International Perspectives on Urban Planning in the United States

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International Planning

International Division

World Urban Forum
International Division

- Share U.S. experiences with planners from other countries
International Division

- Learn from other countries’ experiences in planning
Five Key Takeaways from the 2018 World Urban Forum

- The world is urbanizing at a blistering pace.
- Much of this urbanization is sprawling and resource-inefficient.
- Growing numbers of people recognize that we must change business as usual.
- But there are many who haven't "gotten the memo."
- The New Urban Agenda represents a hopeful way forward for all.

Source: Planetizen (Michael Mehaffy) https://www.planetizen.com/features/97663-five-key-takeaways-2018-world-urban-forum
Learning From China: Development Review

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Presentation Outline

- Notes on Differences
- Decision Makers
- Plans and Regulations
- Review Process
- Technical Contents
- Chinese Elements that USA can learn from?
- Discussion and Questions
“The ultimate test a planning system must survive is not its legality, or even its wisdom, but rather its acceptability to the public at large.”

Charles M Haar
In the USA, local governments utilize the development review process to ensure that the private developments satisfy the governing zoning and subdivision regulations as well as building codes, among many other local regulations in order to safeguarding safety, health and welfare of the general public.

In China, government also reviews and approves development projects that are consistent with the master plan policies and land use visions.
Development Steps

- **Land Use development sequence** - To develop a piece of land, a developer needs first to decide the best possible use of the land, starts site planning process including site design, grading, road access design, etc., then prepares building design, develops construction documents, carries out construction management, completes construction and installation and eventually lets tenants occupy and use the buildings.

- **Chinese Land Development**
  - Two paths - Planned and Market
    - Planning Agency Site Selection Statement
    - Land Use Certificate
    - Planning Certificate
    - Permit Issuance
Major Differences

- **Government Structure-Planning Function**
  - A unitary Planning System
    - A hierarchy of planning functions ranging from The Central Government, Province, Prefecture/County Municipality to Township
    - Planning policies, operational requirements and Guidelines are the responsibility of the Central Government Implementation is with the locals
**Major Differences**

- **Land Ownership**
  - The State is the owner of land
  - The State holds the rights of usus, abusus and fructus may allocate three rights as “Commodities”
  - **Private Property Right**-2007 Property Law
    - Condominium

- **Role of the Court**
  - Almost non-existing-Administrative Remedy only

- **Control of Land Market**- 1987 Land Use Law
  - National overall land use amount
  - Two paths
    - Free land for government uses, infrastructure, etc.
    - Bidding for private development such as housing and retail/commercial development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New York City-ULURP</th>
<th>China-1 Statement, 2 Certificates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor (May Veto Council Action)</td>
<td>Mayor-Vice Mayor in charge of urban development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council (Majority Vote-2/3)</td>
<td>Development and Reform Commission - Project approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Planning Commission-Department of Planning</strong></td>
<td>Planning Bureau, Land Bureau - Technical Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(City Planning and Design Institute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough President and Borough Board</td>
<td>Agency Site Selection Statement and Two Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Board-Advisory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)</td>
<td>Expert Consultants - professors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Plans and Regulations

### Prince George’s County, MD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development - Planning Department participates</th>
<th>5-Year Social &amp; Economic Plan - not by Planners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Plan</td>
<td>Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Area Master Plan</td>
<td>Area Master Plan/ District Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Plan</td>
<td>Functional Plans - Water, Sewer, Transportation, Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Agriculture - Planning Study</td>
<td>Detailed Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Plans - Green Infrastructure, Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ordinance and Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtitle 27 - Zoning Ordinance and Landscape Manual</th>
<th>Urban Design, Landscape Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtitle 24 - Subdivision Regulations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtitle 25 - Woodland Conservation Ordinance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtitle 29 - Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Urban and Rural Planning Act, Land Use Act, Real Estate Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Regulations</td>
<td>Other National Acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPIE (Subtitle 23) Stormwater Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sediment Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Archeological Review Guidelines, etc.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Regulations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Acts - Local Implementation/Administration Regulations</th>
<th>Regulatory Detailed Plan - Text and Map</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Agency referrals
# Development Review Process

## New York City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development sequence based-Legislative, Quasi-judicial, Administrative Approvals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged, Permitted &amp; Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning Changes - Legislative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Map changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning text changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing and urban renewal plans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition of residential buildings, except to non-profit companies for low-income housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site Plans - Quasi-judicial</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Special Permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Map changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-City public improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition of commercial or vacant property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of real property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permits - Administrative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site grading permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and Occupancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development and Reform Commission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I-Statement 2 Certificates</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Administrative Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Project site selection Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Project Land Use Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Project Planning Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion and Acceptance Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)</strong> - Land Use Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density (residential DU/Ac, FAR for all others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot and building coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green area coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Certificate</strong> - Detailed Regulation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green area ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)</strong> - Building height and story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use, Zoning and public policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facilities and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Design/Visual Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewer Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste and Sanitation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site Selection Statement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Impacts</td>
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Types of Development Review Case,
Prince George’s County, MD

ZONING
- ZMA-Zoning Map Amendment (7)
- SE-Special Exception
- SP-Special Permit
- NCU-Certified Nonconforming Uses (3)
- Departures (3)
- ADT- Alternative Development Techniques
- ROSP-Revision of Site Plan

SUBDIVISION
- P-Pre-Preliminary Plan
- 4-Conventional-Major Subdivision
- 4-Conventional- Minor
- S-Conservation Subdivision-Sketch Plan
- 4-Conservation Subdivision
- 5-Final Plat
- V-Vacation Petition

URBAN DESIGN
- CSP-Conceptual Site Plan
- CDP-Comprehensive Design Plan
- SDP-Specific Design Plan
- AC-Alternative Compliance (DDS)
- SDP/H-SDP for a Homeowners Minor Amendment

PERMIT
- Grading Permit
- Building Permit
- Use & Occupancy Permit
- Retaining Wall
- Deck

Seven variances
Chinese elements that USA can learn from?

- **Design Professional Driven Review**
  - Attorneys need design training

- **Procedure Uniformity**

- **Planning Guided Development Review**
  - Regulation Plan

- **Anything Else??**

Recently, implementation questions have arisen with respect to the interpretation of the below-highlighted portion of Section 27-107.01(a)(103) of the Zoning Ordinance:

(103) **Green Area:** An area of land associated with, and located on the same parcel of land as, a "Building" for which it serves to provide light and air, or scenic, recreational, or similar purposes. "Green Area" shall generally be available for use by the occupants of the "Building," but may include a limited amount of space to enhance the amenity of the development by providing landscaping features, screening for the benefit of people in neighboring areas, or a general appearance of openness. "Green area" may include lawns, decorative plantings, sculptures, wooded areas, landscaped areas covering structures that are not more than twelve (12) feet above ground level, sidewalks and walkways, furniture, active and passive recreational areas, and water surfaces that comprise not more than ten percent (10%) of the total "Green Area." It shall not include "Parking Lots" or other vehicular surfaces, or "Accessory Buildings," except as otherwise provided.

The 10% figure applies **only** to water surfaces which are part of the Green Area, i.e., if you have a water surface as part of your Green Area, it cannot constitute more than 10% of said Green Area.

This interpretation both avoids an absurd result and applies common sense, both of which are canons of statutory interpretation. As a result, and in consultation with the Director, this shall be the official position of the Department.

Thank you.
Chinese elements that USA can learn from?

Review Based on Regulation Plan

KO N TERRA TOWN C ENTER EAST, MD

NA T I O N A L H A R B O R, M D
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International Perspectives on Urban Planning in the United States

America Planning Association
American Institute of Certified Planners
Webinar Series
HAITI

URBAN EQUITY IN DEVELOPMENT

• Planning Concepts
  • Public Health
  • Economic Development
    • City vs. Sub-Urban Living
    • Country Side vs. Sub-Urban Living
  • Open Space
    • Parks and Recreation
  • Infrastructure
    • Water, Sewer, Canals
  • Transportation
    • Roads, Bridges, Airport, Seaport, Rivers
  • Land Use Concept and Equity
HAITI

URBAN EQUITY IN DEVELOPMENT

• Land Use Concept and Equity
  - Country Side
  - Sub-Urban
  - City
  - Slums

• Mixed Use Concept
  - Country Side
  - Sub-Urban
  - City
  - Slums
Haiti Pre-Earthquake

Planning Concepts and Land Use in the Point of View of the People of Haiti

Source: Haiti Libre
Urban Core

Civic Center
Church
Public Place
Radiating Street Axis

Photo Source: Pinterest
Land Use Concept

- Mixed Use
- Residential
- Commercial Settings

Photo Source: Pinterest
Haiti Post Earthquake

Planning Concepts and Land Use in the Point of View of the People of Haiti

Source: Haiti Libre
Urban Core

History
Structures
Life Style

Source: Haiti Libre
New Urbanism Concept: DPZ
New Urbanism

Lifestyle
City Life
Sub-Urban Life
Country Side
Resources

- Human
- Capital Improvement
- Implementation
- Independence
- Public Participation
LESSONS LEARNED

- Public Involvement
- Research Lifestyle
- Cultural Experience
Q&A
Communist dreams and post-communist reality in Romanian ‘Granite Gardens’:
Where does New Urbanism stand or could stand today?
Gitta Margit Pap, MEPD
Overview

1. Short background of Romania
2. Le Corbusier and ‘towers in the park’
3. Case Study: Odorheiu Secuiesc [Szekelyudvarhely (Hungarian), Odorhellen (German)]
4. What to learn from each other
I usually show this simple chart to my undergraduate students and ask: what happened in the 1800s in US (and in many other Western European countries)... Industrialization and urbanization was history in the US by the 1960s...

What did happen here?

Source: Henslin, 2008:603
Meanwhile in Romania...

Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu: Dictator of the Socialist Republic of Romania, that was ruled by the communist party between 1965-1989. *Fall of Communism in Romania was in 1989, when the Ceausescu couple was executed.*
In 1956 the rural population in Romania was 68.7%... and the Communist Party dreams and plans of an urbanized and industrialized country in the 20 century (we were ~100-150 years behind of the modernized world) (Demeter, 2014).

In 1960 only ~34% of the total population lives in urbanized areas, to put in contrast in US this was ~70%. Source: World Bank.
• “...the Romanian society has to become a modern and industrialized nation that lives in cities, this will require the country’s urbanization at all costs” (Communist Party, Demeter, 2014)
Population of Romania between 1960-2016
Population of Romania between 1960-2016

- 1989: Fall of Communism
- 2007: Romania becomes part of the EU
Le Corbusier and ‘Towers in the park’

Le Corbusier
1887-1965

- One of the founding father of the modernist movement (LeGates)
- Painter, architect, city planner, philosopher
- Grew up in Switzerland, later moved to Paris
- LeGates “[Le Corbusier] exemplified the energy and efficiency of the Machine Age” (p. 336)
- He called his houses “machines for living”
- His design reflect Cubist minimalism

A Contemporary City for Three Million People (1922)

https://thecharnelhouse.org/2014/06/03/le-corbusiers-contemporary-city-1925/#jp-carousel-20072
Le Corbusier and ‘Towers in the park’

• Le Corbusier wanted to decongest the centers of the cities by increasing their density. His idea was to build vertically in a small part of the total ground area (Hall, 1988:207). He hated design on buildings.

• “WE MUST BUILD ON A CLEAR SITE! The city of today is dying because is not constructed geometrically” (Le Corbusier).

• He influenced urban developments in socialist and communist countries such as the Soviet Union.
“Statistics show us that business is conducted in the center. This means that wide avenues must be driven through the centers of our towns. Therefore the existing centers must come down” (Hall, 1988:209 incited Le Corbusier)

Le Corbusier’s plan for Paris: it meant the cleaning of historic urban fabric.
Stuyvesant Town–Peter Cooper Village, NY

- Example of the ‘Towers in a Park’
- Example of mass private housing project
- Example of the failure of Urban Renewal projects
The ‘Dream’ of the Public in Communist Romania

- Free or affordable housing
  - Free housing was many times provided to certain service workers, etc.
- Steady income
- Education, health and other social benefits of living in the city
- Improved living conditions
- Improved social life

The Creation of Communist ‘Granite Gardens’ (1960s-1970s)

1. Top Level Induced Change
2. Building of factories
3. Mass Housing Developments
4. People migrate from rural areas to existing and new urban areas
The Result: more than 50% of people live and work in urbanized areas.

Percentage of people living in urban areas (Demeter, 2014).

1956: 31.3%
1966: 38.2%
1977: 47.5%
1985: 53.1%

Building of blocks ~1965s
Today **Communist Blocks** are not so bad, but buildings can be awfully ugly (the conditions of these neighborhoods greatly varies throughout the country).
Socialist Communist are not so bad, they are just ugly

- Walkable blocks and streets
- Housing and shopping in close proximity
- Accessible public spaces (playgrounds, parks)
- Interior comfort with many having central heating and wooden floor, customized kitchen furniture etc.
- And at the end of the day it is home, playground and workplace
Socialists are not so bad, they are just ugly.

So what next? Communism gone, and these blocks are aging.
New Urbanism focuses on:

“...walkable blocks and streets, housing and shopping in close proximity, and accessible public spaces. In other words: New Urbanism focuses on human-scaled urban design...”

(https://www.cnu.org/resources/what-new-urbanism)

New Urbanist

“...are activist, believing that since the physical form of cities impacts people’s lives, urban design can be a tool for the greater good...” (Heins, 2014:293).

Heins, 2015, page 294.
Case Study: City of Odorheiu Secuiesc
Socialist Communist are not so bad, they are just ugly

Case Study: City of Odorheiu Secuiesc
“Bethlen” Neighborhood. Construction began in early 70’s.
One apartment building usually have 12 apartments, with 2-4 bedrooms. A two bedroom apartment costs between 25-35 thousand Euros.
• Apartment buildings are usually four-five stories high
  (According to Jan Gehl, human scales is up to 5 levels)
• No elevators (only in apartment buildings of 6 levels to 10 levels)
• The city has only a few apartment buildings with 6-10 levels
• One block has mixed designed apartment buildings (2-4 bedrooms, varied sized kitchens, and bathrooms)
• After the fall of communism the first floor may changed to small shops
• Each building has basement storage
Renovated blocks with EU grants (to the left).
This is College Station, TX. Northpoint Crossing. Mixed use development. Completed a few years ago. A “hub”. Not very much different from the 1970s socialist neighborhood block designs.
Socialist Communist are not so bad, they are just ugly

Case Study: City of Odorheiu Secuiesc
A recently built affordable housing project, somehow better architecture, but disconnected from the rest of the city.
What to learn?

US from Romania

Nothing new really, that Jane Jacobs have not already mentioned yet:

- A development does not have to be expensive to work, and have a lively community, however it needs to have the parts that also preached by New Urbanists
- Safety is ensured by “eyes on the street”, close ties among people (there is now way to not bump into someone when you on the street)
- Neighbors know each other!
- Block units form communities, and they take care of their own surroundings
- Beautify, adapt and reuse, not demolish
- Reinvent the meaning of “ugly”
What to learn?

Romania from US

- Simply put: A LOT!
- Designers, planners, and city officials need a design planning tools, and New Urbanism could serve as guide
- The most important: citizen science and community based planning
- In Romania the planning process is still top-down
- Could embrace New Urbanist principles
- Citizens are engaged in their community, they beautify their surrounding, but they are not informed and educated of what could be done
What to learn?

Romania from US (cont.)

- Citizens are engaged in their community, they beautify their surrounding, but they are not informed and educated of what could be done
- Owners could be taught how to be activist for their community and influence planning decisions (community based planning approaches, citizen science programs)
- Implementation of new and innovative building codes and sustainable design
- Parking is a big issue, new solutions for planned parking etc.
Resources


Google Earth

Data Charts:
The World Bank, Urban Population (% of total),
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=RO.


THANK YOU

Questions?
Integrated Planning at Different Levels

BRAZIL & U.S.

Cristina Sassaki, AICP, LEED BD+C
Urban Designer and Urban Parks Planner
M-NCPPC – Montgomery Parks
March 16, 2018
Overview – How did we grow?
Background: different political realities

BRAZIL
One colony
One Religion
Centralized Power
Brazil Empire
Republic of the United States of Brazil
Federative Republic of Brazil

UNITED STATES
Multiple Colonies
Freedom of Religion
Multiple Confederations
United States of America
Federal Policy & Master Plans

Background: different political realities

**BRAZIL**

National Urban Policy
- 1988 – Revised Constitution
- 2001-Cities Statute
- 2003 – Ministry of the Cities
- 2015- Metropoles Statute

Municipal Master Plans aligned with Federal Policy

Community Participation: varies, increasing after the Cities Statute

**UNITED STATES**

No National Urban Policy

Integrated Initiatives among Federal Agencies

State/Local Policies: Master Plans

Community Participation: varies, culturally and historically, community is more involved
National Urban Network

Population concentration in metropoles

Sao Paulo: Big National Metropolis*
28% of Brazil’s Pop.
40.5% GDP

Rio de Janeiro: National Metropolis*
11.3% of Brazil’s Pop.
11.3% GDP

*Metropolis = include areas that are connected through flow of goods and services

Sources: IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatistica, Regiao de Influencia das Cidades, 2007
National Urban Network
Connections among Metropoles

Brasilia: Federal Management Coordination Center

Sao Paulo: Business Management Command Center

*Metropoles = include areas that are connected through flow of goods and services

Sources: IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Regiao de Influencia das Cidades, 2007*
INTEGRATED PLANNING ON:
EDUCATION
GOVERNANCE
PHYSICAL PLANNING
Education: integrated mandatory curriculum

5-year architecture and urban design program: University of Sao Paulo

MANDATORY STUDIOS: 1X WEEK

- Architecture
- Landscape Architecture
- Urban Planning
- Industrial Design
- Graphic Design

LECTURES & SEMINARS

- History of Art & Architecture
- Structures Geometry Topography
- Hydraulics Lighting Calculus
- Theories of Urbanization Landscape
- Acoustics Thermal Comfort
- Environment Design Housing
- Electives Varies

Thesis: choose one topic of the mandatory studios
Governance: technical & executive levels

PROCENTRO: Sao Paulo Downtown Revitalization Program

**Agency’s Task:**
Prevent further decline of quality of the downtown

**Governance:**
Steering Committee (technical & executive levels) with ~20 entities among public agencies & semi-public organizations

Sources: World Bank, US Census Bureau
Physical Planning: growing with infrastructure
Curitiba

Structural Axis

expressways

slow roads

center
Physical Planning: reclaiming infrastructure
Bringing back the river...

**HUMANIZE**
Good urban design is ultimately about people and how we can optimize the way they live, work, play and travel.

**NATURALIZE**
Increasing open spaces in cities is not only good for the environment; it's good for everyone's well-being.

**URBANIZE**
Our master plan emphasizes the best qualities of an urban setting with a carefully planned mix of uses, pedestrian-friendly connections, access to multiple transit modes and fair housing.
Physical Planning: preserving water quality

Water Quality Control
APPLICATION IN THE U.S.: INTEGRATING ACCESS TO EXPERIENCES
Integrating access to public spaces experiences

ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN: access to experiences, not acres...

Access Distance/Time
Parkland per 1,000 Residents
Parkland per 1,000 Daytime Occupants
Number of Visitors (capacity)
Facilities per Capita
Quality LOS – Design and Maintenance
Park Units per 1,000 Residents
Spending on Parks
Revenue on Parks

Focus on how organizations measure success...

Where can I go to exercise, be active?
Where can I go to relax, escape chaos, enjoy nature?
Where can I go to get together with friends/family/community?

Focus on how people use & experience outdoor public spaces...

Active
Contemplative
Social Gathering
Integrating access to public spaces experiences

ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN: access to experiences, not acres...

ACTIVATE – CONNECT – RENOVATE/REPURPOSE
DEVELOP - CREATE
Thank you!
Obrigada!

Contact: cristina.sassaki@montgomeryparks.org