

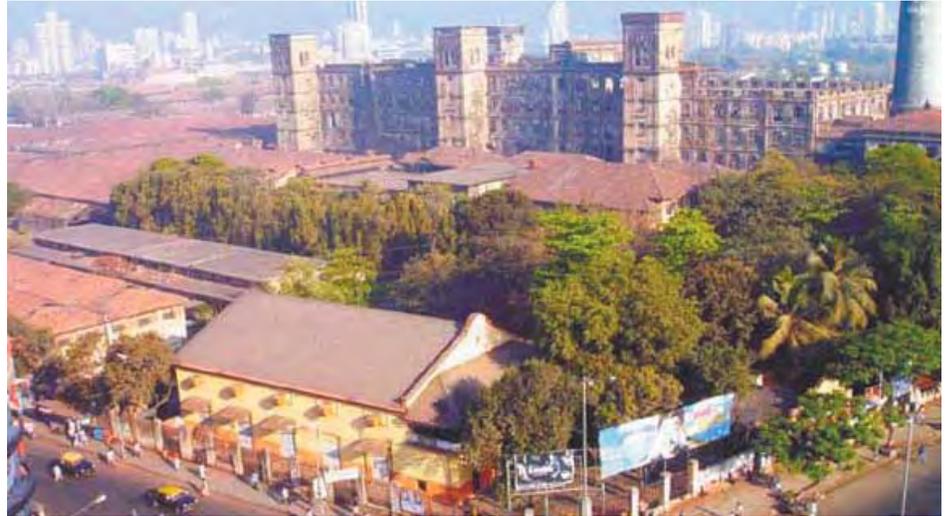
INTERPLAN

Mumbai's Mill Lands: A Need For Public Participation

By Puja K. Bhutani

Mumbai's 600 acres of underutilized mill lands presents an unparalleled planning prospect for the city. Yet, the planning process has become a case of governance gone astray in the face of high stakes, demonstrating the essential role of public review mechanisms for ensuring accountability. Widespread public distrust of the government over the process has necessitated planning through activism and litigation. This adversarial planning is resulting in piecemeal development that fails to achieve the larger and more comprehensive vision for the city.

Mumbai, the capital of the Indian state of Maharashtra, forms the world's 4th most populous metropolitan area with 20 million people. Mumbai is also India's commercial and financial capital and has some of the highest real estate prices in the world. The city aspires to transform itself into a "world class city" with high quality of life aided by rapid economic growth, along the lines



Mumbai's defunct mill lands present a unique planning opportunity; however, many are concerned over the government's approach and process for these properties.

of Shanghai, the economic engine of China. For this congested metropolis, where land is scarce and valuable, the opening up of substantial tracts of defunct mill lands in the heart of the City, presents a tremendous opportunity for achieving its aspirations.

The mill lands form the historic industrial core of Mumbai. However, the decline of the textile industry during the mid-1970s left behind large derelict industrial areas and widespread unemployment in the area. The mill lands also contributed very little in tax revenue, having been leased for annual rents as low as one dollar.

Seeking to revive the textile sector as well as balance the interests of the workers, the city, and the mill owners, the Maharashtra government introduced Section 58 (1991) to the Development Control Regulations of Greater Mumbai (DCR) in 1991. Under DCR58, the owners were allowed to sell and change the use of the mill lands from industrial to commercial/residential. Furthermore, the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the properties was nearly tripled to 1.33. In exchange,

the mill owners had to forfeit, to the municipality, one-third of their land for public open spaces and civic amenities, and one-third for public housing. Realizing the tremendous value of this rezoned real estate, the mill owners held onto their lands using an existing loophole. In the following ten years, little effort was made by the government to break this impasse, or work out acceptable development plans for this area.

In 2001, the Chief Minister approved a "minor" amendment to the DCR 58 wherein the owners had to turn over a two-third share for public housing and amenities from the existing vacant portions of the site, instead of the entire site. The mill owners had lobbied hard for this change, justifying their need for more land in order to raise money to pay the worker dues. The proposed "minor" modifications created a windfall for the owners and reduced by more than 90 percent and in some instances to nil, the land available for public housing and amenities.

What has unfolded since is a story of a
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Letter from the Chair

The International Division is making great strides with a new leadership structure, new officers, and a new look and feel to InterPlan. All these factors contribute to renewing our commitment to further the practice of planning around the globe and to provide value to you, our members.

As I considered how to turn this commitment into action the concept of "making connections" seemed particularly important. In order to pursue our goals, the division must encourage connections between our members, between our division and other international planning organizations worldwide, and between the division and other APA-related groups. We also need to facilitate discussions and scholarship on the interconnections among different planning issues (housing, economic development, environment, social issues, etc.) as well as the interconnections between communities and nations whether they are neighbors or half a world away. This edition of InterPlan embodies our emphasis on making connections.

Over the coming months you're sure to be hearing from Mike Sabel, Vice Chair for Communications; Beth Offenbacher, Vice Chair for Special Projects; Doug Fermenga, Vice Chair at Large; and Jeanine Nazar, Secretary/Treasurer. Gardner Smith will continue as our web manager and Tracy Sayegh as the co-editor of InterPlan. Many thanks to Christopher Silver and Paul Wack for their leadership over the past two years.

We hope that the enthusiasm and professionalism our new officers bring will ensure increased opportunities for you. Please make a connection with us and become part of this exciting new chapter for the International Division.

- Jennifer Lindbom

political-business nexus that flagrantly disregards public interest and trust in its haste to capitalize on the mill lands astronomical values. The stakes are extremely high with the redevelopment value of the 600 acres estimated at about \$4.4 billion in 2005, nearly half of which is owned by the central government-run National Textile Corporation (NTC). Of the existing 58 mills, 25 mill are owned by the NTC, and 32 mills remain in private ownership.

Public distrust of the government surrounding the case is high, precipitated by the following facts:

- The public notice requirement for amendments was deliberately circumvented by publishing it in a few obscure local papers. There were

no official studies of the impact of the amendment on the development of the area, or mechanisms to ensure compensation to workers.

- A "study group" formulated by Chief Minister in 2005, under political pressure, had no worker representation and was dominated by mill owners and business leaders with significant financial interests in the mill lands. There were no public hearings held by this committee.

- The NTC, controlled by the Congress Party, stands to make nearly \$2 billion from the land sales. The Congress party also controls the only trade union supporting the mill land sale. Shiv Sena, a local party, controls the Bombay Municipal Corporation

(BMC) that has jurisdiction over the mill land sales and development. Shiv Sena leaders were amongst the first buyers of several mill lands.

- Some of the mills are continuing construction work without having obtained the required environmental clearances from the State. These environmental permits include the only official requirements for public hearings. BMC has yet to incorporate these requirements into their permitting process despite notification from the State.

Given the lack of political will and the apparently deliberate subversion of the few public participation forums, the planning decisions are being primarily

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Migration, Remittances and Urbanization: Transnational migration between Senegal and Italy

By Ian Chodikoff

With an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 Senegalese migrants living in Italy today, transnational migration between these countries provides an interesting lens through which to view a widespread global phenomenon. In this case, migration, combined with informal commerce, has created an efficient mechanism that has led to unprecedented land speculation and rapid urbanization in several regions of Senegal. These pressures are placing tremendous stress on the government's ability to respond to the needs of education, infrastructure, and affordable housing for its growing urban population. The result is an ever more pressing need for a coherent urban growth strategy in Senegal.

Over a two-year period beginning in the fall of 2003, a study was conducted involving several trips to Senegal and Italy to document transnational migration between the two countries and how it has evolved. The research looked in-depth at this one case study as a way to better understand how transnational migration is impacting the world's urban areas. The goal was to examine factors of urbanization relating to immigration, citizenship, informal markets, economic development, and access to capital, and how these factors are changing the urban landscapes of both Senegal and Italy.

The findings reveal the strength of social networks among Senegalese migrants in Italy. Senegal's Muride Islamic Brotherhood is particularly influential in enabling migration and establishing networks for the migrants abroad, playing the crucial role of assisting young Senegalese in making the journey overseas. Once in Italy, the migrants disperse throughout the country. They find employment varying from informal labor in Southern Italy to selling counterfeit merchandise consigned to them by Chinese merchants in cities such as Genoa or Florence. Living arrangements often entail sharing a room in a dormitory or low-rent apartment building with up to

ten other people.

Through their social networks, the Senegalese find religious schools and prayer groups. They also offer each other advice and pool resources in seeking legal and medical assistance. The Senegalese newcomers are 85 percent male and span the socioeconomic strata, ranging from uneducated peasants to well-educated students and professionals trying to save money for a down payment on a house in Senegal.

The money being sent home is not insignificant — it's changing Senegal's urban landscape. As soon as migrants are settled in Italy, they send money back to their families on a regular basis, paying an informal tax to money transfer agencies such as Western Union or Moneygram. Most of the remittances are placed in "safe" investments, notably speculative real estate development and construction. The estimated amount of money Senegalese living abroad transfer home annually is roughly \$400 million, representing a significant component of the country's GDP. Modern technology has quickly facilitated the investment of remittances into land purchases and housing construction. For example, digital cameras and the Internet make it possible for the émigré in Italy to keep abreast of the new home he's building in Senegal.

Nowhere are the physical impacts of remittances more obvious than in the Senegalese Holy City of Touba. This metropolitan area, the spiritual center of the Muride Islamic Brotherhood and home to many of the sect's devotees, is booming with development. The results of migration are astounding: Touba has experienced a four-fold population increase over the past ten years. It's now the second largest city in Senegal, with a population of approximately 500,000.

Nearly all migrants from Italy return to Senegal, usually after a period of three to five years abroad. Rarely do the family bonds fracture or disintegrate. With cheap



phone cards, low-cost air travel and the Internet, a 23-year old from Senegal can work in Italy for a few years and save up enough money to start a family and build a house in his hometown of Dakar, Diourbel or Thies. Thus, the experience of a young man selling fake Louis Vuitton bags on the streets of Florence could be considered somewhat similar to that of a western youth, whose goal is to make a living and put a solid roof over his family's head.

Ian Chodikoff is an architect and urban designer based in Toronto. He is currently the editor of Canadian Architect magazine, Canada's national review of design and practice. He is a graduate of the Harvard Design School's Urban Design program and is the 2003 recipient of the Druker Traveling Fellowship which allowed him to undertake research in Italy and Senegal.

Han Chang'an Challenge: Planning for Preservation and Economic Development in China

By Troy Knott, recipient of the 2005 APA International Division Student Travel/Research Grant

Around the world, the torrent of modernization threatens the architectural and cultural heritage of cities. Especially in China, drastic development during the last half-century has resulted in significant losses. At the Han Chang'an site, however, Chinese, Taiwanese, and American planners—including graduate students from the University of Hawaii—recently joined together to preserve this ancient capital of the Han dynasty. Their goal: to balance a substantial degree of preservation with economic development objectives.

Han Chang'an is significant. This 36 square kilometer site includes Weiyang Palace, the Emperor's residence. Its sophisticated architecture influenced the built forms taken by Seoul, Kyoto and Hanoi. In terms of cultural heritage, the artifacts recovered from the tombs best exemplify the life and times of the city's inhabitants. Han Chang'an received official government protection soon after excavation began in the 1950s. In 2003, additional sections were unearthed, gradually revealing the magnificence of the dynasty.

Whether the ancient site will be an integral part of a livable Xi'an (the nearest city), a space for historic preservation only, or the hapless victim of an expanding metropolis is still undetermined. Once a seat of imperial power, today, the site is home to 50,000 rural "hukou," who predominantly till the land using traditional agricultural practices. Both local and national governments acknowledge the promising potential in accelerating the tourism industry, taking full advantage of the area's rich historic resources. The future of the hukou and their livelihoods is more uncertain. While the rapid changes occurring in Xi'an are not unique to China, the pace and scale of development is arguably among the fastest the world has seen.

The planning team focused on assessing Xi'an in the context of rapid urban-

ization and globalization; assisting the Shaanxi Provincial Government in applying for UNESCO World Heritage designation; and incorporating concepts of Responsible Tourism Development into the planning strategy. Endemic to every city are varying social, economic, and political conditions. Yet, a substantial level of commonality is found throughout the world. Acknowledging this, planners relied on an international comparative perspective. Rather than entirely "reinventing the wheel," they integrated previously vetted methods from abroad with local planning knowledge to formulate recommendations for Han Chang'an and Xi'an.

In May 2006, the team produced the report *Historic Preservation in a Livable City*. They also presented findings to organizations in China and Taiwan. With historic preservation as the overriding priority, the planners concluded that Han Chang'an cannot succeed as an economic engine fueled by tourism, or support the regional economy as a whole. The previously produced local-level comprehensive plan (2005-2010) recommended excavating and displaying the site's most significant ruins in the southwest, including Weiyang Palace. The planning team agreed. In addition, they called for prohibiting substantial impacts to the site—a sentiment also consistent with the

existing comprehensive plan.

New recommendations called for a range of economic activities to take advantage of the site's sheer size. This includes small-scale local businesses with high potential for increasing the economic multiplier effect. Further, planners explained how World Heritage designation and the creation of permanent green space for the city could potentially expand the number of enterprises choosing to locate in Han Chang'an.

Because the enormity and scale of Xi'an far surpasses what American planners typically consider appropriate human-scale development, the American graduate students thoroughly benefited from site visits to the city. In terms of practicing international planning and learning about planning in China and Taiwan, much was gained from collaborative planning sessions, negotiations, site visits during the day and evenings spent at banquets. Experiencing "book knowledge" first-hand was an invaluable lesson for the University of Hawaii students—debilitating dust storms and severe pollution aside. The research trip was difficult at times, but everyone felt the experience was tremendously rewarding.

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Big Wild Goose Pagoda at the Chang'an site

UN HABITAT Interview (continued from page 3)

believe planners across the globe need to keep in mind, given the new challenges faced by cities and towns today. In 1950, two-thirds of all the world population lived in the countryside. Today, over half of the world's population—three billion people—live in urban areas, and by 2050, it is anticipated that two-thirds of all people will be living in cities.

Furthermore, with one in three urban dwellers living in slums, poverty is clearly becoming an urban phenomenon. But these numbers merely illustrate the scale of the problem. The real, qualitative change is that exclusion is becoming more and more entrenched in our cities. The poor have fewer opportunities to get out of the cycle of poverty, and they are at best neglected, and at worst, actively discriminated against.

Urban planners can have a major role in addressing poverty and exclusion, as well as disaster prevention and post-disaster recovery, but they have to change the way they do business. They can no longer afford to simply be technocrats or experts, focusing on “physical planning”—they have to be skilled negotiators, facilitators of dialogue, who can engage with communities and governments alike, who have an understanding of, and commitment to, larger issues of rights, conflict, sustainability and inclusion. Planning needs to balance the goals of social inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability. This is what makes the “New Urban Planning” different from conventional planning approaches.

IP: What “first steps” are required to begin implementing the “New Urban Planning”?

Shipra: Well, there are steps that need to be taken at the global level, and other steps that could be initiated at national or sub-national levels. At the global level, we need to start campaigning actively for the “New

Urban Planning” at various international fora, for instance this year at the World Planning Schools Congress in Mexico in July, and the ISOCARP Congress in Istanbul in September. Ideally, we would like planning associations (national, regional and stakeholder specific) to formally endorse this new paradigm.

At the national level, planners’ networks and associations could start with reviewing their planning systems and approaches in the light of the ten principles of the New Urban Planning, i.e., a “self-audit” of achievement of principles. Based on this, priority areas for action can be identified, and adaptation of principles to local contexts initiated.

We also need to support the formation of new national associations of planners, where these don’t exist currently. Capacity Building Action Plans would have to be developed for these new associations, to be implemented through collaboration and staff exchanges between planning associations, and direct support from more established associations to less developed ones wherever required and appropriate.



The collaborative group focused on preserving the ancient capital of the Han Dynasty, Chang'an.

Han Chang'an - China (continued from page 5)

From a student’s perspective, this project demystified the world of international planning. We were exposed to significant bureaucratic controls and procedures, the challenges of presenting and collaborating through interpreters, and the value placed on collegiality in the name of progress. As rewarding as the project was itself, the camaraderie experienced between new col-

leagues and friends in Taiwan and China made the experience truly memorable. This opportunity was realized in part by the American Planning Association International Division’s commitment to develop young planners into experienced professionals. These activities also could not have been possible without the continued encouragement and assistance from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawaii and Group 70 International, Inc.

Troy Knott is a resident of Honolulu, Hawaii. He recently completed his Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and is currently a planner with Group 70 International, Inc. Troy was recently awarded the APA/AICP Outstanding Student Award for 2006. The APA International Division awarded the author a \$500 travel research grant for his trip to China. Troy can be reached at: tknott@hawaii.edu.

Reflections: Nicaraguan Villages See the Light

By Elizabeth Robbins

Sabana Grande is an unexpected place to learn about solar energy technology. This remote Nicaraguan village of 200 families is located in the mountains southeast of Totogalpa, Nicaragua, near the border with Honduras. Along with nine others from the U.S., Mexico and Honduras, I recently traveled to Sabana Grande to learn about its path to sustainability. The villages where we studied and volunteered are emerging example of how poor populations, with outside help, can empower themselves. I must admit that during my trip, I learned much more from the community than I could teach.

A combination of prolonged civil war and powerful hurricanes in the late 1990s devastated Nicaragua's economy and social infrastructure, leading to an exceptionally high unemployment rate. During the war, land mines were dispersed in alarming numbers—killing and maiming many on both sides of the conflict. In response, between 1999 and 2001, the Falls Brook Centre of Canada started a program to create economic opportunities for land mine victims by training them in solar energy techniques. One of these trainees became Sabana Grande's expert. He taught us how to construct and install solar panels.

After completing the course, we hiked two hours into a more remote and even poorer community called Santa Domingo. It was here at the church—the place of worship, of gathering, of community events—that we introduced solar-powered light. The entire village watched, and some joined in, as we installed the batteries, wires, and solar panels to power a mere five light bulbs. These Nicaraguans, who suffer from malnutrition and live on less than one dollar a day, celebrated the new light with a feast to honor us that rivaled a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Unfortunately, Santa Domingo and Sabana Grande are not unique in the developing



world. According to the United Nations, some 2 billion people live without a modern energy supply. At the same time, an estimated 1.6 million people die every year from illnesses caused by indoor air pollution due to non-renewable energy uses. Fossil fuels make up 85 percent of the world's present energy use, and developing economies are increasing their use of fossil fuels to meet their economic and social goals. In Nicaragua, the number one health problem is respiratory disease, a larger cause of death in the country than contaminated water. This is not surprising—rural kitchen ovens are fueled with wood and are usually not well-ventilated. Also, at night, many families use the ovens for light.

A cooperative called Las Mujeres Solares de Totogalpa (The Solar Women of Totogalpa) has been improving their community's indoor air quality since 1999. Utilizing a local design, these women build simple solar-powered ovens that store energy during the daylight hours. To ensure that everyone can access this technology, poor families are sold the ovens at-cost, and those with even less means borrow them. Our class was fortunate enough to spend an afternoon learning how to build these ovens.

It struck me that in Nicaragua, as in the United States, there is a great disparity between rich and poor. Nicaragua is a beautiful country with lush rainforests, spectacular beaches, active volcanoes, and picturesque mountains. But like many

there, the family that shared their tiny adobe home with me lacks electricity. They grow coffee, vegetables, and fruit, and keep a few chickens, but still struggle to make ends meet. They own a solar panel, are saving money for a battery and hope to have electricity in a few months. Despite the hardships, the mother's openness, dignity, intelligence, caring, and love for her family never wavered. We laughed like kids when she taught me a dance for our closing celebration! The family's closeness and their welcoming, loving nature towards me warmed my heart.

I emerged from my experience in Nicaragua with a new hope: that a broader use of appropriate renewable energies can result in significant health and local economic benefits and opportunities in developing countries. There's no time to wait decades for these technologies to make it into the marketplace. Planners are stakeholders that can affect this change. Energy efficiency, transportation policies, and clean energy funds are just some of the building blocks we can use to create more sustainable and vibrant communities—whose growth can be fueled by renewable technologies.

Elizabeth Robbins is the Housing Sustainability Administrator for New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. She can be reached at ERobbins@njhmfj.state.nj.us Elizabeth's trip was co-sponsored by Renewable Energy in the Developing World, Grupo Fenix, and Solar Energy International. To learn more about participating in solar energy workshops abroad, please visit <http://www.solarenergy.org/>

Book Review

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man by John Perkins

Reviewed by Bill Pugh

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2004, 250 pages) is the memoir of John Perkins' career as a highly paid international development professional. This New York Times best-seller is also a sharp polemic on the self-serving institutions Perkins worked for and encountered. The dust jacket describes the book in bold print as, "The inside story of how America turned from a respected republic into a feared empire."

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man focuses on Perkins' employment during the 1970s with the MAIN company (Chas. T. Main, Inc.), a private engineering firm specializing in the electric utility industry. Perkins is hired to conduct economic studies for MAIN's projects in the developing world. But soon after arriving, a mysterious "special" consultant for the company

trains him to be an "Economic Hit Man."

Despite a lack of formal training in the task at hand, Perkins is instructed to inflate national economic forecasts to justify huge international loans for infrastructure projects—loans that countries could never pay off. It was clear that the resulting multi-lateral aid would effectively subjugate developing nations to the United States and its allies in institutions like the World Bank. Perkins' first assignment is to Indonesia. Here, he concocts an outrageously optimistic economic forecast. It calls for a corresponding 17 to 20 percent annual expansion of Indonesia's electric infrastructure for the next two decades, resulting in extreme benefits to MAIN's bottom line.

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man is not policy analysis, but rather a memoir with a political message that ties into events taking place in Panama, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Colombia, Iraq and Venezuela. The author's personal experiences coincide with geopolitical hot spots, and he explains how his professional directives for a presumably private company are in reality connected to U.S. foreign policy interests.

The book's value and enjoyment stem from personal anecdotes that turn with an almost spy-thriller bent. I served in the Peace Corps in El Salvador, a country that was a target of intensive U.S. intervention. So, I was interested in hearing about similar countries and the influence Perkins' Peace Corps service exerted on his personal journey. Unfortunately, he stays focused on details of his career during the 1970's, only later touching on current events and broad themes in the globalization debate. In this respect, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* misses an opportunity to educate the next generation of international development professionals, planners included.

Bill Pugh, AICP, served in the Peace Corps in El Salvador from 2001-2002, working in municipal and community development. Until recently, he was local government planner for the Charlotte, NC metro area's regional council of governments. This August, Bill will be relocating to Hong Kong where he hopes to find a planning job. He can be reached at chiromancy@hotmail.com.

Mumbai Mill Lands (continued from page 2)

made by the Courts. As expected, the Courts have focused on procedural violations and undue hardships, rather than the planning merits, especially in the absence of an official mill area plan. In May 2005, the Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG), an NGO, successfully challenged the DCR 58 amendment in the Bombay High Court and obtained a ruling to stay all construction activities. This ruling was immediately appealed in the Supreme Court by the government-owned NTC and mill owners. In January 2006, the Supreme Court ruled to allow the development, sale or construction of five of the NTC mill sites, which had been auctioned.



Mumbai's mill lands occupy 600 acres

The mill lands, a defining asset for the city's vision, is in imminent danger of uncontrolled and unplanned development that gives little back to the City while taxing its overburdened infrastructure and depleting an already limited affordable housing stock. However there is still hope, as this issue

has organized and brought together various citizen groups, professionals and worker organizations. An informal coalition has been created that is working steadily to raise public awareness, organize public protests and lobby the Central government. Whether this loose coalition can come together as a cohesive group to institutionalize meaningful public participation in future government planning is yet to be seen.

Priya K. Bhutani, AICP, has been living in Mumbai, India for the past 1.5 years and provides consultancy services for land use planning and urban design. Prior to this she has lived in and worked with both public and private organizations in San Francisco, Chicago, and Seattle. She can be reached at

Report Back on International Division Panels at the APA Conference

Panel: Planning Across International Borders

Moderator:

David Fields, AICP, Astoria, NY

Speakers:

Roy Gilyard, City of El Paso, El Paso, TX

Lucinda Vargas, Plan Estratégico De Juárez, A.C., Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua

Veronica Rosales, AICP, City of Sunland Park, Nm, El Paso, TX

This panel probed the international and state jurisdictional issues inherent in international planning in the El Paso–Las Cruces–Juarez metropolplex and explored the challenges posed by differing state systems in the region.

Roy Gilyard spoke extensively about the challenges of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in El Paso. The Metropolitan Planning Organization, along with the Transportation Policy Board, establishes regional transportation policy for the area, with the participation of the Governor.

The El Paso MPO is the only MPO in the US that has one staff member working everyday in both the planning office in Juarez and the MPO in El Paso on issues of transportation, environment and other relevant topics. Transportation planning in El Paso addresses issues on national, international, interstate and regional levels. Among the solutions the City is pursuing to address transportation issues are to improve efficiency by building fast truck lanes; to increase truck flows on national, interstate and border crossings; to increase the international ports of entry for commercial and passengers; to develop an international transit system; and to improve air quality.

Lucinda Vargas presented information on the Juarez Strategic Plan. The plan is focused on the objective of bringing public, private and social institutions together to improve the quality of life in Juarez. Juarez Strategic Plan is a comprehensive plan, representing an inclusive multi-sectoral effort

(with the involvement of the public sector, private sector funders, the community and NGOs). Lucinda called Juarez, “a city of work” and a place of opportunity. Its high economic growth, strategic geographic location, military base, education levels, and agriculture centers should continue to prove important assets for promoting the City’s future national and international image.

Veronica Rosales spoke about Sunland Park and the maquiladora sector. Many US industries have moved to southern New Mexico in order to supply and service maquiladoras in Mexico. The maquiladora program employs well over 1 million workers. To read more about this topic please search www.planjuarez.org.

Panel: Planning Immigration and American Communities

Moderator:

Jennifer K. Lindbom, AICP, ACP Visioning & Planning, New York, NY

Speakers:

Oliver Kerr FAICP, Oliver Kerr, Palmetto Bay, FL

Dowell Myers, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Sigurd Grava, FAICP, Columbia University, New York, NY

Paula R. Walker, Catholic Charities, San Antonio, TX

Throughout history, communities in the U.S. and abroad have been shaped by immigration and the cultures, ideas, and lifestyles of their new residents. This panel examined major American immigration and global migration trends, identifying immigration’s influence on communities, and how planning tools are used to accommodate (and integrate) non-native residents.

There was a consensus on existing frictions in culturally distinguished communities regarding the creation of distinct standards for housing, transportation, job force and political activities. Typical challenges were discussed included overcrowding, exces-

s of parking, nuisance, low rents, unemployment, language barriers and transit culture.

Oliver Kerr and Sigurd Grava suggested a more human approach in dealing with code enforcement issues, by researching and penetrating into those communities to identify needs, standards and capabilities. Mr. Myers highlighted the need to focus on people rather than immigration issues and pointed out the enriching benefits these communities offer the broader city.

Mr. Myers also stressed the benefits of economic development with first and second-generation immigrants becoming the growing middle class taxpayers. The panel pointed to the contributions of educated professionals as well as the dependability of US economy on a cheap labor work force migrating from other countries to seek opportunities. Mr. Kerr introduced the exploitation of workers, mostly women lacking education and work permits, as a major concern.

Paula Walker discussed her hands-on practical experience in San Antonio with the federally funded, State Department program assisting new refugees. The program entails a 1-3 day orientation for refugees while overseas and a settlement period of 4-6 months for self-sufficiency. Many newcomers are eager to work and do not wish to live on welfare; however, many get entry level jobs regardless of their skills. Ms. Walker emphasized the need for voluntarism to meet the needs of refugee immigrants in the US.

Mr. Sigurd Crava expressed the importance of enabling immigrants to transform their own communities. Mr. Myers gave the example of the transit system in Los Angeles, which has over 54 percent foreign riders. This can be used to cultivate the transit culture and increase the ridership service. Mr. Kerr saw potential in celebrating these cultures as identity-building tools for cities. He gave the example of planners in the City of Miami organizing festivals in April and November of each year in Little Habana.



Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras, 2005

Two Miskito farmers investigate a recent burn in the cultural zone of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in eastern Honduras. A non-indigenous cattle rancher who is clearing Reserve forest land for pasture was responsible for the burn. Although only indigenous residents are legally permitted to live and work in the Río Plátano cultural zone, the absence of clearly demarcated boundaries, insufficient property rights and minimal government enforcement make it difficult for the Miskito people to monitor their lands and stop non-indigenous encroachment.

Submitted by Tanya Hayes, a doctoral student at Indiana University. Tanya is conducting her dissertation research on property rights and agricultural expansion in the Mosquitia Forest Corridor of Honduras and Nicaragua. She can be reached at tanhayes@indiana.edu

EVENTS CALENDAR

October 9-12

42nd ISoCarp Congress
 “Cities Between Integration and Disintegration”
 Istanbul, Turkey
www.isocarp.org

October 14-17

U.N. Habitat: A Landmark Gathering to Make Headway in Promoting Sustainable Land Management in Africa
 Bagamoyo, Tanzania
 To request more information, e-mail infohabitat@unhabitat.org

November 9-12

Borders and Cores: What is Planning in the Global Era?
 Hosted by the University of Texas School of Urban and Public Affairs
 University of Texas, Arlington
www.acsp.org/events/conferences.html

December 10-15

12th International Planning History Conference
 Sponsored by the International Planning History Society
<http://web.bsu.edu/perera/iphs/>

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