

INTERPLAN

APA

American Planning Association
International Division

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the International Division
of the American Planning Association

Chair's Column



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Outlook for 2017

Potential cuts in US Government funding for international development aid are juxtaposed with renewed world focus on climate change through the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and sustainable development via the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Habitat New Urban Agenda. This makes NOW the perfect time to review and renew our dedication to good planning as a facilitator of climate action and sustainable development whether in the US or overseas, in both developed and developing countries. Please take a moment to review the following goals for an APA International Strategy and send your thoughts to me at tvanepp@gmail.com:

- To “mainstream” international throughout the APA organization, including fund-raising, research and publications, policy and advocacy, communications and marketing, education and training, etc.
- To provide more and better services to International Division members and other APA members or potential members who live and/or work overseas
- To work more collaboratively and effectively with our international planning organization partners, both multilateral and bilateral, including the Global Planners Network and the International Society of City and Regional Planners
- To provide more and better services to existing or emerging national and regional professional planning organizations, e.g. those in Central and Eastern Europe, India, Brazil and Mexico who have approached us in the last few years
- To be a “go-to” resource for high quality studies and reports relating to international planning topics and issues for clients based in the US and overseas

After adjusting the goals to reflect your feedback, we will develop a draft strategy to share with the APA Board of Directors. Thanks!

Report from APA International Division Annual Business Meeting: May 7, 2017

Below is a short summary of our annual business meeting minutes.

Division's role in helping members through a time of potential cutbacks and reorganization of the US role in development aid

Since federal funding cuts to international development programs are likely, there was a discussion related to the role that the International Division is playing (or could play) in supporting overseas work. Seeking grant money from private foundations was one strategy mentioned. It was also mentioned to focus on one particular geographic area, in order to focus resources, which could result in a larger impact. Sending APA members overseas for short periods of time (up to a week) to train local planners in an effort to build capacity was also suggested, specifically related to needs in Mexico.

Getting the Division's issues addressed in the APA Policy and Advocacy agenda

Advocacy opportunities include an International Division focus for Annual Planners Day on the Hill, participation in the APA Policy and Advocacy Conference, and possible collaboration with the Federal Planning Division. Two action items were developed as part of the discussion: (a) solicit membership for developing key points for advocating to Congress, and (b) connect with other international planning organizations to determine common goals and how we can best work together.

Developing organizational sponsorships, webinars/conferences, and other means of boosting funding

We are looking for ways to increase funding. Ideas discussed include: increased membership, hosting webinars and/or conferences, small grants from APA, and organizational sponsorship. Other divisions are getting corporate sponsorships that support additional sessions on the front - or back-end of the national conference. Ideas for seeking sponsors included: focus on 'urban'; focus on medium and large international organizations; create a menu of sponsorship opportunities (with associated costs) that companies can choose to support; and focus on firms that are in the information and communications technology (ICT) business related to smart cities.

Planning for upcoming events -- Policy & Advocacy meeting in September, Oregon-ISOCARP-ID meeting in October, World Town Planning Day Online Conference in November, and APA National Planning Conference 2018 in New Orleans in April; FAICP sponsorship

Tim introduced Marc Lewis-DeGrace as the newest member of the Executive Committee, with a title of Vice Chair for Events. Marc has done a lot of work to prepare for the Annual Conference, which requires year-round efforts. Tim and Marc are looking for a volunteer coordinator for APA's participation in World Town Planning Day (WTPD) – see separate article below. This event occurs annually in November. Ideally, we would like to have a volunteer by the end of May.

Tim Van Epp, APA International Division Chair

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1 - Marc Lewis-DeGrace (left) and Tim Van Epp (right) receive the Overall Division Performance Award from Linda Amato, APA Divisions Council Chair, at the National Planning Conference. Photo by Roy L. Carrington. (C) 2016 American Planning Association.

News



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Student Grantee Becomes APA Ambassador

Akshali Gandhi, a 2011 recipient of the International Division Student Grant, was recently featured in APA's blog for her work as an APA Ambassador. See: <https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9105503/>
For a summary of her grant work on the restoration of Ulus, Ankara, Turkey, go to: <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/INTERPLAN2013Winter.pdf>

Smart Cities Lectures at Metsol 2016

The Metropolitan Solutions Conference was held in Berlin, Germany in June. Division member, Ric Stephens, moderated a session about smart cities organized by ICLEI. The reports for that and all other sessions are now available at <http://www.metropolitansolutions.de/home>

ISOCARP Young Planning Professionals Workshops in China, Poland, and Russia

In May 2016, ISOCARP and several partners organized several workshops for young planning professionals in Guangzhou, China. There were 20 participants, including four international delegates from Morocco, Germany, Vietnam, and Poland. The theme was inner-city regeneration and rethinking of the Guangzhou waterfront. Reports are available at <http://isocarp.org/young-planning-professionals-programme/national-ypp-workshops/ypps-guangzhou-2016/>

In June, ISOCARP and several of its partners in Poland delivered a series of workshops for its Young Planning Professionals under the name of Gdynia School of Urbanism. The event attracted 6 young professionals from Poland and 20 from other countries. The results were presented at ISOCARP's 52nd Congress in Durban, South Africa. Reports are available at <http://isocarp.org/young-planning-professionals-programme/national-ypp-workshops/ypp-national-workshop-gdynia-poland-june-2016/> The Government of Moscow held the annual Moscow Urban Forum in July. The theme was "Fast-Growing Megacities: Technologies for Dynamic Development." Division member Ric Stephens participated as a guest speaker and as moderator of Young Planning Professionals workshops. Photos, videos, and presentations can be viewed at <http://mosurbanforum.com/results>

World Cities Summit 2016 Singapore

The World Cities Summit took place in Singapore last July 2016 with the theme "Mayors Taking Charge." The report is now available at <http://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg/>

52nd ISOCARP Congress Durban

Last September, in Durban, South Africa, ISOCARP held its 52nd Congress with the theme "Cities we Have vs Cities we Need." Papers and other materials are now available at <http://isocarp.org/52nd-isocarp-congress/>

EU Smart Cities Information Framework under Development

Starting in January 2016, our fellow planners at ISOCARP have been involved in an European Union research project named ESPRESSO or "Systemic Standardisation Approach to Empower Smart cities and Communities." The focus of the project is the development of a conceptual Smart City Information Framework based on open standards, technologies, and information models that are currently in use or in development in various cities or industry sectors. The framework will consist of a Smart City platform (an enterprise application) and a service that integrates relevant data, workflows, and processes. For more information, please visit: <http://espresso-project.eu/>

thinkNATURE

ISOCARP and the ISOCARP Institute have been selected as a partner within a European Consortium to develop a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform and think tank to promote innovation with nature based solutions. The EU (Horizon2020) funded research project "thinkNATURE" has a 3.5 million euro budget

and deals with nature conservation, environmental planning, urban studies, and sustainable innovation. It started in October 2016.

Planner Profile



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Michael Cobb is a long-time member of the APA International Division and the New Jersey Chapter. Earlier this year, he was inducted to the AICP College of Fellows for his professional achievements in planning, design, management, and implementation of urban and regional development projects throughout the world. Now a consultant with his own firm, IDC International Development Consultants, LLC, Michael's career spans over 3 decades of work with The Bechtel Group, Planning Research

Corporation, EDAW, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the University of Pennsylvania, and Casoni & Casoni Architects.

His experience includes numerous large-scale urban redevelopment and expansion projects, ecologically-based coastal developments, and integrated planning and design for national urban, transportation, and infrastructure reconstruction projects. Early in his career he did projects in California, Colorado, New York, and New Jersey. Subsequently, his work has taken him to Jordan, Venezuela, Indonesia, Thailand, Lebanon, Egypt, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the Dominican Republic, Uganda, and South Africa. Cobb is probably best known for his work in directing the master planning, urban design and implementation of Jubail New Industrial City, the award winning mega-project on the Arabian Gulf in Saudi Arabia, a project highly regarded for its environmental and economic development success.

Details of Michael's work is found on two websites, www.idcworld.com and www.urbanism3.org. Also, his Twitter account is: @GreenUrbanist, and he can be reached via email at: jmcobb@idcworld.com and jmcobb@urbanism3.org.



2 - Mr. Cobb reviewing port relocation options with the Chairman of the Aqaba Development Corporation in Jordan. Port relocation was a key component of the master plan for the Aqaba Special Economic Zone expansion project.

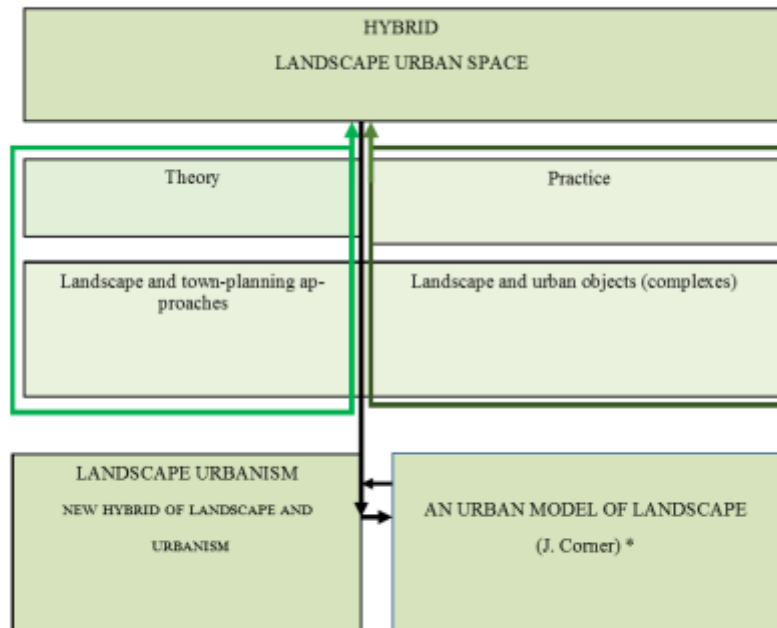
Facts & Viewpoints



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Urban Hybridization in Russian Cities

By Elina Krasilnikova and Dmitrii Klimov, in Moscow



3 - Hybrid space as a landscape architectural or architectural landscape complex. © E.Krasilnikova.



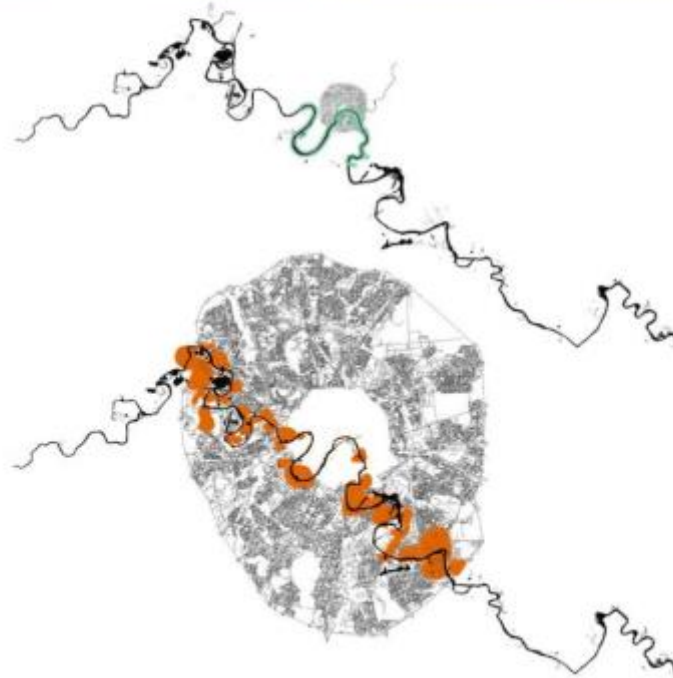
4 - The Atlanta Beltline by Perkins + Will and James Corner Field Operations, 2010. Source: <http://worldlandscapearchitect.com/atlantabeltline-atlanta-usa-perkinswill-james-corner-field-operations/#.VPq0aPmsX5g>.



5 - Crimean embankment in Moscow, 2013, by designers MAAPL by name of academic Polianskiy and the Bureau Wowhouse and architects Dmitry Legin and Oleg Shapero. Photo: © E.Krasilnikova



6 - The competitive project of the park "Zaryadye" in Moscow, by the consortium Diller Scofidio + Renfo, Citymakers (competition winner in 2013). Source: (<http://archi.ru/russia/51824/proekt-parka-zaryade-v-detalyakh>)



7 - Concept of development of coastal areas of the Moskva River by competition winner architectural bureau "Project Meganom", 2014. Source: <http://stroimsk.ru/pobeditel-konkursa>



8 - Concept of multifunctional complex on the Sofia Embankment in Moscow by competition finalist Miralles Tagliabue EMBT, Burgos & Garrido arquitectos, TSNIIP 2015. Source: <http://archsovet.msk.ru/competitions/sofiyskaya-naberezhnaya>



9 - Process of forming the Gardens of the Tsaritsa, a multifunctional landscape architectural complex with public recreational function and an entertaining structure at the valley bottom, 2015. By AC Green ART, E. Krasilnikova, O. Danelina, L. Kuzina, V. Vazhinskaya.

Urban hybridization in the age of post-modern society becomes one of contemporary trends of urban regeneration. The contemporary period of development of urban theory and practice is characterized by an integral approach to development of cities under the conditions of intensified globalization processes in the context of global economic crisis. Scholars (N. Ellin^[1], F. Zanni^[2]) forecast in their research the urgency, relevance, and socioeconomic importance of formation of hybrid spaces in the urban planning fabric of contemporary cities. It is explained by the fact that hybrid spaces are essentially multi-functional architectural and landscape complexes that are based on the rules of landscape urbanism and have spatial coherence with adjacent territories. Spatial coherence of hybrid spaces with the urban

fabric makes it possible to influence the development of adjacent territories and, in future, the structure of the city, where hybrid spaces become symbolic and image creating markers of the city.

Today urban regeneration is one of the powerful mechanisms launching a further development of the city planning structure under the conditions of the complex reconstruction of the existing space planning structure of cities. The rise of hybrid spaces in modern cities is directly connected with socioeconomic development of a city and, in the present period, with the total globalization process. Hybrid spaces are fast growing urban areas with self-organization in the wide architectural context – socioeconomic, functional planning, recreational, landscape compositional, and ecological.

Hybrid spaces are dominant central zones in the urban structure. The hybridization of these zones is based on the rise of multifunctional ties with the inner urban structure along with the adjacent suburban territories. As a rule, contemporary hybrid spaces in the large urban structure have a pronounced public recreational purpose with the advanced dwelling or public function. A functional saturation of the hybrid spaces with a residential function goes vertically, thus, there appears a space formed by the principle of multifunctional and multilayered, intercultural, public pedestrian promenade. Therefore, there is a good reason to consider the contemporary concept of the hybrid spaces as a symbiosis of an urbanized space with the natural environment.

The methods and techniques of urban regeneration have wide variation depending on specific features of a concrete place and an architectural potential of a given territory for city development. Formation of hybrid spaces, for example, former post-industrial areas in the urban structure, is connected with their new functional saturation.

The principles of forming hybrid spaces depend also on the architectural context of the territory and the specifics of socioeconomic and investment conditions of the urban regeneration. The formation of hybrid spaces enables the creation of an economic environment as an economic growth area for the surrounding space. This possibility results from the “concentration” effect in commerce. The “concentration” effect appears at the “hybridization” of public, business, residential, commercial functions on the regenerated urban area. The hybrid space with an enormous variety of intermediate functions enables creating conditions for new branches – development of the incubation process facilitates information exchange and diffusion of innovations – the process of knowledge flows that improve business communication.

Applying the fundamental principle of co-evolutionary approach in creation of hybrid spaces, namely, the principle of interdependent evolution of nature and society in designation of the most important directions of transformation of the existing structure of the city, we can nullify the negative consequences of urbanization processes to create a sustainable and comfortable urban environment. Such an approach is illustrated by a number of large-scale long-term urban planning projects in Russia, which have hybrid spaces of different functional saturation as their dominant elements: Zaryadye Park in Moscow, concepts of development of the banks of the Moskva River, concepts of development of Kaliningrad historical center (the King’s Mountain and its surroundings), concepts of the multifunctional complex at Sofiyskaya embankment in Moscow, and Tsaritsa Gardens in Volgograd.

There are four main steps in making a hybrid territory economically attractive and self-sufficient:

1. Services and infrastructure must satisfy citizens, companies and clients;

2. A hybrid space needs landmarks (possibly new ones);
3. A hybrid space must speak of its characteristics and advantages through an energetic and bright image, a communicative program;
4. A hybrid space must maintain an appealing “appearance” of the territory, create a positive image for it to attract new companies, investments and tourists.

Urban hybridization is a mechanism for creating an urban environment that attracts investments in harmony with nature, which is, to be exact, integrating objects of different functional saturation into a natural or artificial landscape. Urban hybridization is an instrument for creating a new quality of environment of a territory and is defined by its comfort for local dwellers as well as tourists, investors and higher authorities.

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[1] Ellin, N.(2006) Integral Urbanism, Routledge, New York

[2] Zanni, F. (2012) Urban hybridization, Politecnica, Milano, Italy

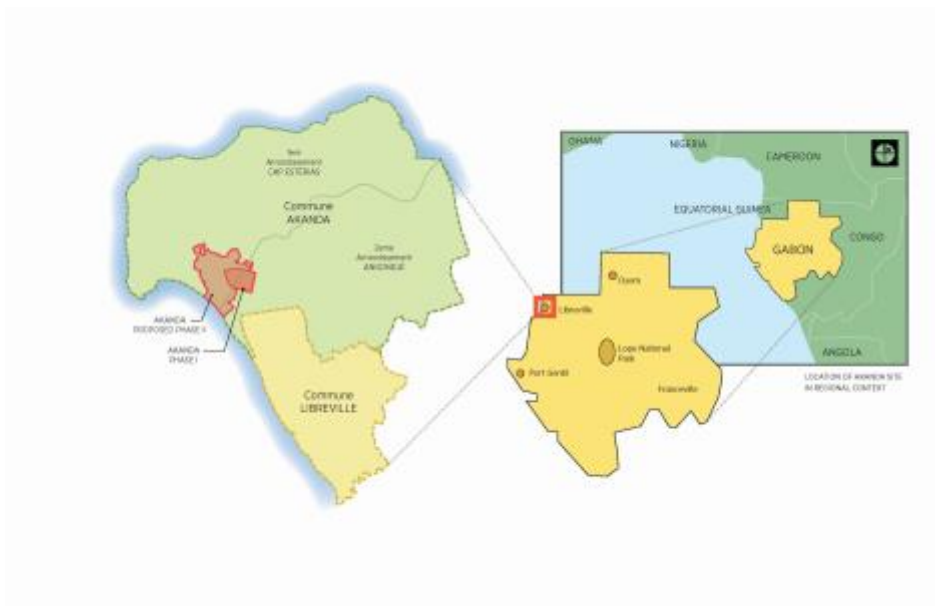
Project Gallery



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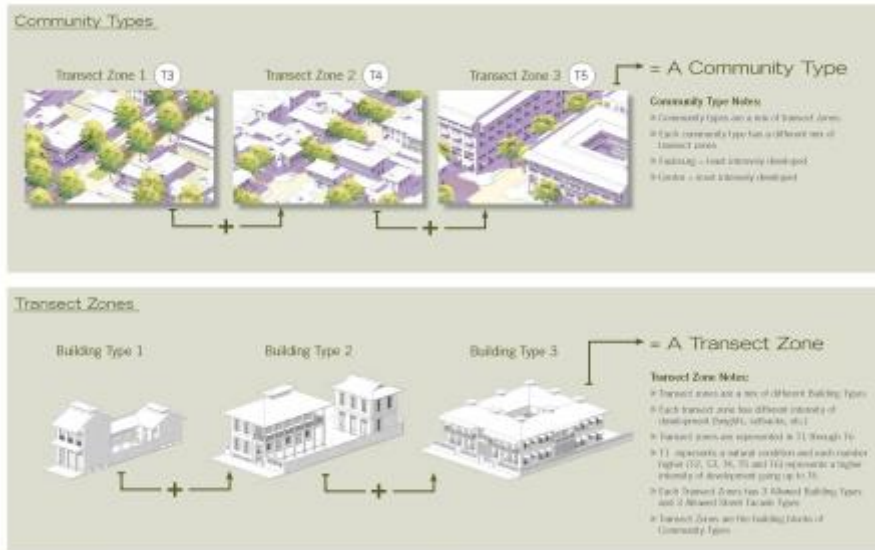
Providing a Sustainable Future for the Rapidly Growing Capital of Gabon

By Daniel Parolek, AIA, Founding Principal of Opticos Design, Inc.



10 - Fig. 1 The Akanda site in its local and regional context.

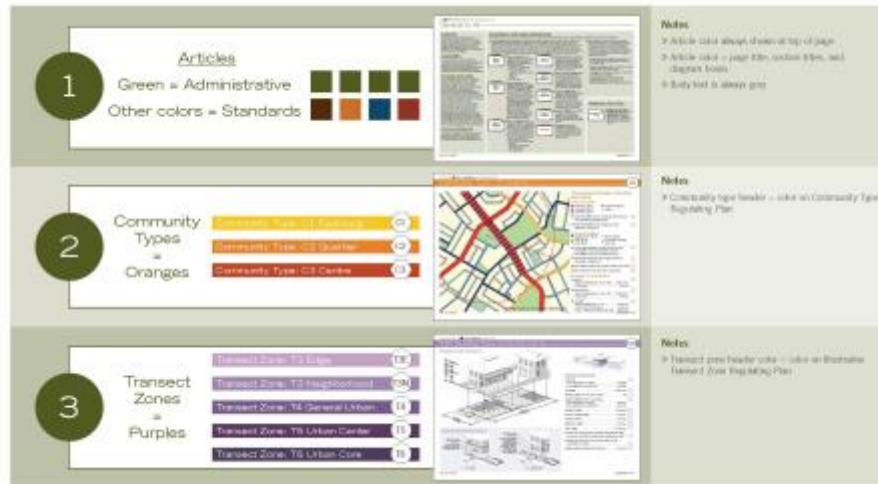




13 - Fig. 4 Visual diagrams show how community types are made up of transect zones, which are themselves made up of building types.



14 - Fig. 5 Building types accommodate different configurations of units and a mix of commercial and residential uses. Pictured here are two floor plans of courtyard apartments, important building types within the T4 Transect.



15 - Fig. 6 The SmartCode's color coding system clearly differentiated parts for administrators and other users.

As the 2016 Winner of the 2016 Pierre L'Enfant International Planning Achievement Award, Libreville, Gabon's Akanda Masterplan and SmartCode envisions a bright, livable future for the African capital. At its core, this project raised the question and challenge: How do you successfully plan and regulate for a sustainable future for a rapidly growing capital city in a developing country, and do so in a way that reinforces and respects the local culture and a robust local economy, while improving the quality of life for residents? Involving a partnership with Opticos Design, the Prince's Foundation for Building Community, and local leaders, the project called for extensive research and several trips to the dynamic city of Libreville for the project team to gain a more thorough understanding of local urbanism, Gabonese culture, and tropical building design.

Progress for progress's sake is not always good: When the team arrived for the first time in Libreville, it was immediately evident that recent development was promoting an unsustainable, auto-dependent lifestyle that the majority of residents could not afford, and it was providing new housing that did not respond to the tropical climate or reflect the patterns of good, walkable urbanism or Gabonese cultural patterns. In addition, it was evident that roadway widenings were detrimental to the local economy and way of life for many residents who relied on the informal, organic commerce that happened along the existing streets.

The purpose of the project was to establish a framework of green, walkable communities of varying scales that will provide up to 20,000 new homes, support public and commercial uses, enable development of the capital, and showcase Gabonese nature, culture and commerce. The end result of the effort was a "toolbox" of documents and strategies that the Gabonese government will use to ensure improved quality of life for its residents, and a sustainable framework of growth for the capital city of Gabon. The "toolbox" included a Masterplan, a SmartCode (Development Standards), Tropical Building Guidelines, and a Sustainability Guide.

The Masterplan

The Masterplan covers approximately 900 hectares (2,200 acres) to the north of the Gabonese city of Libreville and south and west of the Akanda National Park. The area is targeted for growth, but with its mangroves, mudflats, coastal water and patches of moist coastal forest, any growth here needs to be

sensitive to these existing natural conditions. The vision of the Masterplan was developed through an Enquiry by Design process that brought together an international design team, local stakeholders, and the expertise of L'Agence Nationale des Grands Travaux (ANGT).

The planning process set out to reinforce the natural characteristics of Akanda and protect the local environment while thoughtfully accommodating growth. The plan achieves this aim by determining the location and general boundaries of three community types: the Hameau, Village, and Centre. The ultimate build-out of the plan will create eight Villages, four Hameaus, and one Centre. Each community is centered on a civic facility such as a school or community center, such that all residents can walk to this gathering place—a critical feature given less than four percent of residents own a car. The Masterplan also includes the country's first public transportation network, which will serve to further promote the region's progress.

The SmartCode

The first question observers might ask is, “Why a SmartCode?” The country had adopted a model SmartCode a few years prior but was struggling to use it because the code had not been calibrated to meet the specific Gabonese cultural or unique physical patterns of a tropical, developing country. However, the government supported the underlying philosophy of sustainable development patterns inherent in the SmartCode, and thus it made sense for the team to build upon the existing general framework, making major refinements to create a more effective regulatory document. The goal was to complete a mostly graphic, easy-to-use Form-Based Code that could effectively implement the vision of the Masterplan in a country that had no history of development regulations and little history of land ownership, and to do so in a way that created places that reinforced the cultural and physical patterns of Gabon.

The Transect-based code establishes three levels of regulation:

1. The Regional Scale
2. The Community Scale
3. The Block and Building Scale

Effectively establishing and implementing Walkable Urban Community Types became a foundation of the Code. Community Types combine a variety of transect zones (in other words, the Transect Zones are the “ingredients”), and Transect Zones combine a mix of building types (in other words, the Building Types are the “ingredients”).

The Code is a true Form-Based Code in that it has no use tables or use requirements, allowing an organic and informal mix of uses, like that which currently exists in the local community. In a place like Libreville, where car ownership is low and mobility options are limited, access to bicycles and walking distances greatly determine the location of services and commercial uses in compact patterns.

Adaptable Tropical Building Type Design

As a foundation for the code, the team created a palette of Tropical Building Types, which is unusual for a SmartCode effort. This design decision was made because the team observed that the building type was the most likely scale that would be understood by developers and their design teams; if a building

were simply “copied” from the code standards, it would produce good urbanism within the required urban framework defined by the Code.

Opticos Design worked closely with Andrew Coates of Cresolus, a tropical building design expert from Panama, to refine the building types and to illustrate the flexibility in the defined types by showing a variety of plans within the same footprint. Coates also created a prefabricated concrete structural system that would enable building construction to occur quickly, standardize and thus improve the quality and safety of construction, and allow locally trained community members to build the buildings, or to open locally owned businesses that provided these structural elements. Tropical building design guidelines were included to ensure that some basic but important principles of tropical building design—such as cross ventilation, airflow, and flooding consideration—were reinforced in future development.

Sustainability Guide

As part of the project, Opticos Design worked with WSP’s Andrew Cameron and his team on a sustainability guide, which proposed a set of enduring and flexible solutions for creating more sustainable neighborhoods, buildings, and regions. It covers the following areas: Environmental Design with a focus on habitat protection; Neighborhood Design; Mobility and Circulation; Building and block energy design; Water, including stormwater, potable water, and waste water; and Solid Waste.

Usability

Special thought and care were given to usability at several levels. First, the document itself was structured in a way so that the administrators of the code could pull out and provide only sections of the code that were applicable to the scale of the project being proposed. Additionally, the code was formatted in a way to create a checklist system useful for both administrative reviewers and project applicants. A color coding system was also integrated to differentiate content.

As with all Opticos Design codes, the final document is hyper-graphic, emphasizing key concepts through pictures and diagrams. Three-dimensional graphics supplemented by limited text are the norm, and the code includes several graphic, how-to pages for both administrators and applicants at all three scales.

Furthermore, each zoning district or transect zone allows only three clearly defined building types and three frontage types tied to each building type, and has minimal level of regulation necessary to create good urbanism.

A Collaborative, Innovative Effort

The approach to this project was thorough, provides Gabon with the tools necessary to establish a framework for a sustainable future while accommodating growth, and can serve as a model for other rapidly growing capital cities in developing countries.

The documents also address the challenges of land ownership, establishing an entity for administration, providing necessary training, and defining a demonstration project that would illustrate the intent of the Masterplan and vision. Opticos Design was thrilled to be part of such a groundbreaking project and looks forward to future collaboration with the Prince’s Foundation to establish models in other parts of the world.

This article first appeared on Logos Opticos: Composing Vibrant Urban Places. All images courtesy of Opticos Design, Inc./The Prince's Foundation for Building Community.

Daniel is an architect and urbanist who has worked with cities and towns of all sizes around the world to create vibrant, urban visions that reinforce the unique character of a place and that support local economies. A recent Next City article referred to Daniel as "that guy" who coined the term Missing Middle Housing, which intelligently addresses housing issues in cities across the country. He is also at the forefront of rethinking the way we zone our communities to promote more compact, walkable, and vibrant places. He co-authored the book Form-Based Codes and, as part of a larger sustainable growth strategy in partnership with the Prince's Foundation for Building Community, he wrote the first development code for Gabon, Africa. He serves as a board member for the Form-Based Codes Institute, an organization dedicated to reforming zoning to remove barriers for urban development, and for TransForm, which promotes walkable communities with transportation choices to connect people of all incomes to opportunity. His love of good urbanism springs from a childhood spent exploring the vibrant downtown of Columbus, Nebraska, on his bike.

Featured Program



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The International Division at Habitat III

By Greg Scruggs, Victoria Okoye, Jeff Soule, and Tim Van Epp

The Habitat III conference, the major conference setting a global commitment on the future of the world's human settlements, took place in Quito, Ecuador October 17-20th. APA organized a Global Planners Network (GPN) panel that featured GPN President Carol Rhea and APA International Division Chair Tim Van Epp speaking on public participation. The capacity audience—over 125 people—heard general ideas as well as specific cases from the speakers. At the Habitat III conference, GPN and our Allies presented more than 35 sessions.

GPN also shared exhibit space with a broad effective coalition of domestic allies, including the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) along with international partners the International Federation of Housing and Planning (IFHP), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Grand Circle Alliance, Paris and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). Each organization took turns staffing the booth and answering many questions. Traffic was varied but steady and at times very busy.

One of the highlights of the week was a presentation of the [Viva Alameda Urban Village](#) project with ICOMOS after six months of planning and preparation with local and international teams. The historic neighborhood is adjacent to the World Heritage central city. During the months leading up to Habitat III, the community identified issues and priorities with help from both international experts and city agencies. All this culminated in a local charrette on the final day with more than 150 community residents participating. After the charrette, the city and the international organizers agreed to continue to support the neighborhood and implement several recommendations.

Over the next several months, APA and the Division will work with our allies on guidelines for implementation. Many of the recommendations are found in various PAS reports and policy guides already. There are many examples, policies and planning cases from other countries that can inform our domestic practice, just as we share our best practices abroad.

The main outcome of Habitat III was the adoption of the [New Urban Agenda](#) by acclamation. Two years of hard work and discussion led to 193 countries agreement on this global commitment recommending a path forward for global urbanization. APA and its allies were among the many private organizations reviewing and recommending the final language. Among the most important aspects are citizen participation, planning and development based on sound metrics, and transparency in governance.

While there is nothing binding about the agreement, the fact that not only the national governments support it but also the unprecedented participation and concrete contribution of over 1,500 non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders suggests it will be an important tool as cities grow and develop. APA will continue to develop resources for APA members to use the outcomes of Habitat III in their own localities.



16 - APA President Carol Rhea and CEO Jim Drinan at the GPN booth.



17 - International Division Chair Tim Van Epp, AICP joined the Habitat Professionals Forum meeting and is pictured here with GPN member Nicholas Buchoud (center) and newly elected HPF Chair, Didier Vancutsem or ISOCARP.



18 - Patricia O'Donnell, AICP one of the international experts participating in Viva Alameda.



19 - GPN leaders in session.



20 - Tim Van Epp (right) with other GPN leaders.

Take Me There



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US Planner Visits the UK with APA-RTPI Exchange

By Linda Wheaton, AICP





21 - Linda participating in a panel discussion.



22 - The new electric hybrid bus.



23 - Directional sign outside of King's Cross Station.



24 - Linda and former Mayor of London Boris Johnson.

2015 marked a political turning point in the United Kingdom (UK), with the Conservatives gaining majority power from the prior Coalition government in the May general election. Boris Johnson is serving his last year of his second term as Mayor of London; a new mayor will be elected in May 2016. Housing has been, and will continue to be, a leading political issue in the UK and London. This was the environment in September when I participated in a professional exchange sponsored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the [Royal Town Planning Institute \(RTPI\)](#).

My exchange partner was Jamie Ratcliff (top picture), Assistant Director, Housing and Land, at the [Greater London Authority \(GLA\)](#), who came to Northern California on the heels of my visit in London. I spent two weeks in London and several days at the RESI Housing Conference in Wales where I participated on a panel, “Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail! How do we oil the wheels of the planning system to increase housing supply?”

The concern with inadequate housing supply and high housing costs is a common issue to the UK, including London in particular, and California. London, with a population of 8.6 million, like many US cities, is experiencing resurgent growth, after decades of declining or stagnant population growth. Political consensus about the need to address housing supply and high housing cost issues, are, however much stronger in the UK and London than in California. It appears that a wider array of stakeholder organizations is engaged in debating proposals about how to increase housing development and related issues of urban design and “regeneration” in the UK. Features of their town planning as sacred as their greenbelts are subject to debate.

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), adopted in 2012, involves significant control by the national government. The planning system is seen by the current government as one of the main barriers to increasing housing supply; substantial changes impacting housing planning and regulation are being proposed. Since 1990, the UK has had inclusionary housing requirements, “Section 106,” requiring a portion of new housing developments to include significant portions of affordable housing. Major proposed changes include first-time homebuyer (“Starter Homes”) focus, expansion to housing associations of “Right-to-Buy” provisions allowing tenants of social housing to purchase their units at discounted prices, and broadening the definition of affordable housing.

These changes, both fiscally and with influence on residential occupancy and development patterns, would have significant impact on London, which accounts for a vastly disproportionate share of England's social housing proposed to be sold to tenants at discounted prices, and has constrained land supply for new development. Strategic planning, including a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) of [The London Plan](#) is the responsibility of the Mayor of London, 32 boroughs and the City of London. [The Opportunity Areas](#) (32) seven Intensification Areas, 20 [Housing Zones](#) constitute major areas for development in London. Applications of 150 or more units are subject to Mayoral referral - more than 500 public comments had been submitted regarding one of these applications in a meeting I attended.

I experienced why the UK's support for transit is the envy of US planners - from Transport for London's (TfL) and the Department of Transport's (DfT) transit options in London to major projects such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, a.k.a. High Speed 1 (HS1), Crossrail, and the pending High Speed 2 (HS2) connecting London and Birmingham. 600 [New Routemaster electric hybrid buses](#) (note the Los Angeles bus banner!), accessible by three doors, support London's ambition to become the ultra-low emission capital of Europe. TfL has also approved a network of cycle superhighways.

The [Mayor's Question Time](#) September meeting with the London Assembly, which included an audience with taxi drivers protesting Uber, was particularly interesting. In the course of discussing the 2018 date requiring zero emissions for new taxi licenses, chaos erupted in the audience when the Mayor referred to resistant drivers as "Luddites."

The renowned regeneration of the [St. Pancras International-Kings Cross Station](#) as London's impressive terminus for the Eurostar, connecting with Paris and Brussels. The success of that development is being parlayed into a second site, Brent Cross South, by a new UK-US developer joint venture: [Argent Related](#). This is part of London's interest in increasing the private rental sector.

Despite fundamental differences in governance and planning in the UK and the US or California, particularly relative to centralization of control by the national government, there are strong similarities in planning issues to be addressed. Examples include increasingly diverse demographic change, income inequality and accompanying polarization affecting the capacity of government to support public infrastructure, affordable housing and public service delivery, density and placemaking challenges. My exchange visit confirmed we could benefit from more collaboration with our planning colleagues across the pond.

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at: <http://www.theplanner.co.uk/opinion/learning-lessons-on-both-sides-of-the-pond> The article that my exchange partner, Jamie Ratcliff, wrote for them is available at: <http://www.theplanner.co.uk/opinion/lesson-from-america>

Window to the World

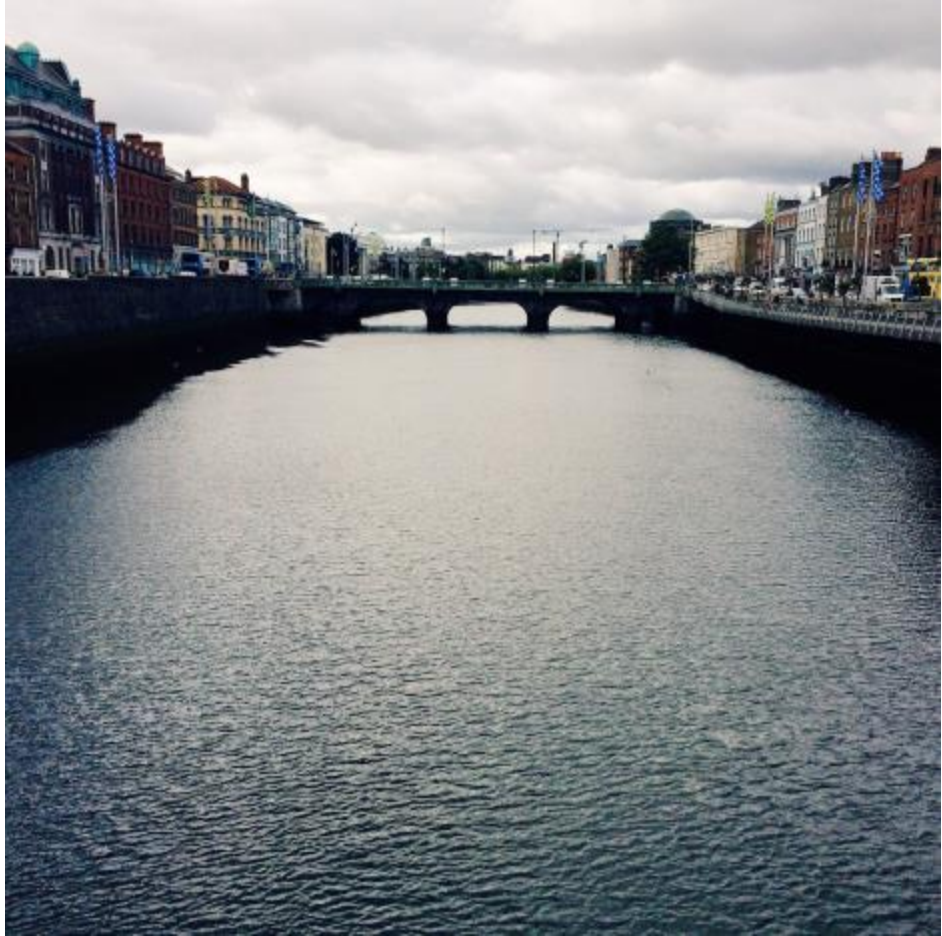


Dublin, Ireland

By Victoria Okoye









Dublin, Ireland's capital and largest city, has for centuries been a crossing point of culture, heritage and history. Founded as a Viking settlement and then part of the British Empire until 1916 when it became the capital of independent Ireland, the city's built environment is a stunning window into its rich past.

British occupation left strong influences on the city identity; street signs share directions in both Gaelic, the local Irish language, and English. Boarded windows can be seen on a few of the city's oldest buildings; the practice was in reaction to the 1696 window tax (property tax assessed according to the number of windows per dwelling); property owners sought to reduce their bills by boarding up windows or constructing houses with few windows to begin with, such as in the case of the windowless Bank of Ireland building, which was constructed in 1729 to house the Irish Parliament.

In the span of less than three decades, Ireland has evolved from a traditional agriculturally based economy with textiles manufacturing, food processing, beverage brewing and distilling to ICT, pharmaceuticals and financial services. Between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, Ireland achieved immense economic transformation from one of Europe's poorest countries to one of its wealthiest, before the global financial crisis hit.

An extensive network of nearly 200 bus routes, rails, trams and more than 120 miles of cycling lanes encourages mass and non-motorized transit; the compact street design, vibrant mixed-use development and city green promote a truly walkable and scenic city. With its immense green spaces, trees and surrounding mountainous terrain, Dublin is one of the greenest cities in Europe – 97% of residents living within 300 meters of a public green area, and the 10 square miles of Phoenix Park make it one of Europe's largest walled city parks.

The River Liffey, a main channel for trade, divides the city into northern and southern geographical parts, and these two parts of the city are connected by the iconic Liffey Bridge (also called the Ha'penny

Bridge). The River Liffey also separates the generalized socioeconomic parts of the city, the working-class neighborhoods of north Dublin from the middle and upper class areas in the south.

Dublin is also a center for art, culture and youth movements. Political statues, festivals, wall graffiti, guerilla art and murals provide a spectrum of creative and social expression – from metal statues of Ireland’s most pivotal independence figures to traffic light boxes painted with original art, famous movie scenes and characters to everyday commentary on social and political issues.

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