always home to bustling technology companies and luxury apartment owners. Although it was originally settled as a residential waterfront community, much of its current built environment was constructed for industrial use between the 19th and 20th centuries. DUMBO's proximity to Manhattan and accessibility to marine transportation made it ideal for shipping and receiving goods. Some of the nineteenth century's most notable manufacturers—the Arbuckle Brothers, Robert Gair, Hanon & Son Shoe Company and Kirkman & Son Soap Company—chose the neighborhood as the heart of their production and distribution.

Initially, DUMBO was the docking point for the Fulton Ferry that connected the once-independent city of Brooklyn to Manhattan. The Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883 and in 1909 the Manhattan Bridge was opened to the public. The Jay Street Railroad entered the neighborhood in the 1920s, resulting in a bustling, noisy industrial neighborhood that was sandwiched between bridges, and characterized by cobblestone streets intertwined with rail lines that are still present today.

The manufacturing uses were short-lived; by 1959 the Jay Street Railroad ceased operation, and by the 1970s industrial production in DUMBO came to a standstill. Left behind was a derelict neighborhood whose once productive manufacturing buildings were now primarily being used for storage and recycling.

The buildings in DUMBO were never meant for residential use, which is why there were no showers, toilets, or in some cases, even floorboards. However, the absence of these basic necessities didn't deter artists from calling these structures home. Thanks to the Artist in Residence program that was established in 1971, "starving artist"-types and other low-rent seeking residents were able to move into the vacant upper floors of DUMBO's industrial buildings. By 1978 there were approximately 150 tenants living in live/work units scattered around the neighborhood.

Today it's often treated as common knowledge that the

presence of artists in a blighted community can legitimize revitalization, but in 1970s this concept was fairly new. Developers had seen this trend in SoHo and Tribeca, but few saw such potential in Brooklyn.

By the early 1980s, two primary land grabbers interested in DUMBO came to the fore—David Walentas, owner of Two Trees Management, and the Jehovah's Witnesses, who've owned property in the area since 1909. Walentas focused his purchasing efforts on the area between the two bridges, while the Jehovah's Witnesses sought the area just southeast for the expansion of their headquarters. In 1982, Walentas purchased nine properties and joined the ranks of DUMBO's primary landholders, including the Department of Transportation and the long-established Guttman family. The Jehovah's Witnesses still hold the title to three million square feet of property in DUMBO and Brooklyn Heights.

While the Witnesses utilized their new warehouse spaces as headquarters for their religious initiatives, Walentas had a much different vision for the neighborhood—a residential arts and entertainment district that would house those wealthy enough to afford pristine waterfront views of Manhattan.

Accomplishing this transformation wasn't easy; the '80s were rife with political disputes between Walentas and the city over the conversion of the neighborhood's zoning from industrial to residential uses. He caught a lucky break in 1986 when the New York State Department of Labor agreed to a 10-year contract to rent the Clocktower building on Main Street. This became the first building in DUMBO to be converted to luxury apartments.

In the meantime, Walentas' efforts focused on preserving the artistic feeling of the neighborhood by offering galleries and artists free space or highly subsidized rents. He also created amenities aimed at attracting future residents, for instance, by offering supermarkets and other retail businesses free rent in the neighborhood.

As the residential conversions unfolded throughout the 1990s, Walentas advertised the upper floors of some of his buildings to commercial tenants. He offered low-rent spaces with

lenient lease terms that didn't require major credit approvals. These conditions were particularly attractive to start-ups in the growing technology sector that could start small, but acquire more space as necessary. The apex of this business model, the advertising firm HUGE, which was founded in DUMBO in 1999, now has offices in six locations globally. Advertising and technology firms are now the economic base in DUMBO.

The result was an unanticipated live/work/play community that has office buildings, luxury residential units, retail, dining and the arts all housed in an environment that one resident called "the perfect mix of grunge and class."

Such a huge commitment by private developers to DUMBO, with the primary focus of cultivating a rich neighborhood, has led to increased public interest as well. In 2005, the DUMBO Business Improvement District (BID) was formed to advocate in the public sector on behalf of the private sector. As a result, DUMBO has received two new public plazas—the previously closed Archway under the Manhattan Bridge and the Pearl Street Triangle. The BID has also been influential in the branding and marketing of DUMBO as a neighborhood. The BID draws in people from New York and beyond by advertising neighborhood developments on its website and coordinating numerous annual events that showcase the creative talents of DUMBO's residents.

While the future of DUMBO's development is unclear, the focus remains on maintaining its status as a vibrant live/work community. The Jehovah's Witnesses have moved their headquarters upstate, leaving nearly three-fourths of an acre of potential conversion space in the neighborhood. With the high rates of return for residential development in New York City today, preserving commercial space in the neighborhood is a challenge. Although planners might lament the shortsightedness of real estate developers, DUMBO's trajectory proves that this is not always the case. Hopefully future investors will take note of DUMBO's ongoing success and recognize the benefits that accrue when long-term vision is prioritized over short-term financial gain. Affordable rents, quality building stock and community amenities may take a longer time to develop than standardized condos, but DUMBO proves that when it's done well, it's worth the wait. ■



KUSUM ANANTHAIAH



PHOTOS BY LESLIE DEACON

BOOK REVIEW:

HARLEM IS NOWHERE:

A JOURNEY TO THE MECCA OF BLACK AMERICA
BY SHARIFA RHODES-PITTS
 LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY, NEW YORK, NY 2011

BECCA GOURLEY // MSUP 2013

Often in books about ideas, the physical gets lost: in histories, the place which provides the context for the story is not featured as prominently as the actors; in biographies, the locations are subservient to the trajectory of the individual; in novels, the settings fade into the background behind the characters.

“Harlem is Nowhere” is Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts’ personal memoir of a neighborhood, chronicling the image and reality of Harlem as the author found it in at the turn of the century. She uses the Harlem held in her imagination, developed through a teenage obsession with the Harlem Renaissance, to explore the contemporary village in the city. She asserts that the place of Harlem matters for the idea of Harlem, and the idea of Harlem informs the place, for blacks across the country, and arguably for everyone else too.

Rhodes-Pitts repeatedly returns to Harlem as a physical manifestation of a dream: disinvestment in cities led to black-dominated inner cities across the U.S., but Harlem had the highest concentration of blacks in the United States long before that happened. It served as a place where blacks could be seen, instead of invisibly serving whites in southern Manhattan. The importance of witnessing each other, keeping your eyes on the street as well as on your neighbors, recording daily life, and acknowledging members of the community also comes up again and again.

She borrowed the title of her work from Ralph Ellison’s eponymous essay, in which he describes the common conversation on the streets of Harlem in the 1940s:

NEGRO AMERICANS ARE IN SEARCH FOR AN IDENTITY. REJECTING THE SECOND-CLASS STATUS ASSIGNED THEM, THEY FEEL ALIENATED AND THEIR WHOLE LIVES HAVE BECOME A SEARCH FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS: WHO AM I, WHAT AM I, AND WHERE? SIGNIFICANTLY IN HARLEM THE REPLY TO THE GREETING, ‘HOW ARE YOU?’ IS OFTEN, ‘OH, MAN, I’M NOWHERE’— A PHRASE REVEALING AN ATTITUDE SO COMMON THAT IT HAS BEEN REDUCED TO A GESTURE, A SEEMINGLY TRIVIAL WORD.



Rhodes-Pitts documents as much as she can, knowing that gentrification has already arrived in Harlem. She jots down the inspirational chalking on Lenox Avenue that a man she calls “the Messenger” leaves for school children. She explores the scrapbooks created by L.S. “Gumby” Alexander in the 1920s, filled with mementos showing the daily and extraordinary life of the Harlem Renaissance. She spends hours as a researcher at a local Harlem publisher poring over the archives documenting every day and extraordinary life in Harlem, and the archives of the New York Public Library’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Foremost, she walks and walks the city streets, identifying the physical landmarks of her neighborhood and the historical markers of Harlem. She also attends meetings to stop the building of condominiums on 125th Street, to protest the introduction of an H&M to the neighborhood, and to prevent Columbia’s hostile Manhattanville takeover.

“Harlem is Nowhere” offers a young newcomer’s perspective of the neighborhood as it transitions from the role it’s served for a century as the capital of black America. Rhodes-Pitts uses her memoir of the neighborhood to show the social ecosystem that continues on, despite the increasing threats. It also acts as a written guide to the physical and social history of the neighborhood, providing a blueprint for those looking to find the Harlem beyond the fancy restaurant bars and coops that outsiders use as their reference points. Lastly, it offers a memory of a neighborhood before gentrification irrevocably alters it, forcing out and dispersing its community across the region. ■

BOOKS FOR SMALLER PLANNERS: THE WORKS OF VIRGINIA LEE BURTON

LUCY ROBSON // MSUP 2013



Ask any planning student, professor, or practitioner to detail their recommended must-read list for an aspiring planner—or interested reader—and they'll surely mention Jane Jacobs' "Death and Life of Great American Cities" and Robert Caro's "The Power Broker" at some point. We seem to have no shortage of adult reads in planning, but what about good planning-related books for younger readers?

For pure whimsy, conversation-starting, and narrative power, the books of Virginia Lee Burton (1909-1968) are a good place to start for the budding planning enthusiast. Massachusetts-born Burton wrote her first book about a piece of dust. When that idea failed, she sought out more dynamic subject material. Her most famous books—"Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel," "The Little House," and "Katy and the Big Snow"—are, at their core, about planning issues.

"Mike Mulligan" (1939) is the story of a loyal man-and-machine duo who win their place in a small town by delivering what it needs most—digging the site for the new town hall. Burton aligns this small town's municipal needs with other achievements, namely the greatest public works projects (railroad passes, canals, skyscraper basements, for example) of the early 20th century. By Burton's estimation, the growth of the country via its small towns is just as important as in its large cities. Children who read "Mike Mulligan" learn, through the endeavors of prominent characters Mike and Mary Anne, that places are built, not found.

Burton returns to the small-town ideal with "The Little House" (1942). The story of a house on a hill, eventually engulfed by the urban fabric, was initially received as alarmist and even anti-urbanist. Burton's idyllic depiction of the house in the country contrasts with the anthropomorphic aggression of her drawings, which surround it with elevated railways, busy roads, and skyscrapers. Nonetheless, she easily explains the causes and effects of urban conditions. The tale of the little house, framed through the author's soft drawings, invites children to wonder about the hows and whys of urban conditions.

Burton delves deeper into the nuts and bolts of how places work in her posthumous publication "Katy and the Big Snow." Katy, a red tractor from Geopolis, has a dual existence: she is a bulldozer in the summer, and a snowplow in winter. The city grinds to a halt when a blizzard arrives, incapacitating it and those living within it. Children can follow Katy across the map of Geopolis as she clears the snow and saves the city. Readers learn about the interconnectedness of roads and city services, weather and emergencies.

Although Burton's books can seem dated, their friendly illustrations, lively characters, and compelling plots make them excellent choices for children interested in cities and planning. They also prove that classic planning literature doesn't exclusively reside in Avery Library. ■

DESIGN IN THE FACE OF OBSOLETE TECHNOLOGY

DANIELLE DOWLER // MSUP 2013

Clark Kent used it to change into his iconic alter ego before he launched into the sky to save the world. It's a mainstay of kitschy tourist photography. The telephone booth is an iconic structure that has captured the attentions of those around the world, through its use in film, or, even simply, as a noticeable streetscape feature. However, with the rise of mobile—and now smart—phone use, the phone booth has become passé in many cities. In some instances, the payphones no longer work, making the rare collect call home infinitely more difficult.

With growing evidence suggesting that phone booths are obsolete, designers have begun to re-imagine these structures as much more than a convenient calling mechanism. In Brazil, Vivo, a local phone booth company, called upon artists to transform the remaining functioning phone booths into artistic works of their choosing. The Call Parade featured 100 artists' work with transformations ranging from the depiction of a cityscape to a large replica of the human brain. In Osaka, Japan, phone booths became the home of the goldfish club, Kingyobu, a pop-up aquarium installation that was inspired by the fish themselves, which are considered a good luck charm in Japan, thus, spreading both free art and luck to passersby.

Some phone booth transformations have focused more

on functionality to propel their relevance into the 21st century. In New York, a phone booth is used as the entrance to exclusive speakeasy, Please Don't Tell. Additionally, in April 2012, the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications proposed working with the communications system City24/7 to replace the phones from 250 booths with free touchscreens that feature local news and neighborhood events. The screens, maintained by City24/7, would allow users to report issues to city information via 311 efficiently. In July 2012, the Mayor's office announced that 10 phone booths would offer free Wi-Fi access to the immediate surrounding 100-200 feet. These locations were picked specifically because of their proximity to public plazas. New York City has 12,800 phone booths that could, eventually, serve alternative purposes like pop-up libraries, information centers, or art galleries.

The transformation of these structures signifies the end of an era; phone calls have transformed into text messages, and more focus is now placed on the need for Wi-Fi access. Looking forward, the streetscape may highlight, or at least compliment this shift, whether it's with a traveling art exhibition, or even a replica of Clark Kent, just as he is about to take flight. The sky is the limit. ■



PLANNING AFTER HURRICANE SANDY

FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013



As New York continues to recover from the mar and ruin of late October's superstorm Sandy, assessments and analyses are still being conducted and decisions are being made for how best to navigate the aftermath. The prioritization of cogent, innovative planning mechanisms is at the forefront of each inter-agency communique; even unorthodox suggestions are being given a nod, and rightly so. Without reprising Sandy's impacts, **URBAN** explores a micro-perspective of experiencing the storm from an outer borough, and expounds upon the role of planners in managing an unprecedented emergency situation.

Since forecasting is more probabilistic than absolute, there was room, early on, to make even a cautious person skeptical about the storm's possible impacts. As Sandy made her way north and east, however, prudence turned into panic as bottled water, batteries, and other sundries quickly disappeared from grocery shelves. The apex of the storm was aptly preceded by selective neighborhood evacuations, since the anticipated destruction was incalculable. Ultimately, the cascade of heartbreak and loss Sandy left behind incited a fervent scramble to get the city, the affected, and its infrastructure back to functional. The subsequent weeks have required a full-on revision of routines, routes, and timetables, and an augmentation of perspectives.

All told, things could have been much worse than being stranded in Woodside, as this writer was. Although inconvenienced, all were safe, the 7 train viaduct was intact, though not operational, and the immediate environs were unscathed. Meandering through neighboring Sunnyside, however, revealed a very different story.

Sandy's wanton gusts, paired with the neighborhood's architecture and housing typologies created a disastrous cocktail of felled trees and havoc. Broken limbs were strewn about and whole, huge trees—often taking their concrete foundations with them—crushed the cars that were parked beneath them, ironically, for safety.

While still within the bounds of academia, it's worthwhile to consider, from an inter-scalar perspective, the different functions of a planner at each level. What could neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs, have done better, if anything? Should community boards assess where their districts' weaknesses are, and account for them to help city agencies plan for disaster readiness? Is that a feasible conversation? If so, how could the resulting process be streamlined and incorporated into

how the City Planning Department, the Office of Emergency Management, and others plan and react to a storm like Sandy? Should the Planning Department have a team of experts to assess potential weaknesses instead? Can planning prepare in phases? Should it? Is it possible to plan in the face of a natural disaster? Or should worst-cases scenarios take the place of non-existent precedents? Is over-preparedness possible?



Three days after the storm subsided, suspension of the 7 train, seeing gaggles of bus riders waiting at stops, or being sardined chest-to-chest on non-articulated buses—even after the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) accounted for delays—made it easy to rationalize staying put. New Yorkers have a fortitude that's inimitable, however; more people than one would think trekked across the Queensboro Bridge to resume their lives in the days after the storm when many of the subways were still inoperable. Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Coumo's HOV-3 restriction (vehicles were required to have at least 3 passengers for bridge and tunnel crossings) on Manhattan-bound traffic brought upon interactions

that could only accompany a more-than significant aberration in routine.

As patterns were reinstated and rearranged, subway service in Queens was gradually enabled, though it often meant going further out of one's way than pre-Sandy. The circuitous route to the F train—one of the first trains to run select service to Manhattan—led one past gas stations encircled by idling cars, their pumps cordoned with Police tape, and directly into the path of private drivers, taxis, and others looking for passengers to satisfy the HOV requirement. In their desperation to recap losses and get into Manhattan, drivers picked up anyone that would respond to them without charging a fee.



As a response to Sandy, and to facilitate discussion, the Center for Architecture hosted "Designing the City after Superstorm Sandy" in mid-November, a panel discussion comprised of experts in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, planning, policy, and geophysics that was moderated by The New York Time's Michael Kimmelman.

Drawing from her wide range of expertise, Cynthia Barton (Housing Recovery Plan Manager at NYC Office of Emergency Management [OEM]) discussed the importance of collaboration at the local and federal levels, the importance of engaging with the public and non-profit organizations, and how best to achieve that to create sturdy structures that can sustain those partnerships and act expeditiously. Of many issues, Howard Slatkin (Director of Sustainability and Deputy Director of Strategic Planning for NYC Department of City Planning [DCP]) spoke of the need to identify resilience and reduce the vulnerability of the city's infrastructure. He also noted the "gradient of cost-effectiveness" that's inherent in the discussion about constructing or retrofitting buildings to withstand coastal flooding and anything else nature has in store.

Stephen Cassell, AIA of Architecture Research Office (RAO) advocated for expanding our aperture and taking a macro-perspective of the systems that exist between the city, its infrastructure, and the possible solutions, in a "holistic systems" approach. He extracted

from RAO's work on "Rising Currents: Projects for New York's Waterfront," an exhibit for MoMA that included "porous green streets and a graduated edge, freshwater wetland" that would "integrate an interior porous street network, an exterior marsh system, and an encasing utility infrastructure below ground in accessible waterproof vaults beneath the sidewalk." Though by no means standard, these mechanisms could be the future of planning and design for our changing environment.

Landscape architect and urban designer Donna Walcavage brought the idea of arboriphobia (urban dwellers' fear of trees) to the discussion, noting that some communities removed trees because of the *possible* damage they *could* have caused in the storm. Although extreme and slightly pre-emptive, this decision reveals that planners have larger issues with which to contend, and bolsters the argument for creating a regional plan. Walcavage also mentioned an initiative that a colleague is working on that calls for "integrating forestry [and vegetation] and tree planting into regional planning" among other things.

Instead of de-treeing communities, could planners instead take the reins and work with designers and architects to agree on including different types of vegetation into neighborhoods to create variability in flora heights? Perhaps.

Robert M. Rogers, founding partner of Rogers Marvel Architects, suggested adopting an inter-scalar focus, and acknowledging the importance of the role of designers "that are both proactively and reactively" approaching the post-Sandy context.

Deviating from launching into policy suggestions and ruminating on best-practice methodology, Dr. Klaus Jacob (Geophysicist, Special Research Scientist, Professor) spoke to the broader issue of climate change:

"We shouldn't reconstruct, we should prostruct. We have to look forward, not backward."

He also suggested that "We...make time dependent benefit cost-risk analyses....[So that] if we're thinking about physical barriers....It has to be time-dependent on the importance and the expected meaningful life cycle of that structure."



FRANCESCA CAMILLO

Thinking longitudinally is imperative for effective, efficient planning for both city and federal agencies, and still allows for a gradient in decision-making and implementation. Dr. Jacob referred to New Orleans to buttress his position, referring to the barriers that, as we know, ultimately failed the city. Although New York City is mostly dissimilar, there's enough resemblance for mention here.

“The subway system...[is] below sea level, for the most part,” he said, further explaining that three barriers and some levy and dike systems could help if implemented strategically. As a part of an operational interim plan, the inflatable tunnel plugs that received cursory media attention are on his radar. Floating city blocks are another possibility, especially for lower Manhattan and, generally, wherever they would be feasible. “Transformers could go up and down with the tides instead of being inundated by [them],” Jacob explained.

An added layer of defense or anticipation of their fallibility must be accounted for, behind the barrier, in the event of their failure, hence, “Barriers should be considered, but with an exit strategy,” Jacob offered.

Do these suggestions seem too good to be true? They don't have to be.

The capillarity of Sandy's damage was much more than anticipated, and didn't just include New York City and its Municipal Service Area. Dr. Jacob avidly supports developing a Regional Master Plan that would include Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, and believes that it could help transition the area out of its habit of reactionary planning. He suggested creating a Managed Retreat Plan for the lower elevations “that's financed and has sound regulations in place.” Audacious as that may seem, it's a worthwhile consideration, given the potential increase in flooding and storms in the coming decades.

The possibilities DCP, OEM and the string of other incumbent agencies should consider in order to better prepare for more frequent storms are nearly endless. Furthermore, because all involved parties reside at different places on the spectrum of understanding, there must be an inter-scalar focus that balances best practices with creative, innovative strategies.

Moving forward, decisions should be “thought through in a meaningful way,” as Dr. Jacob said, and should lead to policy implements that are pragmatic, “cheap in the interim, durable in the long run.”

New York City is many things—grand, brutal, matchless, incandescent—and, since our environs are changing, we must change with them. ■



MAKING WAVES

DANIELLE DOWLER // MSUP2013

New York City is known for its impressive skyline, gourmet restaurants, and thrilling theater. However, one overlooked aspect of the City is its plentiful waterfront, as waterways encapsulate all five boroughs. While other cities are lauded for their coastal or riverfront amenities, New York's waterfront presence is often ignored. The City boasts an impressive 520 miles of shoreline, which is both immense and incredibly diverse; it hosts multiple watersheds, countless species, and is ripe for transformation. Moreover, the City maintains a bustling maritime industry, employing 31,000 workers and collecting \$1.3 billion in tax revenue.

In order to focus on bringing more New Yorkers to the waterfront, Mayor Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn collectively launched the Waterfront Vision and Enhancement Strategy (WAVES) in April 2010. The initiative spans across city agencies, emphasizing a collaborative effort to establish a sustainable plan for the city's waterfront.

The initiative is two-fold: first, it consists of Vision 2020 which establishes long-term waterfront goals for the next decade. Secondly, it incorporates the New York City Waterfront Action Agenda which includes 130 projects to be implemented within a three-year span. Projects include improving two miles of city-owned property along the East River Waterfront Esplanade, stretching from the Battery Maritime Building to Montgomery Street and well as Hunter's Point South, a chrysalis of mixed-use mid-income housing on nearly 30 acres of Long Island City waterfront.

After years of focusing on its avenues and skyscrapers, New York has begun to recognize the waterfront as one of its most vital and underutilized assets. However, as Hurricane Sandy has recently shown, the city also needs to consider the effects that climate change and increased frequencies of natural disasters will have on new coastal developments and communities. The costs of evacuations, rescues, and property damage should be evaluated when allocating land use in waterfront plans. ■

GREENEST CITY?

ALEXANDER McQUILKIN // UPALUM

The debate over which cities are “greenest” is a fervent one, yet it’s largely based on unscientific arguments. Rankings of cities by recycling rates, per capita energy use, park acreage per person and transit and bicycle mode share are all helpful, but when combined it’s difficult to point to a clear set of winners.

What is slightly easier is identifying cities’ literal verdancy. The circles below show the “average” colors of the nation’s five biggest municipalities, as computed by averaging the color values of the pixels from satellite images depicting their landscapes. The images were taken in July 2011 from an elevation of 50 miles, courtesy of

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). What is immediately obvious is that the cities generally considered to be the most rich in open space, as determined by the Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore metric, are not necessarily the most literally verdant. Older northeastern cities like New York and Philadelphia may claim more “black-top” recreational spaces like playgrounds and basketball courts, which are of course no less valuable than parks with lawns and trees. Meanwhile, newer, sprawling cities in the south and west may include more single-family homes boasting natural vegetation and providing some opportunities for more private outdoor recreation. ■

PARKSCORE RANK:
RATINGS CALCULATED BY
COMBINING ACREAGE,
SERVICE/INVESTMENT, AND
ACCESS TO PARKS.

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE
[HTTP://PARKSCORE.TPL.ORG](http://PARKSCORE.TPL.ORG)
FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF CITY
RANKINGS.



25 LOS ANGELES
2011 POPULATION: 3,819,702
LAND AREA: 468.7 SQ MI
PARK LAND AS PERCENT OF CITY AREA: 14.1%



30 HOUSTON
2011 POPULATION: 2,145,146
LAND AREA: 599.6 SQ MI
PARK LAND AS PERCENT OF CITY AREA: 12.9%



14 CHICAGO
2011 POPULATION: 2,707,120
LAND AREA: 227.6 SQ MI
PARK LAND AS PERCENT OF CITY AREA: 8.5%



3 NEW YORK CITY
2011 POPULATION: 8,244,910
LAND AREA: 302.6 SQ MI
PARK LAND AS PERCENT OF CITY AREA: 19.6%



10 PHILADELPHIA
2011 POPULATION: 1,536,471
LAND AREA: 134.1 SQ MI
PARK LAND AS PERCENT OF CITY AREA: 13.0%

GEO-GEEK SUMMIT

DANIELLE BERGER // MSUP 2013

The annual ESRI International User Conference, also known as a grand geo-geek summit, was hosted in San Diego, California this year during the first three weeks of July and drew 15,500 attendees. The overwhelming 200+ page program schedule was a treasure-trove of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-related talks and events for interests varying from transportation and renewable energy, to wildlife protection, and agriculture, and even introduced the latest Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) tools.

The exhibition floor showcased the latest in GIS technology and data visualization techniques, including U.S.-prohibited personal remote sensing drones and bleeding-edge GPS units. Many businesses were in attendance displaying their current projects and employment opportunities, creating the perfect environment for networking.

The average attendance fee of \$1,500 provided one with 5 days of moderated papers, technical sessions, special interest group meetings, and access to social events. No matter how you cut it, it’s an expensive conference—before airfare or accommodations. However, a crafty student can secure free admission; a complimentary conference pass comes with every ArcGIS software annual license registration. Universities pay dozens of license fees and have dozens of free passes to give away.

The opportunity to see how GIS is utilized within and beyond the planning field is one of the main attractions of this conference. It’s also a great platform for people to network and showcase their work. Columbia’s Urban Design Lab and GSAPP offer many opportunities to attend a variety of conferences and events in planning and related fields. Use the wealth of resources at your disposal to make it happen! ■

SMALL APARTMENTS: A BIG SOLUTION?

STEPHANIE SHELLOOE // MSUP 2013

Early this summer, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced adAPT NYC, a pilot program to develop a new housing model to accommodate the city's evolving composition. The program hosted a competition to design and construct a building of 275 to 300 square foot "micro-units"—smaller than the 400 square foot minimum currently required under zoning laws—to meet the needs of the growing number of small households in New York City. A successful project could lead to a reformation of the existing zoning regulations that govern dwelling size and density.

The regulations in question require separate kitchens, minimum sizes for living areas, and a dwelling unit factor that regulates density, essentially, setting the average size of units for buildings upwards of 600 square feet for most districts in the city. Certain regulations will be waived for the demonstration building on East 27th Street, in Kips Bay, but building codes and zoning limits on height and setback requirements remain in place.

The Bloomberg Administration is selling the project as a solution for the rising discrepancy between small

households and large units; the Mayor has noted that the city has "1.8 million one- and two-person households, but only one million studios and one-bedroom apartments." DCP has focused on creating more options for people who live with roommates because affordable small, private spaces aren't available. The Citizens Housing and Planning Council, the non-profit whose research largely influenced this initiative, advocates for regulation reform to encourage housing innovation to meet the needs of evolving household types.

The notion that New York's current housing stock neither reflects nor meets the needs of a population that has metamorphosed since the initial zoning laws were put into place pervades each agency. Room and unit size minimums were largely a response to squalid slum conditions in nineteenth century tenement buildings, but conditions, social climate and individual economic situations have changed drastically. Now, as people continue to delay marriage and children, households of one are becoming the norm; furthermore, current regulations preclude a provision of innovative housing that would better serve New York's dynamic population. ■

AS EDUCATED, YOUNG, URBAN, SOON-TO-BE PROFESSIONALS, COLUMBIA'S URBAN PLANNING PROGRAM PROVIDES A PROXY OF THE INITIATIVE'S TARGET POPULATION TO ASSESS THE DESIRABILITY OF MICRO-UNITS. HOW ARE "YOUNG URBAN INNOVATORS" LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY NOW? HOW SMALL IS TOO SMALL? THE RESULTS OF AN EMAIL SURVEY OF THE URBAN PLANNING CLASS CHALLENGES SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS DRIVING THE MICRO-UNIT INITIATIVE.

MOST OF US DO REPRESENT THE TARGET POPULATION:
70% LIVE WITH UNRELATED ROOMMATES, I.E. IN A NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLD.
84% LIVE IN NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS, WHEN INCLUDING THOSE LIVING WITH UNMARRIED PARTNERS (AS THE US CENSUS DEFINES NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS). **45%** OF RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS ARE NON-FAMILY IN NEW YORK CITY. **73%** LIVE IN ONE- AND TWO-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS. **60%** HOUSEHOLDS ARE ONE TO TWO PERSONS IN NEW YORK CITY. **20%** LIVE ALONE VS **47%** OF RENTAL UNITS IN MANHATTAN OCCUPIED BY SOMEONE LIVING ALONE.

HERE'S WHAT UP-ERS HAD TO SAY:

PROXIMITY TO TRANSIT WAS THE HIGHEST FACTOR CONSIDERED WHEN CHOOSING A HOUSING UNIT.

93% SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT

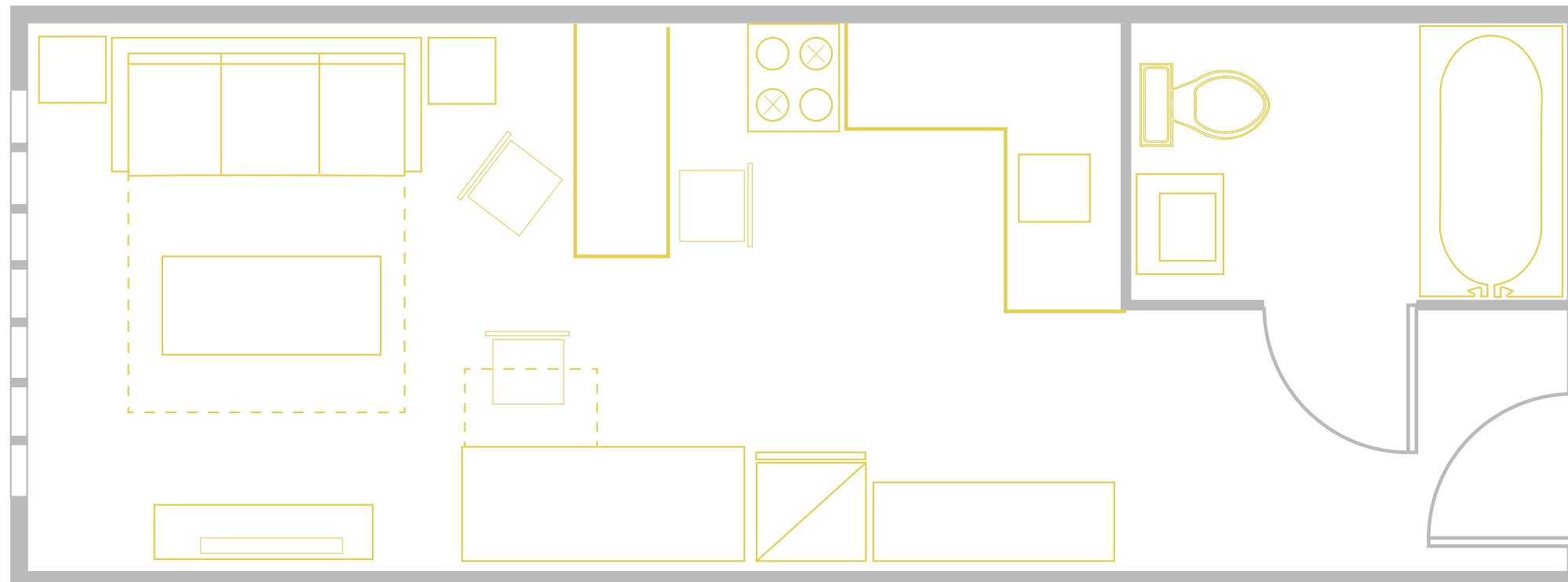
BUILDING AMENITIES AND QUALITY OF UNIT DESIGN RATED THE LOWEST IN DECISION FACTORS, WHICH CHALLENGES THE COMPONENTS EXPRESSLY ENCOURAGED IN THE ADAPT NYC COMPETITION

77% SAY SIZE OF UNIT IS "SOMEWHAT" OR "VERY IMPORTANT" BUT ONLY **56%** SAY THAT HAVING A PRIVATE UNIT WAS A PRIORITY

OF THOSE WHO SHARE A UNIT, **57%** SAY THEY ARE SOMEWHAT OR VERY LIKELY TO CHOOSE A PRIVATE 300 SQ FT UNIT, BUT ONLY **40%** ARE LIKELY TO CHOOSE A 250 SQ FT DWELLING

WHILE A FULL KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY IN THE BUILDING WERE HIGHLY RATED AMENITIES, MOST BUILDING AMENITIES WERE NOT IMPORTANT. ONLY **7%** PRIORITIZED COMMON SPACE

HOW SMALL IS TOO SMALL? AS A PROPOSED LAYOUT FOR A MICRO-UNIT, IS THIS SPACE LIVABLE?



LAYOUT BY NYC DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

UP STUDIO UPDATE

FRANCESCA CAMILLO // MSUP 2013

Over the summer, Fayerweather 201 underwent a full renovation guided by the work of GSAPP Architecture students in a design/build course co-taught by Adjunct Assistant Professor Mark Taylor and Architect Robert Marino. Last spring, **URBAN** interviewed Taylor and Marino for a preview of the renovation, which was to be done in two phases. As of the near-completion of Phase I, small programmatic details have left students complaining of a lack of temperateness in the lab and classroom and a common area that still needs permanent furniture.

In a follow-up chat with Taylor, he implored students to understand the functionality of the space and airflow between the lab, classroom, and common space.

Why? At its barest bones, it's not hard to follow. Fans in the classroom can't be blocked because that disrupts air flow.

Recall that there are two phases. "HVAC wasn't in the scope of [this phase of] the work. If we'd wanted to wait... none of the current students would have enjoyed any element of the renovation, which I think, overall, is a pretty significant improvement. Sure, the classroom isn't ideal... but everything else is a net gain, and I hope that they feel the same way."

The intake (lower) and output (higher) fans in the classroom are speed controlled. When they're off, the system can't do its job, which creates a sweltering classroom. Further, the door must be kept ajar because "then the heat doesn't have anywhere to go," Taylor explained.

Taylor wants students to be assured that "[he's] continuing to look into alternatives [to make the classroom temperate] until Facilities resolves the HVAC issues."

Ultimately, if there's anything UP students want or need, speak up. ■



THIS YEAR MARKS THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AVERY HALL, HOME OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION SINCE 1912, AND DESIGNED BY CHARLES FOLLEN MCKIM OF MCKIM, MEAD, AND WHITE. TO CELEBRATE, GSAPP AND AVERY LIBRARY HOSTED A SYMPOSIUM ON NOVEMBER 10, HONORING AVERY HALL'S FIRST HUNDRED YEARS AND LOOKING TO ITS FUTURE.

HERE'S TO ONE HUNDRED MORE, AVERY!



PHOTOS BY KUSUM ANANTHAIAH