



The community planning handbook: how people can shape their cities, towns and villages in any part of the world

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50% or greater probability of experiencing the end of 'our existing way of life', while an average 24% foresaw the same chance of the elimination of humanity within a century. Perhaps they had read and digested *Sustainable Futures*.

Given these portents of self-immolation, which could constitute the greater threat: climate change in the atmosphere or diseconomies of scale and the law of diminishing returns on the ground. Can planning lift its view beyond the level of the individual region, put aside the symptomatic and palliative distractions of 'mitigation' and 'adaptation', and get down PAT to the root causes of the crisis? These moves would elevate its system analytic capacities and advocacy roles developed during the 1970s. Today, to any reasonable observer who accepts contemporary science, the discipline's continuing complicity with the neo-liberal political, and expansionary demographic, *Zeitgeist* must surely defy logic – not an especially prospective basis for acclaim. To their enduring credit, realist volumes such as *Sustainable Futures* act as beacons in the swirling mists of confusion, inertia or plain avarice while, within city and regional planning, insightful writers like Gabor Zovanyi (2013) offer the first indications of a possible paradigm shift.

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Note

1. Along with recognition of the long-term support of Kelvin Thomson, a contributor to this volume, who is retiring from the current federal parliament as the MHR for Wills. He stands tall as one of the seemingly few members of both Houses who fully appreciate what IPAT is all about.

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The community planning handbook: how people can shape their cities, towns and villages in any part of the world, edited by N. Wates, London, 2nd edn., Earthscan, Routledge, 2014, 6 pp., AUD\$55.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-84407-490-7

It has been over 15 years since Wates (author) and Brook (the book's graphic designer) collaborated to publish the first edition of *The Community Planning Handbook: How People Can Shape Their Cities, Towns and Villages in Any Part of the World*. Like the first, the second edition is a detailed guide for practitioners. During the 15 years between editions, community planning has become accepted practice in the United Kingdom (UK). 'The biggest change since the first edition has been that community planning has moved from the preserve of a few enthusiasts to something that a great many people come into contact with at some stage in their lives' (5). This edition covers the material in the first with the addition of methods that utilise new technologies. There is also a short case studies section. In Australia the book will appeal to practitioners who already engage effectively with communities and/or are committed to doing so and planners, developers and communities pursuing community planning activity.

Similar to the first edition, this book is a 'how-to-do-it style' manual (2). It is a rich resource for practitioners engaging with communities in planning, land use or project development. Brook's design input enhances the book's useability. Photos, diagrams, sample agendas and consultation outputs appear on most pages. This creates a colourful and effective guide.

The 300 pages is presented in five sections – principles, methods, scenarios, programs and case studies. The book leads with seminal principles and a simple framework for 'why and how' to apply participatory planning practice. The methods section details over 60 methods for engaging communities in planning. While there is a repeat of many methods from the first edition, 'the internet', 'e-voting', 'online consultation' and others are added to reflect the use of web technologies in community planning.

Community planning methods vary for different scenarios. The book draws on a range of examples, though many have a Global North context. The presentation of 24 project, planning and development scenarios demonstrates the application of many methods from the previous section. The short programs section presents three examples. Two of these are outside of the UK in Taiwan and the US. The case studies section also has three examples. These are all from the UK. A mixed use development, a community enterprise and a youth space project illustrate the diversity of community planning activity. The appendices are 'useful formats', a checklist, glossary, contacts (UK) and recommended publications and websites.

If there is a weakness, it is that the handbook assumes that community planning and authentic participation in planning is accepted and usual practice. The recommended publications section includes much of the critical literature, though the book itself does not engage with the debates in the field. This may be appropriate for practitioners in the UK but Australian planning practitioners are yet to consistently adopt community planning. More is needed to persuade planners of the value of community planning. Through its user friendly presentation and rich range of methods, the book goes some way to advancing that objective.

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Atlas of cities, edited by Paul Knox, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2014, 256 pp., AU\$96.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-691-15781-8

Atlas of Cities is a weighty A4 size hardback that will not be out of place on your coffee table. The blurb on the back describes it as visually captivating and a vibrant book from which the ‘would-be urbanist’ can learn something. I was attracted to the title as it is edited by Paul Knox, author of *Urban Social Geography* and many other insightful and informative texts. Still, on reading the book, I was puzzled as to where it was targeted.

The book is divided into 13 varieties of cities and might well be an adjunct text or ideas starter in a course on City Form and Function. The chapters sequentially address the Greek and Roman foundations of the Western City, Mercantile Cities, Imperial Cities, Industrialisation, Modernity, Globalisation, Postmodern Cities, Megacities, Planned Cities, with chapters 10 and 11 given to Economic and Cultural Globalisation and 12 and 13 to Sustainable Urbanism.

Nowhere is it made clear exactly what disciplinary vantage point is being adopted; it thus lacks a clear structure or set of debates about cities as an organising principle.

Each chapter identifies a core city and secondary cities: for example, the core Industrial city is Manchester, while secondary cities include Berlin and Chicago which receive passing comparison.

Here is a flavour of the chapters. The *Networked City* describes the rise of cities around trade routes, the trade relations between cities and the relationship of cities to their hinterlands through history. The authors note the thirteenth-century business model, such as that of the Medici in Florence as a driver of new forms of trade and urban concentrations of wealth and power. It introduces us to the Venetian galley fleets of the fifteenth century, trade by bills of exchange, couriers and the first postal service, the Tassis Postal network of the Habsburg Empire in 1500.

The *Imperial City* takes Istanbul as its archetype from the Roman Byzantine and Ottoman empires. It describes the power built around Empire but then has difficulty following through with any generic lessons from other imperial centres such as London, Beijing or Moscow as Istanbul did not retain its power and fell into decline.

The *Industrial City* archetype is Manchester. The problems of tying each type to an exemplar become apparent

as the authors state ‘... it is worth remembering that no city type exists in isolation from its national global political and cultural context’ (73).

The *Rational City* focuses on Paris ‘Hausmannisation’ and the relation between spatial and social engineering. The *Celebrity City*, the authors argue, is where people are famous for being famous; the chapter documents the urban global network associated with film, media and celebrity; it tells us where to be seen and how to calculate the photo-to-event ratios of Paris Hilton and Angelina Jolie.

Megacities are cities greater than 10 million. Twenty-eight are listed, the largest being the conurbation of Tokyo–Yokohama with 37 million, the smallest Nagoya with 10 million (143). The authors ask, ‘can they get too big? When do the diseconomies of size outweigh its economic benefits?’

The *Instant City* argues that many of the world’s 200 national capitals are, or have been, instant cities. It focuses on Brasilia and the task of joining a new city to its hinterland and the nation.

As a *Transnational City*, Miami is the archetypal cosmopolis where people, culture and ideas collide; Miami connects the United States with South and Central America and the Caribbean.

With the second largest volume of international passenger traffic in the United States, it is home to international traffic in tourism, crime, drugs and real estate. As the authors’ maps demonstrate, many who live their lives abroad in this cosmopolis return home to die or to be buried.

As a beginner text an extensive bibliography of key references would have been a useful asset to the ‘would-be urbanist’ but unfortunately there is slim fare here. The book is largely unreferenced, the sources for each chapter being divided into image references and further reading. The reading resources are mainly the previously published work of the authors. Overall the image resources far exceed the further reading. This is reflected in the presentation which has many useful colourful tables, maps and diagrams. So, while the *Atlas of Cities* is not going to provide a useful reading guide for students or established urbanists, it will make an attractive addition to your coffee table and a useful source of maps and tables for discussing contemporary urbanisation.

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