

2018; Temple University Press; 327 pp.; \$37.95

Constructing the Patriarchal City: Gender and the Built Environments of London, Dublin, Toronto, and Chicago, 1870s into the 1940s, by Maureen A. Flanagan (Illinois Institute of Technology and Michigan

State University), accuses, indicts, and convicts the city-building professions for imposing “a conceptual and geographical division between public spaces, intended mainly for men and their economic activities, and domestic residential areas reserved for family, home, and women.”

The author identifies three premises that engineers, architects, and urban planners assumed:

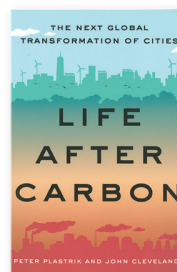
1. “The city [was] a disorderly space that needed to be controlled and made modern.”
2. Women were a significant cause of urban disorder.
3. Impersonal solutions to urban problems were required, rather than “people-centered solutions focused on how people lived in and experienced the city.”

Those who find this overstated should first read her account of women’s struggles for public toilets in each of the four cities, and John Nolen’s statement that good city planning would encourage earlier marriage and childbearing.

Flanagan highlights women’s initiatives as well as male disregard. In London, Octavia Hill’s work in poor neighborhoods focused on renovating existing properties rather than on slum clearance and relocation.

Modernism is out of style these days, but even when it is critiqued, “the gendered origins of their ideas and work remain unquestioned” and women are omitted.

The author does not limit her critique to the dates in the title, skewering the 2002 Chicago plan for failing to consider gender “even when addressing the issue of safety in public transit,” and the disregard of women’s recent planning initiatives in Toronto and London. In her view, the built environment continues “to exclude or obstruct women from equal movement into and through the city’s public spaces and to contain them as much as possible in the private place of the home. Women’s concerns have never been institutionalized in these cities, always leaving women’s groups and their needs at the mercy of those in power.”



2018; Island Press; 285 pp.; \$35

Life After Carbon: The Next Global Transformation of Cities, by Peter Plastrik and John Cleveland (Innovation Network for Communities) enthusiastically piles one climate-taming innovation after another on its

readers (14 cities in the first three pages).

The authors list 37 “urban climate innovation laboratories” of which 10 are in the U.S. (Austin, Boston, Boulder, Minneapolis, New York City, Oakland, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington). They identify four “transformative ideas” underlying these changes: a renewable-energy economy to create urban wealth and jobs; efficient use of resources “to generate a new kind of urban abundance”; restoring natural systems to enhance and protect urban life; and learning to “adapt successfully to the future’s new requirements.” They quote author Jeremy Rifkin’s idea that everything will change as internet-based communications and renewable energy converge. This is a big-picture book.

The authors acknowledge that “the framework of ideas that is replacing the modern city framework is still coming together” and that the crisis will require “far more radical decarbonization and climate adaptation strategies” than anything so far tried. They note that:

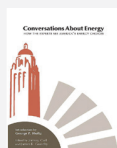
- Most cities are not yet on this path at all.
- Cities can’t go it alone.
- Many will resist the idea of a vegan diet in a 500-square-foot house.

Unaddressed issues include the continuing rise in emissions and wastes, the distribution of costs and benefits, and nonurban greenhouse-gas emissions.

There are imponderable impacts of self-driving cars, geoengineering attempts, and “nationalist politics.”

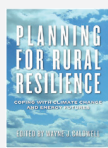
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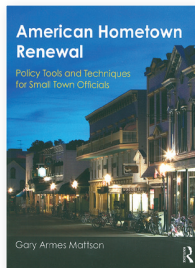
Conversations About Energy, by Jeremy Carl and James E. Goodby, discusses critical issues including energy and synthetic

biology, cap and trade and carbon tax policies, energy efficiency, and international relationships.



Planning for Rural Resilience: Coping with Climate Change and Energy Futures, edited by Wayne J. Caldwell, makes clear that rural communities

have opportunities to make informed and constructive decisions in the face of climate uncertainty.



2017; Routledge;
491 pp.; \$77.95

American Hometown Renewal: Policy Tools and Techniques for Small Town Officials, by Gary Armes Mattson, AICP (Northern Kentucky University), is a big book that tackles a big problem:

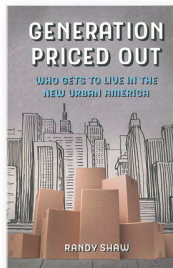
how small towns can survive in a global economy. Despite the general title, the book concentrates on Midwestern towns.

The author argues that a community can offset its constraints of size and location with technology and a willingness to innovate—provided that the community can figure out how its assets can offset its liabilities. The book divides into five sections: small towns, policy planning in the community, economic opportunities, labor force analysis, and fiscal analysis. More than four dozen formulas are included for calculating everything from emigration rate to job centralization coefficient index.

The book seeks to promote Community Asset Assessment Analysis as “a potential strategy for small town revival.” CAAA is not clearly defined, as it is first said to view the community “as a financial balance sheet” (which would include both assets and liabilities) but is later said to focus on the community’s assets rather than its needs.

The author notes that small-town leadership tends toward inertia: “Innovative leadership needs a cosmopolitan type of town manager or a citizen spark plug . . . without an extensive professional staff, it is quite difficult for any small town to adopt innovative budgetary and financial management strategies.” Among the policies endorsed are user fees and privatization of public services.

Students and practitioners will benefit from the wide variety of techniques discussed. They may lament the absence of any detailed case study that tracks the process of creating and implementing a CAAA.



2018; University
of California Press;
292 pp.; \$29.95

Generation Priced Out: Who Gets to Live in the New Urban America, by author and advocate Randy Shaw (Tenderloin Housing Clinic), asks, “When did it become acceptable for America’s politically progressive and culturally

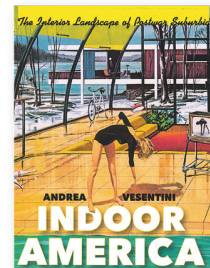
diverse cities to price out the non-rich?”

The author writes vividly and to the point, introducing readers to the victims of a November 2016 Oakland fire, who were in an unsafe building because “their generation had been priced out of safe and affordable housing,” and to meetings full of affluent city homeowners clamoring to prevent development that might bring diversity (and using “open space” as a cover story). Shaw makes four points about urban affordability:

- A generational divide separates those who benefit from owning high-priced city homes and those who are shut out by those prices.
- Urban gentrification can be stopped.
- “Neighborhood activism is the long-overlooked villain in cities pricing out the non-affluent.”
- Environmentalists often “fail to see that opposing infill housing undermines green goals” by imposing long commutes on workers.

The book focuses on the San Francisco Bay Area, but finds similar troubles in Los Angeles, Austin, Seattle, Denver, New York City, and Minneapolis. Key to his argument is that neighborhood organizations, often progressive in the 1970s, now resist necessary changes.

Shaw proposes 10 steps for cities seeking equity and inclusiveness, starting with building “significantly more housing of all types and in all neighborhoods.” The Bay Area added 546,000 jobs between 2010 and 2017—and just 76,000 new housing units.



2018; University
of Virginia Press;
321 pp.; \$49.50

Indoor America: The Interior Landscape of Postwar Suburbia, by Andrea Vesentini (La Biennale di Venezia) looks at post-World War II sprawl, not just as a spreading out, but as a

turning inward: “What might at first look like an uninterrupted sprawl is in fact a collection of insular interiors: little boxes and big boxes held together by moving boxes.” The author, who first encountered U.S. suburbs as a college student, sent home photos of suburbia and in turn was asked, “Where are the people?”

Vesentini identifies three stages of suburbanization: encapsulation in the automobile, introversion of domestic space, and interiorization of public space (as in enclosed malls or the interconnected indoors of many recent downtown hotels and convention centers). Illustrations from popular postwar magazines and movies help make his point.

The author is not impressed with paeans to the “freedom” of cars and suburbs, asking rhetorically what Americans needed to be freed from. “Was it the time constraints of public transit? The space constraints of the traditional city? Or was it the social and racial friction of public urban life?” As for new urbanists, “Their claim is to revitalize the city, but in most cases their projects steer well away from it. . . . Once we scratch off the pretty ornaments and pastel paint, we are still left with car-dependent single-family houses keeping the city at a safe distance.”

Chapters on fallout shelters, air conditioning, picture windows, and malls complete this readable, lookable, and thought-provoking book.

—Harold Henderson

Henderson is *Planning's* regular book reviewer. Send new books and news of forthcoming publications to him at 1355 W. Springville Road, LaPorte, IN 46350; email hshh@earthlink.net.