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# Editorial Note

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After celebrating our 20th anniversary the year prior, the Editorial Board of Critical Planning decided it an opportune moment to revise the mission statement of the journal. While our theme last year, “The Future”, sought new perspectives on the future of urban planning and design, our intention this year was to reframe our goals within these new and emerging debates.

Following much discussion and reflection, we have decided on four core values: 1) advancing non-traditional analyses of contemporary issues, 2) encouraging criticality of the status quo, 3) elevating underrepresented voices, and 4) connecting individuals to the global movement for social justice. At the same time, we did not want to limit ourselves to typical research articles, and thus emphasized that Critical Planning is a departure from most academic journals in that we actively seek out other modes of knowledge and representation, from op-eds and fictional narratives to photo essays and visual art. The journal is thus not only a space for planning scholars and academics, but also activists, organizers, and others who take “the city”, however defined, as their object of inquiry. Guided by this vision, all of the works contained in Volume 21 were carefully selected in the hopes that this new mission statement can provide a platform from which the journal can evolve.

We open Volume 21 with a thought-provoking op-ed from Holli Fajack who critically assesses the UN’s controversial Agenda 21, and in particular the political turmoil it has caused, through the lens of democratic planner. “License to Ride”, by Derek Galey, our Edward Soja award winner this year, examines Estonia’s unprecedented launching of free municipal public transport for residents. While hailed by many on social and environmental grounds, Galey dissects the political motivations behind the city’s policy and places it within the larger context of inter-urban competition. In Elena Bixel’s “Sustainability or Connectivity” and Scott Humphrey’s “Contemporary Urban Renewal”, the authors similarly scrutinize dominant discourses of public participation, sustainability, and connectivity, which often conceal the real motivation behind a project. Together, these articles ask that we not divorce urban policy from its political context, or we may mistake “progressive” policy making for the logic of neoliberalism.

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However, “Costa del Sol”, a short documentary film made by Chema Segovia Collado and Jesús Quintanilla Azzarelli (reproduced here with a series of stills from the film and short explication), both humanizes and historicizes the impact of global urban restructuring. The film tells the stories of a number of people whose lives were changed by the arrival of tourism in one of Spain’s most idyllic coastlines. By juxtaposing their personal narratives against the area’s failed—almost absurd—attempts at urban redevelopment, the film draws our attention to the plurality of experience and perception of place.

Perhaps the most crucial part of planning is its projective component: crafting the ideas and models that will shape the future. Coming to us from the innovative research and planning consultants at Human Impact Partners, “Where Health, Planning, and Community Empowerment Meet” calls attention to the important intersection of public health and urban planning, a growing crossroads for two disciplines that have for too long overlooked one another. By making explicit the gap between stakeholder participation and reality, the authors seek to address it by proposing a model for conducting Human Impact Assessments in a way that is both timely and meaningful. Our other policy paper comes from a group of UCLA Masters and Doctoral students of urban and regional planning. The students spent their spring break in Detroit touring the city, meeting with policy makers, and gathering data in order to document and analyze how the city is changing in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The article “Transit in Detroit” and infographic on the role of the Detroit Land Bank Authority document the findings of their study trip.

While last year’s volume had the most international list of authors of any Critical Planning journal, Volume 21 has several notable works from scholars and artists working around the world. Sean Kennedy’s article, “Eco-certification of Natural Rubber”, explores the emergence of new environmental controls in Indonesia, which, he argues, represent the move towards a form of private global governance driven by consumers in the global North, a serious threat to democracy in low-income countries. “A Forgotten Dimension” by Carolyn Abrams and Ana Luna, analyzes how gendered power dynamics influence the experiences of Bangladeshi women in public space, the household, and the workplace Bangladesh. By challenging Western definitions of the household, equity, and empowerment, the authors offer a series of recommendations that may both improve policy in Bangladesh while also shifting the public’s attitudes toward women. Touching on similar themes, Marcia Rose Hale’s photo essay, “The Reurbanization of Çatalhöyük” transports us to one of the first cities in the history of human civilization, and offers a complex meditation on the meaning of work, home, and equality. We conclude Volume 21 with reviews of the most recent books from three of our esteemed faculty members at UCLA: Susanna Hecht, Michael Storper, and Edward Soja.

I would be remiss to present this year’s volume of Critical Planning without commenting on the context within which we are publishing it, for there is a lot facing the City of Los Angeles in 2014. As alluded to by the cover, California is in the midst of one of the most severe droughts on record. In January, Governor Brown declared a drought State of Emergency and directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages. As sprinklers continue to feed the lawns of much of Los Angeles, just north of the city along the 5, farmers have posted signs on their dried up land, calling for the end of the “Congress-made drought”. Mayor Garcetti has announced that he will take steps to raise the city’s minimum wage to 13.25, and yet LA remains the wage-theft capital of the US, with violations amount-

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ing to \$1.4 billion annually. As many of the authors of this volume would tell us, political context is everything.

With that said, it is my hope that with Volume 21, we have paved a strong future for Critical Planning, as an inclusive forum and alternative voice to the many issues facing cities around the world. I would like to thank everyone who has worked on putting together this year's journal. Here's to another 20 years!

**Brady Collins**

Managing Editor