

Up Close and Personal

What One Planner Learned in a 55-Year Career That Has Paralleled the Major Events of the Time

Floyd Lapp

Growing up in a shifting urban environment during the major socioeconomic transition in the Bronx (NY) in the 1950s and 1960s, my interests in neighborhood change peaked with the changes in housing, the impact of urban renewal, the need for more open-space recreation, the arrival of the interstate highways, and the new faces of the population. These childhood observations led me to pursue an urban planning career. I have had experiences in a variety of functional areas across the tri-state metropolitan area of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. In striving to be a more complete planner, I added depth to my career as an adjunct academician, leader in APA/AICP, and community volunteer practicing what I preached. I learned that these various roles and experiences related to one another and advanced my understanding of urban planning in a synergistic way.

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How Times Have Changed

During my graduate studies at New York University between 1962 and 1964, we read Raymond Vernon’s (1963) *Metropolis 1985*, a date that seemed far into the future at that time. In 1991, writing in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* about cities of the next century, Vernon conceded that there was a loss of centrality, not foreseen in the 1960s, caused by the improved quality and reduced cost of computers and other forms of communication. In the 1960s, major environmental concerns were related to the race for open space and the need for state bond acts and federal grants to acquire recreation and preservation lands before these resources were lost to spreading development. It took the environmental movement in the 1970s to focus on a broader array of concerns, such as the greenhouse effect and eventually climate change. Through the 1970s most regional transportation studies, building on the seminal work of the 1960s, assumed a central city and a surrounding network of smaller cities and suburbs. By the 1980s focus shifted to suburban gridlock and the emergence of subregional centers. Today, regional transportation and open-space recreation plans usually work well in an intergovernmental funding structure among federal, state, and local governments. These plans provide short- and long-range programs, albeit horizon years that are often too far into the future, and they usually do not confront urban–suburban social and economic differences, as in “fair share” housing plans.

Building a Framework

When the *Journal of the American Planning Association* editor created this Perspective series in 2013, we were asked “to reflect on the changes in planning theory and practice that [we] have experienced over the decades of our careers” (Rosenbloom, 2013, p. 109). What follows is my attempt to respond to this

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challenge. More practitioners need to write about their planning experiences, and we need more academic research on who planners are and what they actually do. This exchange of information should lead to greater mutual respect and understanding between practitioners and academics.

In this essay I reflect on how my birthplace and my formative experiences shaped my interests, how the different functions and forms of regional and subregional planning have shaped my perspectives on the planning profession, and my goal of being a more complete planner.

Striving to Be the Complete Planner

For 55 years I have been striving to be the complete planner, which I define as a practitioner in the public and private sectors at all levels of government except the federal, an adjunct academician at colleges and universities, a local and national leader in APA and AICP, and a volunteer advocating greater housing and transportation choices and more sustainable community development. Each experience supports and strengthens the others. I have always maintained that as urban planners we should not be factory workers arriving and departing at specific times; instead, we should always be prepared to apply our skill set outside the office to teach and inform others at the academy, in the community, or within the professional organization. We should be giraffes and stick our necks out as proactive planners rather than be mere back-office bureaucrats. Here I primarily focus on highlights from portions of my public sector career as a practitioner: dealing with open-space recreation in Westchester County (NY) and on the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission; promoting intermunicipal and regional planning between counties in New Jersey; coordinating planning among eight municipalities in the southwestern region of Connecticut; commercial and economic development with a Bronx (NY) local development corporation; and advancing urban revitalization in the Bronx and improved transportation choices with the New York City Planning Department.

After receiving my master's degree from New York University in 1964, I was fortunate in my first assignment to work for S. J. Schulman, Commissioner of Planning for Westchester County. He became my first role model as the complete planner. Usually he was the first one in the office and the last one to leave. He also taught a planning class at Columbia University and with the APA chapter he tried to influence planning

legislation in Albany (NY). I summed up this type of commitment in a *Planning* magazine letter (Lapp, 2015) regarding evening meetings by a planner who started to count his hours of unpaid compensation. I said,

Had he devoted time to volunteer work with APA, teaching as an adjunct academician—at well below billable hours—or in lending expertise to planning where he resides, his clock would have gone well beyond the time he reported. With all those extracurricular activities, for those who tally the minutes, I can attest that you don't lose years; you gain experience! (p. 50)

Growing Up in a Shifting Environment

Long before my formal education and the influence of my first planning assignment in Westchester County, my upbringing and surroundings helped me find the urban planning profession. “Mama, I'm rich! We are moving to the Bronx!” exclaimed Al Jolson in the 1927 motion picture *The Jazz Singer*. My father made that move in 1932, not because of wealth, but because he married my mother, and she lived in the Bronx. He told us that moving to the Bronx at that time was a step up from the extreme residential densities and push-cart commerce of Manhattan's Lower East Side and East Harlem.

New York City in the 1890s had a sharp contrast between the urban squalor of the Lower East Side, as recounted by Jacob Riis (1890) in *How the Other Half Lives*, and the rural Bronx, where 4,000 acres of land were acquired for open-space recreation and connecting parkways. These actions made the Bronx the lungs of the city, where, in the minds of many, you could breathe fresh air. By the turn of the 20th century, virtually all of the major green public open space was in place in the Bronx, well in advance of a burgeoning population and aided by the northern expansion of the subway system from Manhattan. By the 1920s and 1930s, Bronx towns that had been scattered crossroads communities were developed, and they moved closer together into the pattern that now recognizes those communities only as names of subway stations.

The Bronx neighborhood where I was born and bred during the 1940s had a population in 1950 of approximately 200,000, but by 1980 it had severely declined to slightly more than 50,000. This one urban county may have had more social, economic, and physical change than

any other in the nation during that time. It was devastated by arson, abandonment, and demolition from urban renewal and eminent domain. Because of these conditions, the neighborhood I was raised in was the host to Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan as the quintessential example of urban blight. The impact of these actions was eloquently defined in *Root Shock* as “the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or a part of one’s emotional ecosystem” (Fullilove, 2004, p. 11). My parents’ 1949 Dodge and later their 1954 Chrysler provided our personal mobile workshops for visits to friends and relatives and stories of changing neighborhoods, specifically of the White population moving out and Black and Spanish-speaking populations moving in.

From neighbors, family, and friends I heard stories of the highways, bridges, tunnels, and parks created by the master builder Robert Moses. Debates leading to arguments occurred as to whether he was a visionary or a villain (Lapp, 2003). On the visionary side was Jones Beach, the gargantuan Long Island State Park, primarily accessible by Moses’s parkways, highways, and bridges. On the villain side was the Cross Bronx Expressway, which provided travel via an autocentric limited-access highway but in the process it cut through old neighborhoods and caused the destruction of apartment buildings and local businesses. Decades later, with the publication of Robert Caro’s *The Power Broker* in 1974 and the revisionist book *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (Ballon & Jackson, 2007), the debate heightened, and it continues today. In the words of architecture critic Paul Goldberger (1988), “If power was too centralized under Robert Moses . . . it is hard not to wonder if we have paid the price for letting the pendulum swing so far the other way” (p. 45).

The living room windows of our Bronx apartment building allowed personal observations of the changing environment. I learned as an undergraduate college student that most of what I had observed in my youth was encapsulated in urban sociology studies and the research that dealt with the invasion and succession of populations. I was an observer of White flight and changing neighborhoods with the arrival of people of color. I converted these personal experiences and academic training into an interest in public policy, political science, public administration, and urban planning.

Regional Planning: Transportation and the Open-Space Race

The Highway Act of 1962 required that states create metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to allocate

federal funds to their regions, defined as central cities and the surrounding suburban and rural areas statistically related by journey to work and other socioeconomic measurements. In New York State, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, with participation from Connecticut and New Jersey, created the Tri-State Transportation Committee. Eventually this entity became a transportation and then a regional planning commission with involvement by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) later in the 1960s and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the 1970s. Between my two New York University graduate years, I spent 3 months in the summer of 1963 listing and observing land use change in Westchester County. As a response to the post–World War II suburban growth, regional planning was gaining momentum. It was clear that Westchester was receiving some of the major suburban population growth in the region because it was located just north of New York City. There was concern about the conflict between rapid growth and the need to preserve open-space recreation, like the lungs created in the Bronx during the 1890s. To deal with the vast array of data gathering, the use of computer technology, transportation models, and a more scientific approach to regional planning began to emerge. The gist of our work was using land use as a fundamental tool for predicting future travel needs.

During that summer, I borrowed my father’s second vehicle for site visits in Westchester County. One day he wanted to know what this data gathering was all about. I explained that this information would be put into a computer and analyzed to predict future land use and transportation needs. Although he had never graduated high school, he had incredible street smarts and concluded that this process would never work! For him, forecasting land use change 20 to 25 years into the future and how it related to transportation needs had too many slippery slopes. He would say, in a very practical way, based on his many years as a New York City truck driver, that it was very difficult to predict travel behavior. I became very disillusioned by his remarks, especially because Governor Rockefeller had appointed Dr. J. Douglas Carroll, Jr., as executive director. Carroll had obtained Harvard’s first doctoral degree in city planning and had experience doing similar studies in the metropolitan areas of Detroit (MI) and Chicago (IL) between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s. This is not the place to host a forum on the success or failure of transportation models, but more than a half-century later these mathematical applications, across the hundreds of MPOs that were created, have been questioned.

Dr. Carroll and many of his disciples were highly focused regional scientists and pioneers in a field of planning research. In retrospect, their work should have been balanced with the human touch by involving citizens in the research. However, at that time, active public participation processes did not exist.

Between 1964 and 1965 I had the opportunity to work with the Westchester County Department of Planning as part of a team that produced The Open Space Program for Westchester County. The proposed program reflected on the legacy of the Bronx River Parkway and the county legacy of acquiring open-space recreation dating to the 1920s. In 1965, our team recommended 16 potential sites for major county park acquisition, amounting to hundreds of acres. The existing and future acquisition program was based on a generally accepted standard of 12 acres of county parkland per 1,000 population. The population forecasts for the county were much higher than what actually occurred. The Westchester County population, reflecting the graying of the older suburbs, never exceeded 1 million and has actually declined in the past half-century. However, the forecast called for 1.4 million by 1985, 1.650 million by 2000, and 2.4 million by 2050. Commissioner Schulman, the parks and recreation commissioner and the county executive, successfully coordinated the study, which was produced by the Westchester County Department of Planning (1965). Of the 16 proposed sites, 10 were eventually acquired and are being used more than 50 years later. There were two early lessons learned: 1) population forecasts are far from a science; and 2) standards, such as acres per population, are riddled with assumptions. Shorter range forecasts would have been more accurate and still could have sold the program.

In 1973, as a staff member working for the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission, I was given another opportunity to work on an open-space recreation plan. I managed the update of *Outdoor Recreation in a Crowded Region: A Plan for Selecting and Acquiring Recreation Lands* (Lapp, 1973). This was a well-organized plan reviewed and adopted by the three states and their subregions. Given the continuing push for open space, each state adopted an open-space recreation funding program. At the federal level the Departments of Interior and Housing and Community Development had similar programs. Under a federal mandate, Tri-State staff reviewed regional projects for their consistency with the goals and objectives of the regional open-space recreation plan. The agencies and the public liked acquiring more green space. As stated in the plan, "Some open lands are under pressure for urban

development. ... [P]eople living in the center of the Region are critically short of recreation space" (Lapp, 1973, p. 14). Once again, the population forecasts were overstated. The forecast for the region's future population in the early 1970s was 20.8 million by 2000. In 2018, 45 years after the plan was adopted, the region's population is only around 20 to 22 million. As previously stated in the Westchester County Open Space Plan, a shorter time range would have been more accurate and appropriate.

Regional Planning: New Jersey

After slightly more than a year in Westchester, I was seeking a wider planning experience, which I found with the New Jersey State and Regional Planning Office. In 1965, I met my second role model, Eugene J. Schneider, who directed regional planning. His leadership was less technical and more personal and human relations based, focusing on how to participate in meetings: what to say, when to say it, and when to be a good listener. Understanding these tactics was very important in discussing and promoting intermunicipal and regional planning. Pertinent issues concerned old cities and new suburbs and their socioeconomic differences, especially in a small home rule state such as New Jersey with 567 municipalities, 400 of which had fewer than 10,000 population and more than half of which were less than 5 square miles in area. Overlaying this crazy-quilt pattern were 21 counties with two major MPOs that involved 13 of these counties emanating from the New York and Philadelphia (PA) areas. Back in colonial America, Benjamin Franklin got it right when he said that New Jersey was like a keg of beer tapped at both ends. But back to the art form of orchestrating all those meetings. Fifteen years later, participating in APA board meetings, I had the pleasure of working with Dorothy Walker, an American Society of Planning Officials member whose famous phrase to curb lengthy and repetitive discussion I remember fondly: "Does anyone have any new information?" It worked! Participants got the message and moved on. Sounds simple, but those of us who have attended too many long and repetitive meetings know that this is not the case, especially when the subject gets contentious, like promoting intermunicipal/regional planning.

The major success, which I only had a small role in, was establishing the first regional redevelopment agency, the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC) in 1969. The jurisdiction consisted of 14 municipalities in Hudson and Bergen counties, which participated in a system of intermunicipal tax sharing. Today the entity still maintains the original mandate of the

HMDC: to provide for orderly development, to provide facilities for the sanitary disposal of solid waste, and to protect the delicate balance of nature. In 1969 landfills laced the area. Once they were closed, billions of economic development dollars and the preservation of thousands of acres of wetlands followed. The area is also home to the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. Because of the HMDC, the area is economically and environmentally better off than it was 50 years ago, although at times with imperfect planning and development. This is an excellent case in which regional planning largely worked. The environmental mandate was clear, city–suburban socioeconomic differences were not on the table, and the intermunicipal cost-sharing and redevelopment mechanisms were strongly worded innovative actions and logically bolstered by effective political and administrative leadership (New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 1968).

Regional Planning: Fair Share Housing Plans—Their Rise and Fall

Just as working on open-space recreation plans was heaven, where the acquisition of additional green acres was best, the fair share housing plans for low- and moderate-income households were hell to most suburbs; less was viewed as best. When I served as Tri-State's housing and community development director between 1970 and 1982, it was the height of HUD initiatives giving priority to low- and moderate-income households by promoting the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and subsidized regional housing allocation plans. Each of the region's 700 to 800 incorporated municipalities was given a housing needs number based on 1970 U.S. Census data. Looking back, it is clear to me that we should have had the subregions, using their adopted county plans, identify potential housing sites based on criteria all parties would approve rather than Tri-State serving as a secondary data clearinghouse from on high, devoid of land use and development details (Lapp, 1978). This process was a planned mistake! Nevertheless, to continue to receive HUD funding, which was the lifeblood of our nontransportation program, metropolitan planning agencies had to adopt a regional housing plan. It was under duress, but all of the agencies came together and adopted the regional fair share housing plan. This was the classic marriage of convenience. It never happened again, only because HUD never required the plan to be updated. In contrast, open-space recreation plans were updated periodically because that was easy to accomplish.

Smaller and more homogeneous MPOs could approach this housing allocation assignment much more easily. However, Tri-State was the nation's largest MPO, and New York City had the nation's largest assisted housing needs. The city, in turn, was surrounded by many of the nation's quintessential suburban communities. This geographic juxtaposition provided a program for failure, and that is what happened. There was a growing concern that Tri-State had strayed from its original mandate of using a mathematical model to coordinate land use with transportation needs and funds. HUD triggered home rule barriers by telling hundreds of municipalities what their fair share of subsidized housing should be. By 1982, Tri-State was abolished and replaced by nine MPOs. Had the baby not been thrown out with the bath water so quickly, a new partnership could have been forged to focus less on a formula-based approach and more on a planning view of piecing together the local landscapes. Nine MPOs instead of just one led to the mockery of ad hocery. For example, two counties adjoining each other in New York's Hudson Valley created two separate MPOs. Clearly, ignorance was hard at work.

Despite all this upheaval, during this time as Tri-State's housing and community development director I had the honor of being associated with and supported in our work by Paul Davidoff, known as the father of advocacy planning. His *Journal of the American Institute of Planning (JAIP)* articles on choice theory and pluralism in planning speak volumes to his pioneering work as the founder of the Suburban Action Institute (Davidoff, 1965; Davidoff & Reiner, 1962). Other leadership followed with the work of Norman Krumholz and Ron Shiffman. Today advocacy and fair housing leadership is not as visible. These activities seem to have faded away with fair share housing initiatives, changing national priorities, and the current HUD leadership.

Regional Planning in Connecticut

One of the nine MPOs that emerged from the demise of Tri-State was the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) in Connecticut. It was one of six Connecticut regions (the state does not have county government) that then became five separate MPOs. The second-smallest state geographically set the table for some of the smallest MPOs. It would have made more sense to merge all six regions, especially as they were formerly part of Tri-State for 20 years, or at least to divide them in half using criteria such as political, transportation, or natural boundaries, among others. But as part of the pendulum swing, the quest for

home rule prevailed and smaller regions were considered the safe way to go.

I was the executive director of SWRPA between 2006 and 2013. The MPO function covered eight municipalities and a population of approximately 350,000. Fair share housing plans did not exist, and the subject was quietly relegated to data gathering and trend analysis. A regional plan was required by the state every 10 years for each region, and a transportation plan looking 20 to 25 years into the future was prepared and updated every 4 to 5 years. There was a standard of 10% affordable housing for each municipality (SWRPA, 2006). The origin or logic of this standard was unknown and went unchallenged. As expected, the major cities met or exceeded this standard, whereas the affluent suburban municipalities usually provided a meager percentage point or even less. Only a very few complained of this imbalance as fair share was quietly taken off the table. This was the calm after the fair share housing storm created by HUD; once it withdrew funding from MPOs, the nomenclature changed dramatically. The metropolitan planning agencies, based on available funding, became primarily transportation planning agencies. The relationship of land use as a predictor of transportation needs, founded by J. Douglas Carroll, Jr., and his colleagues in the 1950s and 1960s, was split in two and analyzed separately once again.

Back to the Bronx

After Tri-State closed its doors in 1982, I became executive director of the Kingsbridge-Riverdale-Van Cortlandt Development Corporation, located in the northwest Bronx. Unlike other local development corporations created in response to deterioration and destruction, this entity was uniquely organized to provide preventive programs; the goal was to avoid the pattern of the South Bronx, where I was raised. In the more than 6 years on this assignment, I was responsible for structuring commercial revitalization, economic development, housing rehabilitation, and street amenities such as upgraded and decorative sidewalks, landscaping, and new lighting, as well as storefront renovations and ongoing maintenance to sustain the improvements once they were installed.

These efforts yielded millions of dollars of capital improvements, housing rehabilitation programs, and new economic development. The result was the first Walgreens in New York City in 20 years, the relocation of a coat company from Manhattan's garment district, a Loehmann's clothing store, and the renovation of 4 acres of space for office use. The presence of the development

corporation's revitalization programs, plus active leadership by local and state elected officials and the chamber of commerce, created a strong and diverse team effort primarily responsible for curtailing the spread of blight that had occurred in the South Bronx. Since my departure 30 years ago, more new housing and rehab has occurred. A major transition was made with the demise of many of the mom-and-pop stores that had dated back two and three generations with the arrival of big box retail and large national brand names.

Continuing my work in the Bronx, in 1988 I became the director of the Bronx Office of City Planning. The major challenge was political and administrative. The Bronx borough president, who had designs on being mayor, also had a planning office, and my predecessor was the director. A few of my staff had conflicting loyalties. I look back sadly on this situation because rather than competing, it would have been so much better to have cooperated and harnessed our scarce human resources to meet the challenging goals and objectives of resurrecting planning and development for Bronx County. Administrative activities included land use and environmental reviews; liaisons with the 12 community boards; capital programming; and functional responsibilities in housing, economic development, open-space recreation, transportation, schools, and other community facilities. Easily the most satisfying work was coordinating with the city's housing agency and the Mayor's Ten Year Housing Strategy in the South Bronx. Partnering with Community Board 3, my boyhood home, our team produced the first community plan officially adopted by a community board and the New York City Planning Commission.

More Transportation

In 1991, New York City Planning, in the process of reorganizing its executive office, had an opening for a transportation director. The commission chairman, remembering my work at the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission, asked me to fill the slot. I stayed in this assignment until the end of 2000. Four months after I arrived, the federal government approved the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. I had to apply my grants, fundraising, and entrepreneurial skills, which I had learned at the Bronx local development corporation, to grow the program. I was able to double the size of the staff and have it supported with 80% federal funding. Not only was there more transportation funding, but it was flexible and innovative. Applicants could go outside the silos and exchange highway and transit funding.

A new program, the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program, enabled funding for bicycle and

pedestrian projects. With the City Department of Transportation, we partnered to prepare the first-ever bicycle plan and map of existing and prospective routes. Other City Planning projects were aimed at reducing pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Most notable was the reconfiguration of Columbus Circle, which had fallen into disrepair. It was upgraded in accord with its 19th-century Frederick Law Olmsted landscape plan as a circle with a central open space. The Roundabout Appreciation Society named this circle the world's best. Completed in 1905, it is widely considered to be the world's first traffic circle. The reconfiguration, adjoining Central Park, still incorporates the statue of Christopher Columbus erected in 1892 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his first voyage to America. A large pedestrian plaza in the middle is presently ringed by a series of fountains and benches. Just to the south of this area, to reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts, pioneering work was advanced to widen sidewalks and street corners in Times Square. These initiatives eventually led to a full pedestrian mall in 2016.

On the transit side, City Planning recommended a rail route to La Guardia Airport that appeared in the 2000–2004 Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 5-year capital program. After 9/11, attention shifted to providing a route from lower Manhattan to John F. Kennedy Airport. Neither route has been built, and Governor Andrew Cuomo is pursuing a different approach for rail access to La Guardia.

Another initiative of the New York City Planning Commission (2001) was the extension of the No. 7 subway, from its terminus in Times Square to Manhattan West, an area that lacked transit, was undeveloped and viewed as Manhattan's last frontier. Value capture was the recommended funding mechanism so that developments receiving the benefit of the rapid transit, which increased their value, would pay for the subway extension rather than the public sector. The No. 7 subway extension was built and Manhattan West is flourishing, with improved rapid rail access, as a destination site for housing and commercial development.

In 1993, City Planning also recommended an extension of the subway under the Hudson River to the New Jersey Meadowlands to connect with the myriad New Jersey Transit rail lines (New York City Planning Commission, 1993). A variation of this project, sponsored by Amtrak and known as Gateway, is now slowly advancing with funding limits. This project is the linchpin of the northeast Boston (MA)–Washington (DC) rail corridor revitalization, the nation's economic engine.

To improve freight access, we, working with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, recommended a dedicated rail tunnel from Jersey City (NJ) to

the Bay Ridge rail line in Brooklyn (NY) and connecting north along Amtrak to Boston. This route has been recommended since the turn of the 20th century and was the major reason for the creation of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 1921. This is another example of a mega-transportation project that has been seriously delayed.

Rail to airport access, an upgraded rail access to link Penn Station in midtown Manhattan with the Newark (NJ) Amtrak station, and a dedicated rail freight tunnel should each have been built a long time ago, especially as we worked on each of these three mega-rail projects at New York City Planning 25 years ago. The bold, imaginative, and consistent leadership that built the highways, bridges, and tunnels during the first two-thirds of the 20th century in the New York region has been missing. We need to find creative ways to balance the pre-1960s autocratic approaches with the more democratic approaches that are now mandated, which is easily said yet difficult to do. Streamlining the regulatory review process has many people concerned that too many things will be overlooked.

We also supported many of the local shopping areas with traffic analyses of an emerging trend: big box retail. This work was highly sensitive and controversial: replacing small neighborhood retail stores with large national chains. Evaluating traffic and parking impacts and maintaining the neighborhood retail fabric was a very delicate balancing act. I previously mentioned observing this retail trend in Kingsbridge, the Bronx, after I had left the development corporation's area in the 1980s.

As part of my roles and responsibilities I represented New York City, along with the City Department of Transportation, on the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council. This one-state entity was the scaled-back version of Tri-State and consisted only of New York City, Long Island, and three Hudson Valley counties. The work program primarily focused on transportation. Fair share housing plans remained the unspoken agenda.

When I concluded my assignment as New York City Planning's transportation director, I reflected that my involvement in planning with Tri-State had spanned five decades: college aide/field lister with the Tri-State Transportation Committee (1963), staff at Tri-State (1970–1982), and New York City Planning voting member on the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (1991–2000). I also reflected once again on the role of long-range transportation planning, specifically recalling the major movement in using mathematical models to predict travel behavior. All of the time, effort,

and funding has demonstrated that transportation planners and engineers lack the capacity to obtain and process all of the comprehensive information for reliable and accurate decision making. Instead, as Herbert Simon advised a long time ago, we should “satisfice” and take a course of action that is good enough (Simon, 1956, p. 129).

Looking 20 to 25 years into the future reduces accuracy. Taking into account the planning done in Westchester County in the mid-1960s, in conjunction with the open-space recreation plan, as well as a similar plan I produced for Tri-State in 1973 (Lapp, 1973), it is clear that the population forecasts were not even close to reality. Given these major gaps it is not possible to understand needs and long-term future trends. For example, think back to transportation planning 25 years ago. Who among us was able to predict the attention currently given to bicycle and pedestrian planning, the concepts of complete streets, managed lanes and congestion pricing, bus rapid transit, or the greater use of light rail? Based on my experience, I believe that planning and forecasting the future is more an art than a science. We need to be much more creative than merely running a model’s equations for results or fooling ourselves that we can accurately predict more than 10 or so years into the future. Transportation models and the 20- to 25-year horizon lack the touch and feel of the community of people they are designed to serve.

In conclusion, looking forward and based on these experiences, I summarize my perspectives with 10 planning commandments for action by practitioners:

1. Add more precision to your vision by following Martin Meyerson’s (1956) *JAI*P article of more than 60 years ago and promoting middle-range planning, “a detailed development plan function to phase specific private and public programs as part of a comprehensive course of action covering not more than 10 years” (p. 60). This time horizon effectively coordinates our vision and the capital budget process.
2. Beware of quantitative methods and mathematical models in predicting the future, especially travel behavior, as my father warned in 1962! Forty-five years ago, Douglas B. Lee, Jr. (1973), writing in *JAI*P, identified seven sins of transportation models. The emergence of very useful geographic information systems and transportation apps, if applied too quickly and without the calm of further thought, can potentially send our train of thought down the wrong road.
3. Let’s stop romancing regionalism in very home rule environments unless the goals and objectives are very clear, the geographic scale is manageable, and there is a strategy to deal with urban–suburban dichotomies. Regional planning is working well in many places. It depends on the functional area and the approach selected.
4. Promote bottom-up partnerships for advancing equity and environmental justice by using cross-accepted land use and transportation plans rather than top-down secondary source material from higher levels of government.
5. Streamline regulatory reviews with reasonable, quantifiable timelines for each step in the process to expedite implementation and reduce inflated costs from delayed implementation, especially for new mega-transit connections. If not rigorously applied, project reviews will expand to fill open-ended time.
6. Promote diversity in planning practice that translates into assignments with a beginning, middle, and end, but do not stay too long at the dance: Some of the music repeats itself, and you enter a treadmill to oblivion. Diverse experiences, as part of being a more complete planner, reinforce each experience in a synergistic way.
7. Understand the role of the planner as an entrepreneur (Lapp, 1996). A considerable part of my early career was spent using public funds, but as they began to shrink, I learned about creating and growing programs just as many do in building a business in the private sector. This approach is especially critical now with diminished public funding.
8. More aggressively pursue transit-oriented development to create more compact development and less suburban sprawl within walking distance or a short bicycle ride to a transit hub as a major approach to promoting more sustainable communities and taming the automobile.
9. With more compact development and to further reinforce sustainability, promote energy-efficient transit with a zeal similar to that used to advance the interstate highway system decades ago.
10. Proactively design for climate change throughout the 21st century by creating new marriages among planners, environmentalists, and earth scientists.

Some of these perspectives may sound like old wine in new bottles or may appear to defy Burnham’s admonition to “make no small plans,” but I take these with me as I do a modest amount of consulting, let my voice be heard in the print media, and teach at Columbia, as Mr. Schulman did, when I was starting out so long ago.

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