

Towards Mutual Learning:

Sharing North America's City Planning Experience with Vietnamese Urban Planners

Professor Bish Sanyal

Director, Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies
Ford International Professor of Urban and Regional Planning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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North America's Early Urban Planning Experience

Dates back to the later half of the 19th century, after the Civil War, when urbanization started speeding up.



New York circa 1943

Major landmark events:

- The Chicago World Fair in 1893 (to showcase technological innovations)
- The creation of the American Planning Association in 1909
- Introduction of zoning in mid-1910; the use of eminent domain to protect public interest
- The city managers system in the 1920s
- The Great Depression and the need for federal level planning
- World War II and the beginning of suburbanization
- The spread of rational comprehensive planning (land use / transportation planning models)
- Rapid economic growth but also racial segregation

Urban Planning Landmarks (continued)

- 1960s and paradigm shift in planning styles due to civil rights movement , organizational constraints
- Creation of Environmental Protection Agency (federal level)
- Deindustrialization; Financial crisis of New York City
- Stagflation
- 1980s: The descaling of the welfare state and the rise of the "Entrepreneurial city" to attract private investments
- Celebration of "Global Cities"
- Privatization of public services
- Public-private partnerships



Urban Planning Landmarks (continued)

- Creative use of public land (ex. riverfront developments)
- New modes of financing (changes in banking laws)
- Creation of special business districts
- Transfer of developmental rights; flexible zoning
- Creation of Association of North American Planning schools
- Kyoto Protocol and the urgency to control greenhouse gas emission



The New Century



- Spread of information and communication technologies
- Attack on World Trade Center (Sep.11, 2001) and new concern for security
- Innovation clusters in Palo Alto, Cambridge, N. Carolina Research Triangle
- Creation of GPEAN, First conference of World Planning Schools in China
- Financial crisis of 2008-2009 and vulnerability of cities with high debts
- Stress on technological innovations and technological hubs
- Artificial intelligence and the promise of the smart city
- Rise of Uber, rethinking of elevated transportation structures
- George Floyd and the rise of Racial Justice Movements
- Sharp rise in housing prices, stagnant real income and housing shortage

Trajectory of North American Planning

To understand the evolving trajectory of North American Planning, one needs to understand:

- The constitutional separation of power between federal, state and local governments
- The distrust of federal controls
- The financial strength/weakness of cities to float bonds, power to give concessions to private investments
- The flexibility of zoning laws and land use controls
- The need for citizens' participation to approve plans
- The racial history of the nation and the continuing search for "a more perfect union"
- The symbiotic relationship between universities and the cities in which they are located (land grant colleges)
- Climate change and challenge of environmental sustainability

Thank You