

The Essential Planning Library

By Stuart Meck, AICP, and Shannon Paul

If an army travels on its stomach, then it follows that a planning department travels on the strength of its library. Having a good library collection of planning-related texts can save time and improve the quality of the planning department's research, as well as stimulate thinking about new approaches.

We have compiled a list of what we consider to be the essential references for any planning department or consulting office. The 39 selections that follow are intended to provide a balance between the practical and the theoretical. The selection criteria we used were straightforward. We wanted books of enduring quality that either had defined the planning profession or had a major influence on American city planning. We looked for clearly written texts that got to the point quickly and presented common-sense solutions to the problems planners typically face.

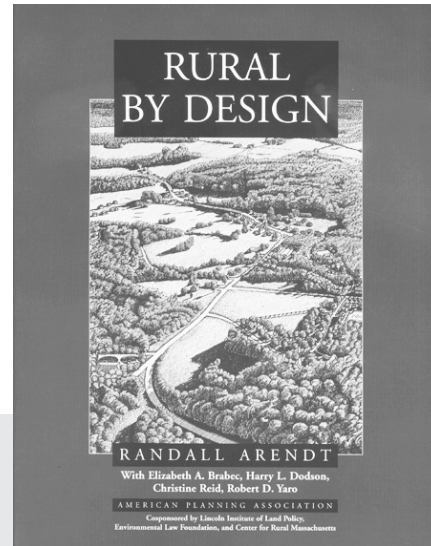
There is always a fair degree of debate about what constitutes "essential." In making that decision, we used various resources. First, we drew on our own experiences; we favored books that were influential in shaping our professional lives and perspectives. In addition, we looked to our colleagues for recommendations. We selected texts frequently consulted by Planning Advisory Service (PAS) research associates in responding to subscriber inquiries. Finally, we asked members of the Council of Planning Librarians for their suggestions.

Most of the books listed here are still in print. Those highlighted with a bullet are available from the APA Planners Book Service. Those books that are out of print are typically available in university and large public libraries. We included such books when we believed nothing comparable is in print.

We have not included Planning Advisory Service reports, although we (obviously) think they are essential to any planning library. Their inclusion would have ballooned the size of the list considerably. Subscribers to the Planning Advisory Service have access to the entire collection of 468 reports, begun 1949; they can decide for themselves which ones they feel are necessary or relevant to their needs.

•Anderson, Larz T. *Guidelines for Preparing Urban Plans*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1995.

Building on the concepts in T. J. Kent's *The General Urban Plan* (see below), Anderson provides guidelines for the preparation of a comprehensive plan. He starts with identification of the client and participants, finishes with implementation of the plan, and in between covers data collection, analysis, and plan preparation. Anderson also includes a useful checklist of topics to include in a local or metropolitan plan.



Nominally focused on rural planning, the text gives guidance on neotraditional planning techniques, sprawl avoidance, greenways, cluster development, open space, and farmland preservation. Second printing improved the quality of already elegant sketches. Includes a good bibliography.

•Randall Arendt et al. *Rural by Design*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1994.

•Bair, Jr., Frederick H. *The Zoning Board Manual*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1984.

Tame the variance/special exception beast by sharing this manual with your zoning board members. In it they will learn all they need to know about the development of zoning, the scope of their powers, and rules of procedures.

•Brough, Michael B. *A Unified Development Ordinance*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1985.

Excellent source for any planner drafting a unified development ordinance that pulls together zoning and subdivision control into one document. This volume serves as a guide for ordinance language and commentary. Intended for smaller and mid-sized communities.

Burchell, Robert W., and David Listokin. *The Fiscal Impact Handbook*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1978.

A planning classic, frequently recommended to PAS subscribers. Comprehensive treatment of the topic of cost-revenue analysis and the limitations of different approaches.

Also handy is *The New Practitioner's Guide to Fiscal Impact Analysis* by the same authors (Center for Urban Policy Research, 1985), which contains updated demographic multipliers. Sadly, both titles are out of print.

Community Builders Handbook Series. 7 vols. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1981-1992.

This series includes the following titles, published as separate volumes: *Recreational Development Handbook* (1981); *Office Development Handbook* (1982); *Shopping Center Development Handbook.* 2nd ed. (1985); •*Mixed-Use Development Handbook* (1987); •*Business and Industrial Park Development Handbook* (1988); •*Residential Development Handbook.* 2nd ed. (1990); and *Downtown Development Handbook.* 2nd ed. (1992). Long considered a "must have" reference series. Some titles are dated, but these books still prove themselves to be the best single source of information on their topics. Each volume consists of a general overview of a development type and case studies of successful developments.

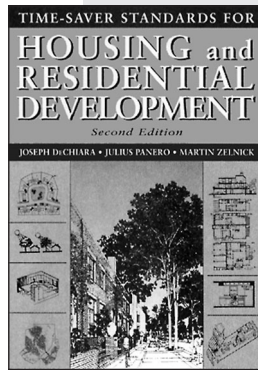
•Daniels, Thomas L., John W. Keller, and Mark B. Lapping. *The Small Town Planning Handbook.* 2nd ed. Chicago: Planners Press, 1995.

Focuses on the special circumstances and needs of rural towns, especially those with populations of 10,000 or less. Sections include the planning process, planning commissions, economic analysis, housing, transportation and circulation, capital improvements programs, zoning ordinances, and economic development. Good nuts-and-bolts guidance.

Gans, Herbert J. *People, Plans and Policies.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

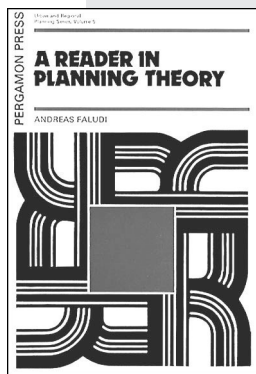
A brilliant, thought-provoking collection of essays on city planning, poverty, racism, and environment and behavior. "City Planning in America, 1890-1968: A Sociological Analysis," speaks volumes about the underlying values and biases, especially that of physical determinism, affecting the development of planning in the United States. The reader should also look for the earlier version of this book, *People and Plans* (Basic Books, 1968), which contains several excellent pieces on suburban and new town development omitted from the current edition.

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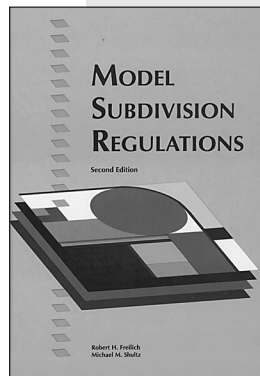
Another one-stop reference source. Incorporates some material from DeChiara and Lee Koppelman's popular earlier volume *Urban Planning and Design Criteria* (McGraw-Hill, 1979). The most popular chapter is likely to be "General Planning and Neighborhood Organization."

•DeChiara, Joseph, Julius Panero, and Martin Zelnick. *Time-Saver Standards for Housing and Residential Development.* 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.



Essays on the full complement of twentieth century planning theory, such as rational planning, advocacy planning, and incrementalism in planning. Of particular note are Paul Davidoff's "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," and Martin Meyerson's "Building the Middle-Range Bridge for Comprehensive Planning."

•Faludi, Andreas, ed. *A Reader in Planning Theory.* New York: Pergamon Press, 1973.



Includes a short history of subdivision regulations, the model subdivision regulations themselves, and commentary. The appendix includes an excerpt on subdivision control from the 1928 Standard City Planning Enabling Act, a summary of the American Law Institute's Model Land Development Code, and practical administrative forms and checklists.

•Freilich, Robert H., and Michael M. Shultz. *Model Subdivision Regulations.* 2nd ed. Chicago: Planners Press, 1995.

Gold, Seymour M. *Recreation Planning and Design.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Don't let the date fool you—this is still the best text on recreation planning around. Gold provides the necessary foundation for recreation planning, including concepts and principles, recreation measures, supply and demand analysis, goal formulation, and implementation. Unfortunately it is out of print.

Gordon, Gerald L. *Strategic Planning for Local Government.* Washington, D.C.: International City/County Management Association, 1993.

This book walks you through the strategic planning process. It begins with definitions and progresses through analysis, programs, review, and organizational considerations. Also

includes a chapter on forecasting. Many will find the sample environmental scans, goal statements, and implementation plans (from California, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Kansas) helpful.

Greenberg, Michael R. et al. *Local Population and Employment Projection Techniques*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1978.

Highly useful treatment of all types of projection techniques for local governments. Check out the clever Newling model for projections based on density ceilings. Includes computer programs.

•Hedman, Richard, and Andrew Jaszewski. *Fundamentals of Urban Design*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1984.

An excellent primer on urban form. This volume encourages architects and planners to remember and consider context, preservation, purpose, and building form when reviewing plans for new buildings or urban growth. Hedman played a significant role in the development of San Francisco's famed Urban Design Plan. In many ways this text is an intellectual heir to Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice* (see below).

Jacobs, Jane. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Modern Library, 1993.

"This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding," wrote Jane Jacobs in 1961. The "current city planning" she was attacking flourishes today and with unrelenting orthodoxy. *Death and Life* details Jacobs's thoughts on the essential conditions of diversity in a city's fabric, conditions that make it exciting, attractive, and safe, and cause constant renewal. As pertinent, bracing, and thought-provoking today as it was 36 years ago. Originally published by Random House.

•Jones, Bernie. *Neighborhood Planning*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1990.

This practical guide is intended for both professional planners and the citizens they serve. Jones explains how to translate citizen concerns about neighborhood issues and opportunities into an implementable plan document. Includes a sample citizen survey, tips on organizing public workshops, and several goal-setting exercises.

Kendig, Lane et al. *Performance Zoning*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1980.

Text and commentary for a performance zoning ordinance that regulates uses and structures based on the impacts that each is likely to have. An alternative to conventional zoning district designations. Proposes permanent landscape "buffer yards" to eliminate or minimize use conflicts. Out of print.

•Kent, Jr., T. J. *The Urban General Plan*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1990.

Kent's unsurpassed classic on the history, purpose, scope, clients, and use of the urban general or "comprehensive" plan. This timeless book is an absolute must. Reprint of the Chandler Publishing Company 1964 edition.

Krueckeberg, Donald A., and Arthur L. Silvers. *Urban Planning Analysis*. New York: Wiley, 1974.

Clearly written introduction to basic quantitative techniques of urban planning and policy analysis. Solid chapters on survey research and analysis, population forecasting, transportation modeling, and program analysis and selection. Out of print.

•Listokin, David, and Carole Walker. *The Subdivision and Site Plan Handbook*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1989.

Contains a model ordinance with commentary for subdivision and site plan review. Good discussion of development standards and makes the case for reducing excessive standards. Well illustrated.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960.

Paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks are the shorthand Lynch developed to categorize the public image of the city. This original and innovative work has had a major influence on urban design.



Pioneering inspirational work on environmental planning. Notable for its use of map overlays to identify land development constraints, this text shows how to graphically integrate environmental information.

•McHarg, Ian. *Design with Nature*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1992.

•McLean, Mary L., and Kenneth P. Voytek. *Understanding Your Economy*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1992.

Nuts-and-bolts explanation of how to do economic analysis for comprehensive planning and how to select strategies that build on the local economy's strengths. This is the best book on the subject.

•Mandelker, Daniel R. *Land Use Law*. Charlottesville, Va.: Michie Company, 1993.

Excellent single-volume treatise on land-use controls that has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court. Well organized with an appreciation of the problems faced by planners. Good bibliographies at the conclusion of each chapter. Supplemented annually.

•Marsh, William M. *Landscape Planning*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991.

Complete treatment of landscape planning fundamentals with chapters on technical topics such as soil classification, development capability, sedimentation, runoff, microclimate, slopes, stormwater, and topography.

•Mertes, James D., and James R. Hall. *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. Washington, D.C.: National Recreation and Park Association, 1995.

An essential resource for park and open space planning. Includes sections on creating a planning framework, developing level of service guidelines, and classifying various open space resources. Provides numerous formulas to allow municipalities to customize the park planning process.

•Moskowitz, Harvey S., and Carl G. Lindbloom. *The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions*. 2nd ed. New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1993.

Helpful commentary and illustrations back up the definitions, which may be used in comprehensive planning and land development. The most complete reference on the subject. Frequently used by PAS researchers.

•Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961.

Sweeping, masterful historical analysis of city development all over the world. Describes why cities came about and what their continuing function is.

•Nelson, Arthur C., and James B. Duncan. *Growth Management Principles & Practices*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1995.

A basic text. The authors cover urban growth areas, adequate public facilities ordinances, special area protection, financing, and state and regional approaches. "Most growth management efforts," they caution, "will fail if done in isolation from regional or state interests. Local governments are usually incapable of influencing regional development patterns in ways consistent with local growth management objectives."

•*Parking Generation*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1987.

The leading resource for determining the average parking occupancy of a land use or building. Airports, bowling alleys, single-family residences, warehouses—they're all here. Helpful in establishing standards for zoning codes.

•Patton, Carl V., and David S. Sawicki. *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Rigorous but clear treatment of methods of policy analysis. Covers problem definition, data collection, methods of evaluating alternatives (including discounting, forecasting, and sensitivity analysis), approaches to presenting conclusions, and evaluation of implementation. Good case studies that show how to apply techniques (see the case study on the redevelopment of Underground Atlanta, a favorite). An instructor's manual is also available.

•Rubenstein, Harvey M. *A Guide to Site Planning and Landscape Construction*. 4th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996.

If you do site plan preparation or reviews, you need this well-illustrated, practical, and highly readable book. It gets better with each edition.

•Schilling, Joseph M., and James B. Hare. *Code Enforcement*. Point Arena, Calif.: Solano Press, 1994.

While this book has a California orientation, it offers a solid grounding in code enforcement management, investigation, and prosecution. Good treatment of non-criminal approaches, including mediation and administrative hearings. It is

particularly helpful if you are reorganizing your enforcement agency or designing an instruction program for code enforcement personnel.

•Scott, Mel. *American City Planning Since 1890*. Chicago: Planners Press, 1995.

The standard text on American city planning history through 1969. Reprint of University of California paperback edition, 1971.

•So, Frank, S., and Judith Getzels, eds. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association, 1988.

This book, in its various editions, defines the practice of planning in the United States. Covers comprehensive plan preparation, planning agency organization, capital budgeting, zoning, subdivision control, urban design, etc. New edition expected in 1998.

•*Transportation Planning Handbook*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1992.

An Institute of Transportation Engineers publication. Basic transportation planning material in one reference book. Here's where to begin your travel forecasting project, locate the definition of an activity center, or determine the capacity of an unsignalized intersection.

•*Trip Generation*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1991 and 1995.

Second volume consists of 1995 update to first edition. Aids the planner in estimating the number of vehicle trips generated by a particular land use using different independent variables (e.g., number of dwelling units, amount of gross leasable area). Based on more than 3,200 trip generation studies. Just remember that the data are based on automobile-heavy suburban sites. Updated regularly. Expensive, but worth it.

•Unwin, Raymond. *Town Planning in Practice*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.

The best book on city planning ever written. A masterful exposition on the fine points of site planning, such as the arrangement of streets, squares and other public places, and buildings. Lushly illustrated with town plans and photos. Unwin shows how to plan cities at the human scale. Savor his wisdom. Show this book to the local civil engineering firm that does ugly subdivision design in hopes of behavioral modification. Reprint of original 1909 edition published by T. Fisher Unwin.



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