

RESEARCH YOU CAN USE

JAPA, A YEAR IN REVIEW

IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR for awards. While Hollywood has the Oscars and college basketball has March Madness, the planning world has the National Planning Awards and the *Journal of the American Planning Association's* annual Article of the Year Award.

Every year, *JAPA's* associate editors pick the best piece of planning scholarship from among the dozens of studies published in the journal. Winners are judged according to their methodological soundness and their contribution to practice.

As you read earlier in the issue (see p. 48), the top paper in 2015—"Evaluation of Networks of Plans and Vulnerability to Hazards and Climate Change: A Resilience Scorecard," by Philip Berke and five coauthors (Volume 81, Issue 4)—describes efforts to develop a scorecard tool for assessing how well suites of local planning documents address vulnerabilities to climate change.

But there were plenty of examples of timely, important research in *JAPA* in 2015. Here's a look at three of them from the quarterly journal.

Spring Issue

We start with "Are Millennials Really the 'Go-Nowhere' Generation?" by Noreen C. McDonald (Volume 81, Issue 2). This study uses National Household Travel Survey data from 1995, 2001, and 2009 to compare travel behavior between Generation X (Americans born from 1967 to 1978) and millennials (1979–1990). Travel declined among all groups between 1995 and 2009, but the decrease was most pronounced among millennials and younger GenXers.

Regression analysis reveals that the general drop in automobility accounts for 40 percent of the drop in driving among millennials; while changing attitudes toward car ownership and automobility—

the use of "virtual mobility," i.e., online shopping and social media—account for another 35 to 50 percent; and decreasing employment accounts for the remaining 10 to 25 percent of the drop in driving.

McDonald presents two competing theories of why this might be true. The first is that millennials are waiting longer to start families and careers, which defers their demand for travel until later in life, but not permanently. The second theory is that preferences for urban (versus suburban) living and "virtual mobility" provided by technology have permanently reduced millennials' demand for driving.

Summer Issue

The next study, "How Differences in Roadways Affect School Travel Safety" by Chia-Yuan Yu (Volume 81, Issue 3), looks at crashes involving children traveling to 78 elementary schools in Austin, Texas. It is among the first to consider street segment-level and neighborhood-level variables simultaneously.

More crashes occur on highways, interstates, and arterial roads than on lower-order roadways. A one percent increase in arterial roads around schools is associated with a 186 percent increase in the likelihood of school travel-related crashes. Yu hypothesizes that this is related to vehicle speeds. Not surprisingly, street segments with higher traffic volumes and higher posted speed limits are associated with a higher probability of crashes. Similarly, connected sidewalks along street segments decrease the probability of crashes, while commercial uses and transit stops along street segments increase the probability of crashes.

In summary: speeds, shopping, and sidewalks matter. Yu's work makes a compelling case that high-volume, high-speed arterials in economically disadvantaged areas should be a priority for planning and design interventions to increase safety for school children.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

"Evaluation of Networks of Plans and Vulnerability to Hazards and Climate Change: A Resilience Scorecard"

PHILIP BERKE, GALEN NEWMAN, JAEKYUNG LEE, TABITHA COMBS, CARL KOLOSNA, AND DAVID SALVESEN
Volume 81, Issue 4

"Are Millennials Really the 'Go-Nowhere' Generation?"

NOREEN C. MCDONALD
Volume 81, Issue 2

"How Differences in Roadways Affect School Travel Safety"

CHIA-YUAN YU
Volume 81, Issue 3

"Parking Infrastructure: A Constraint on or Opportunity for Urban Redevelopment? A Study of Los Angeles County Parking Supply and Growth"

MIKHAIL CHESTER, ANDREW FRASER, JUAN MATUTE, CAROLYN FLOWER, AND RAM PENDYALA
Volume 81, Issue 4

Autumn Issue

In "Parking Infrastructure: A Constraint on or Opportunity for Urban Redevelopment? A Study of Los Angeles County Parking Supply and Growth" by Mikhail Chester, Andrew Fraser, Juan Matute, Carolyn Flower, and Ram Pendyala (Volume 81, Issue 4), researchers estimated how parking in Los Angeles County has grown over the last century (1900 to 2010) and how parking infrastructure affects travel and urban form. The authors develop building and roadway growth models that estimate the temporal and spatial growth of parking spaces to quantify the effects of parking infrastructure on driving behavior.

They find that approximately 14 percent of incorporated land in Los Angeles County is dedicated to parking, with the greatest concentration of parking spaces in the urban core. The ratio of off-street

residential parking spaces to cars in the county is approximately 1:1. Existing parking infrastructure in Los Angeles is so extensive, the authors say, that even cutting minimum-parking requirements for new development would be unlikely to reduce automobile use and associated emissions in the metro area. Therefore, they recommend policies that encourage redevelopment of existing parking infrastructure as affordable housing or other commercial, industrial, or residential uses.

Conclusion

Back to the paper that took the 2015 prize.

JAPA editor Sandra Rosenbloom explained the choice of Berke et al.'s article on hazard planning by pointing out that "In the end, Berke and company won out by applying robust, appropriate research methods to an important question and translating their findings into clear, actionable recommendations for improving planning practice."

And if that isn't the definition of good research, what is?

—Reid Ewing

Ewing is chair of the Department of City and Metropolitan Planning at the University of Utah, an associate editor of the Journal of the American Planning Association, and an editorial board member of the Journal of Planning Education and Research and Landscape and Urban Planning. Fifty past columns are available at mrc.cap.utah.edu/publications/research-you-can-use.

LETTERS

Parks go to the dogs

I agree with Brian Barth ("Dog Parks on the Rise," February) that dog parks are growing in popularity.

Here in Los Angeles, my department opened our first dog park in La Crescenta in October 2012 and is looking to create additional off-leash areas for dogs in other parts of the county in response to popular demand.

Specifically, we are currently working on two park master plans which include dog parks as part of their design: the *Puente Hills Landfill Park Master Plan* and the *Earvin 'Magic' Johnson Recreation Area Master Plan*. The former involves the transformation of a portion of a 1,365-acre former landfill site into a regional

park, while the latter is the redesign of an existing 104-acre park to better address the community and region's growing and diverse recreational needs.

We are also in the process of conducting a countywide parks and recreation needs assessment (lacountyparkneeds.org) to document and better understand the recreational needs of county residents as well as the quantity and quality of the county's park infrastructure. As part of the public engagement process, many residents have identified dog parks as high priority projects in their communities.

—Clement Lau, AICP
Departmental Facilities Planner II
Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

Corrections

In "The Land of Reinvention" (January), Leslie Dornfeld's former title was misidentified. She was a planner with the Maricopa Association of Governments.

A few readers also pointed out that the Deck Park Tunnel in Phoenix is not the only urban interstate highway tunnel, as claimed in "The Land of Reinvention" (January)—nor was it the only one when it opened, back in 1990.

Letters may be edited before publication. Address them to Meghan Stromberg, Planning's Executive Editor, American Planning Association, 205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601; mstromberg@planning.org.

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Local food, national politics

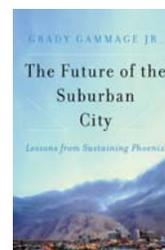
Farmer and policy analyst Alan R. Hunt compares the history of "local food movement national policy achievements" in the U.S. and the UK in *Civic Engagement in Food System Governance: A Comparative Perspective of American and British Local Food Movements* (2015; Routledge; 276 pp.; \$145).

In part, the project grew from personal experience, when the state of New Jersey proposed to purchase his family's farm as open space and then let it revert to forest. The issue was framed as preserving land, not preserving farming. The author's American case study involves federal farm

bill negotiations from 2001 to 2011, and distinguishes between more moderate "insider" groups that worked primarily with members of Congress to introduce new ideas on one hand, and more radical "outsider" groups that relied on media campaigns for more dramatic change on the other. At one point the "insiders" in the Farm and Food Policy Project brought together more than two dozen groups across sectors to organize community leaders and farmers to communicate with congressional representatives. The "outsiders" in the Alliance for Sensible Agricultural Policies brought together environmental and fiscally conservative advocacy groups to conduct a media-intensive campaign for agricultural subsidy reform.

With different funders, different members, and different philosophies, Hunt finds that the two coalitions helped one another: "The presence of outsiders pressing for change resulted in a political environment where Congress was receptive to the transformative proposals originating from tactically moderate organizations. . . . Local food was one of those new ideas." But public knowledge of the insiders' grassroots, behind-the-scenes work was minimal compared to the outsiders' visible media presence.

Although it contains useful information, the book is not easy to read, partly because of its (inevitable) close focus on details of the national political process, and partly because of the jargon-studded language. A three-page list of acronyms is provided.



The Future of the Suburban City: Lessons from Sustaining Phoenix 2016; Island Press; 192 pp.; \$50 cloth, \$25 paper, \$24.99 e-book

Can Phoenix be saved?

Attorney Grady Gammage Jr. makes a case for the sustainability of arid Western cities in *The Future of the Suburban City: Lessons from Sustaining Phoenix*.

There may be an element of special pleading here (the