

**RESEARCH YOU CAN USE****Hot journal, hotter cities**

Past columns have focused on three planning journals, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, and *Journal of Planning Literature*. These journals ranked first, second, and sixth, respectively, in the reputational rankings of Goldstein and Maier (“The Use and Valuation of Journals in Planning Scholarship: Peer Assessment versus Impact Factors,” *JPER*, 2010). They all have respectable impact factors, which measure how frequently the articles they contain are cited. Of 38 journals in the category of Urban Studies, *JAPA* ranked first in its 2012 impact factor, *JPER* ranked eighth, and *JPL* ranked thirteenth. But these aren’t the only planning journals that academics read and practitioners should be aware of.

*JAPA*, *JPER*, and *JPL* are multidisciplinary. There are also specialized journals on the Goldstein and Maier list, and I will feature some of them in this and future columns. *Housing Policy Debate*, for example, ranked fourth in reputation among planners, *Economic Development Quarterly* ranked seventh, and the *Journal of Urban Design* ranked fourteenth. This column will introduce readers to another fine journal, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, which ranked 15th in reputation on the aforementioned list. *LAND* was second only to *JAPA* in its 2012 impact factor, and it ranked ahead of *JAPA* in its five-year impact factor, first of 38 journals.

*LAND* is more specialized than the journals usually featured in this column, focusing on landscape ecology, urban ecology, and landscape planning. *LAND* describes itself as an international journal, and indeed it is to a greater extent than is *JAPA*. A recent issue (Vol. 125) contains articles on thermal comfort in Damascus, Syria; nature restoration in Flanders, Belgium; habitat structures in Canberra, Australia; and park use by children in Montreal, Canada.

*LAND* has become a popular outlet for research on urban heat islands. UHIs are temperature differentials between urban

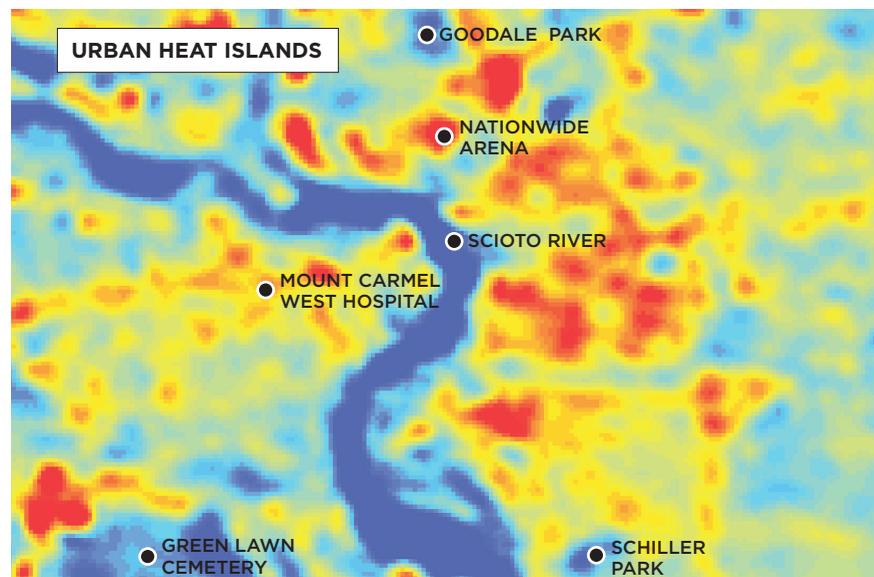
areas and rural areas. They are caused by buildings, replacement of landscapes with infrastructure, use of utilities, and motor vehicle exhaust, among other factors. UHIs are distinct from climate change and global warming, though both are causing cities to get hotter. Most large U.S. cities are warming twice as fast as the planet, according to Brian Stone of Georgia Tech.

Impacts include increased energy consumption for space cooling, elevated emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases, compromised human health and comfort, and impaired water quality. The

exposed to UHIs.

There has been explosive growth in research on UHIs in recent years. Using the search engine Google Scholar and typing in “urban heat island” returns 26,900 distinct journal articles, book chapters, books, working papers, and professional reports, with 87 percent of them published since 2001. Limiting the search with the words “urban planning” still turns up 6,360 hits.

A recent *LAND* article on UHIs by urban planners Bumseok Chun of Georgia Tech and Jean-Michel Guldmann of The Ohio State University, shows that open



Surface temperatures  
(in degrees Fahrenheit)  
High: 103.64 Low: 59.9

Big buildings (and parking lots) sizzle on the researchers’ map of downtown Columbus, Ohio, whereas natural areas are markedly cooler.

national cost of excess energy production necessary to compensate for UHIs is estimated to be about \$10 billion annually. In addition, UHIs lead to an increase in ground-level ozone, with a corresponding increase in respiratory illnesses and mortality rates. Furthermore, UHIs may increase water temperatures, resulting in impairment of water ecosystems.

About half of the world’s population currently lives in cities. Projections by the United Nations suggest that 60 percent of the world’s population will reside in urban regions by 2030. High rates of urbanization mean increasing numbers of people

spaces, vegetation, building rooftop areas, and water sources strongly impact surface temperatures, and that spatial regressions are necessary to capture neighboring effects (see my April 2014 column for a discussion of spatial regression models). The authors use the “best” regression model to simulate the temperature effects of green roofs, greened parking and vacant lots, vegetation densification, and other greening strategies in the center of Columbus, Ohio.

The results demonstrate the potential of such strategies to mitigate UHI effects through design and land-use policies. Their model can also be used to assess other

strategies for mitigating UHI effects, such as increasing the distance between buildings and capping building heights.

So as the planet heats up, it is reassuring that planners can do something to keep cities from heating up even faster.

—Reid Ewing

*Ewing is a professor of city and metropolitan planning at the University of Utah and an associate editor of JAPA. More than 40 past columns are available at [www.plan.utah.edu/?page\\_id=509](http://www.plan.utah.edu/?page_id=509).*

## LETTERS

### More than one danger

Your short article about landslides (News, May) brought back a lot of unpleasant memories. Pardon my cynicism.

In one California community, there is an old subdivision laid out without any consideration of landslide potential, despite long-standing anecdotal information about the threat. In this area, the state required a landscape and irrigation plan in the mid-1970s because of the landslide problem. The plan either was never prepared or was lost.

Another landslide did occur about two decades later, and while closely monitored in the early stages, was not disclosed to the public early on. That landslide was treated more as a problem affecting public streets; the effects on private property were ignored. There was then a lawsuit involving residents and the agricultural area uphill of them. Litigants never received all the information they should have had.

Then in 2005, a much more serious landslide occurred in the same area, killing 10 people. The governor showed up for a photo opportunity, but I saw no news of positive steps taken after that.

In light of all this, I would say that individuals should be very reluctant to build in such areas, and seek out any public officials or geologists they can find who are willing to confide, even off the record, about what hazards may exist. Traditional plans, permits, and environmental reviews just do not create a nexus to deal with the landslide problem, and public officials may want to avoid any involvement or responsibility. In addition, the concept of private property rights involves pressure to

develop, but coastal land may be very valuable—or worthless.

—Merle Betz, AICP  
Santa Barbara, California

### Savannah revisited

Regarding Lane Kendig's letter about our March article, "Oglethorpe and Savannah" (Letters, May): After stating that he admired the Oglethorpe Plan (specifically its ward component), Kendig proceeded to list its "problems." We disagree with his assessment and offer the following response.

First, in Kendig's view the ward design is "grossly inefficient because it devotes too much land to circulation," which he estimates at 46 percent. He fails to point out, however, that this figure includes wide sidewalks and on-street parking. Only 20 percent of a typical ward is dedicated to traffic circulation. Of the 12.4 acres in a ward (including bounding streets), 48 percent is buildable area, 14 percent sidewalks, nine percent on-street parking, and nine percent in the central square.

Kendig's complaint about circulation ignores research on shared space: Ward design encourages pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles to share the streets by constraining motorized traffic to 20 mph and by establishing sight lines that reveal danger from oncoming vehicles. This aspect of the plan creates a mixed use environment in the civic realm, where streets are subsumed into the more dominant presence of public open space. When looking over a Savannah square, one can see two acres of civic space and urban forest—not a square, a street, and sidewalks as segregated uses.

Kendig mused about enlarging the ward to "a quarter mile across" to increase buildable area, but doing so would destroy the neighborhood intimacy and pedestrian safety for which the design is famous. He misses the alternative approach taken by Savannah in which the ratio of buildable area to land area is substantially increased through 100 percent lot coverage and FARs ranging from 1.5 to 12 over the 24-ward area. The design of the civic realm is attractive to developers as well as the public.

It allows intense development without compromising daylight, fresh air, or access to green space, and it allows neighbors to watch out for neighbors—which is priceless in the U.S. today.

A third complaint is that we erred in asserting the design "easily adapts to environmental or topographic conditions." Kendig doesn't say why, but we imagine he means that the geometry of the plan is too rigid to be adaptable. Here we would point out that there are many examples of wards being modified to make such accommodations. For example, they were narrowed as growth approached bounding roads at the edge of the coastal ridge upon which the town was built.

Finally, Kendig complained that we neglected "to discuss implementation, which would require an official street and park map that extends the plan over a large area." Had space permitted, we might have mentioned that Savannah has adopted a Civic Master Plan that does exactly that.

We continue to believe that the ward, as configured in the Oglethorpe Plan, remains "one of the finest diagrams for city organization and growth in existence," as Edmund Bacon wrote in 1967 in *Design of Cities*.

—Thomas Wilson, AICP

—Patrick Shay

### JAPA's impact

I appreciate and welcome nearly all points made by Reid Ewing in "Come Home to JAPA" (Research You Can Use, July 2013), save one incorrect speculation we can now replace with hard data.

There were real and deeply frustrating delays in the review queue of submitted articles until last year, and no one is more pleased than I to see those fixed by a new team (aided slightly by the more transparent online system for authors and referees I implemented in late 2012). However, this internal problem had no counterpart in the quality or effect of JAPA content, and it is a disservice to those authors to suggest so. While processing delays (and contentious articles) may have led to ill-informed speculation by some unhappy parties, it