



## Editorial

*Landscape and Urban Planning* at 100: Looking back moving forward**1. Overview of the special issue**

This issue completes the 100th volume of *Landscape and Urban Planning*, a benchmark that spans 37 years of publication during which more than 2500 research papers, review articles, and editorials have appeared in the journal and its predecessors, *Landscape Planning* and *Urban Ecology*. In commemoration of this achievement we have prepared this Special Issue, inviting current and former journal board members and other distinguished scholars to share their thoughts in short, perspective essays. Authors were given free rein with respect to topic choice but were asked to frame their comments within the context of key substantive, methodological, or sectoral issues of relevance to the journal. Along with their topical commentary, they were also invited to address broader concerns about the nature of our research and its implications to education, practice, and/or society. Personal reflections were encouraged, with the goal of informing future directions.

While the diversity of these offerings resists easy categorization, we have grouped the 31 essays into six general areas: Theory and Critique, Foundations for Landscape and Urban Planning, People–Environment Interactions, Urban Ecology, Modeling and Visualization, and Critical and Emerging Issues. We invite you as readers to not only explore the papers as your interests see fit, but also encourage you to look beyond the titles you are accustomed to reading, as the cumulative value produced by the efforts of our authors exceeds the sum of their individual contributions.

**2. Inlook and outlook**

As the new editor of *Landscape and Urban Planning*, organizing this Special Issue has given me a unique opportunity to think more deeply about what the “journal community” of publishers, editors, board members, reviewers, and readers has accomplished over the last 100 volumes of journal publication, and more importantly, where we need to head in the next 100. In the lead essay for this compilation, charter board member Peter Jacobs notes that while the particular emphases of the editors guiding the journal have shifted some over the years, the central commitments of the journal remain fairly consistent. Beginning in 1974 under Arnold Weddle and continuing in 1991 under Jon Rodiek until this year, these guiding elements have been focused on: (1) a response to societal concerns about the environmental and social forces bringing about landscape change; (2) a better understanding of the relationships between human and ecological systems, particularly the linkages between land use and landscape change; (3) a recognition that understanding these relationships and linkages requires the talents of multiple disciplines and professions concerned with

landscape; and (4) a responsibility to link research questions and findings to the practice of landscape and urban planning, design, and management, as well as to the implementation of policies that guide these practices. But while the basic tenets of the journal have remained consistent, it is how these elements have come to manifest themselves in the journal over the years that show how we have evolved. In the sections that follow, I examine each of these four elements in the context of past journal editorials and current ideas put forth in the essays for this Special Issue, and from this suggest some ways in how we might move forward as a journal community.

**2.1. Landscape change**

The journal was conceived and framed during a period of great environmental change in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where large scale impacts spurred societal awareness and the need to address changes at a landscape scale (Manten and Weddle, 1976). Early issues of the journal were instrumental in identifying what landscape planning was and what it should be, with descriptive investigations and project case studies encouraged along with a range of focused research questions (Weddle, 1974, 1982). Over-arching social changes in the 1980s and 1990s brought issues of human rights and social responsibility to the forefront of landscape planning (Castells, 1992; Rodiek, 1992). The impacts of massive social and technological change were cause for reflection at the turn of the millennium (Rodiek, 2000) and sobered by the tragedies of September 11, 2001 in the US (Rodiek, 2002) – both events brought new priority and urgency to the roles that our disciplinary and professional efforts must play in the planning and design of landscapes, particularly with respect to international relations, cultural diversity, and perceptions of security in urban environments. Today the major force of change on everyone's mind is climate, and as a number of the papers in this Special Issue attest, the journal community has a central role and responsibility to focus on such issues as ameliorating climate for human survival and comfort (Brown; Wong et al.) and planning and managing human and ecological communities that are resilient, sustainable, and less vulnerable to disturbance extremes (Ahern; Huang et al.; Seabrook et al.). How eagerly and thoughtfully we step up to these challenges will not only help to define the success of the journal in the years to come, but also the contributions we will make toward success of the biggest planning and design project of them all – civilization.

**2.2. Land use and human–ecological systems**

While landscape change has been the central societal theme guiding journal activity over the years, influencing future land use

has been the main objective of study. The early years of the journal defined landscape planning as a rural activity divorced from mention of urban land uses (Weddle, 1974). But the overwhelming influence of urbanization processes on landscape eventually brought *Landscape Planning* together in a merger with *Urban Ecology* (Weddle, 1986). This gain in coverage broadened ideas of ecology in the context of land use and helped solidify concepts of landscape as human–ecological systems. With continued theoretical advancements in landscape ecology and technological advancements in computer-aided systems for geographic analysis and visualization, the phenomenological description of landscapes has been largely supplanted by a focus on quantitative measurement and modeling. While much of this evolution is a mark of scientific progress, broader theories about the relationships between human and ecological systems have been overshadowed by models that conceive human interactions with the landscape vis-à-vis land use as negative impacts (Rodiek, 2010). Papers in this Special Issue rightly argue that measurement should continue to be a dominant focus of our research agenda (Brown; Brown and Corry; MacGregor-Fors) and that models of urbanization and landscape change and applications of visualization technology need continued improvement (Bishop, He et al., Lange, Li). But other papers stress that we also need to look for more holistic models of people–landscape interactions to guide our measurement. Kaplan and Kaplan, Nassauer, Musacchio, and Jorgensen each provide ideas for conceiving human interaction with ecological systems as a potentially positive force for landscape change, and to the extent that our research can be framed within such models, we might have a better chance to foster mutually beneficial relationships between people and landscape.

### 2.3. *Disciplinarity*

From the very start, this journal has recognized that the ability to address the interrelated issues of human and ecological systems requires talents that transcend any single discipline or profession (Weddle, 1974). But while the journal's current aims and scope stresses a “multi-disciplinary approach to analysis, planning, and design,” in some cases this is not sufficient. Frederick Steiner's essay on landscape ecological urbanism in this issue provides a compelling example for how a fusion of urban ecology with concepts of landscape urbanism can reveal new approaches to analysis, planning, and design, but it also shows the need for more integrated approaches to research. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are increasingly needed for the study of complex human and ecological systems. Such approaches are stressed by a number of other contributors in this issue (Ahern, Jim, Palang et al., Stuber et al., Swetnam and Reyers, Seabrook et al.), and the journal must be prepared to not only accommodate this disciplinary and methodological diversity, but to also encourage and advance it – both procedurally and substantively.

### 2.4. *Bridging science and practice*

Perhaps more than any other research journal focused on environmental planning and management, *Landscape and Urban Planning* professes a commitment to bridging research and practice. But the ability to link research and practice is much easier to profess than to accomplish, and as early as 1982 the journal's editor began looking for ways to make the increasingly research oriented content more relevant to practitioners (Weddle, 1982). While there are some exceptions, today most of the research papers the journal receives make little attempt to explain how or why their work matters to those engaged in landscape planning, design, or management. And while broader synthesis, critical, policy, and historical case studies fare better on the relevancy scale, few of these stud-

ies have been published over the years, and submissions of this type that I have received thus far for the most part have lacked the methodological rigor required to merit publication. In their essay for this Special Issue, Raoul Beunen and Paul Opdam outline a set of criteria for the production of useful scientific knowledge for planning and decision-making that has direct relevance for how we operate as a journal community, and additional offerings by Brown and Corry, Dramstad and Fjellstad, and Palang et al. are similarly insightful. Our responsibilities to reach practitioners notwithstanding, papers in this issue by Van Herzele and Van Woerkem and by Swetnam and Reyers also underscore the need to broaden the participatory aspect of our research activities to ensure access to diverse stakeholders and geographies.

### 3. **Matter, measurement, and meaning**

As outlined above and discussed in various ways by the contributors to this Special Issue, each of the elements mentioned in Jacobs's essay provide guidance with how we as a journal community ought to proceed as we enter our next 100 volumes of publication. But the main point of his essay is not so much on how we address the challenges of landscape change, land use, disciplinarity, and relevance to practice but rather on how we conceive the fundamental idea of landscape itself. Here Jacobs provides us the biggest challenge of all, to move beyond questions of landscape that ask: What is it? or: How can it be measured? and toward questions of: What does it mean? “Landscape embodies the memory of natural process and human endeavor; the expression of who we are and what we value; it provides critical support for what we wish to become and how we wish to live within nature.”

This is not to say that we no longer need to be concerned with questions about the matter or measurement of landscape, but rather that they are framed within this larger sense of purpose. In this way, our research can fruitfully inform societal concerns about landscape change, provide guidance to achieve mutually beneficial relationships between human and ecological systems, suggest strategies for research collaboration, and build productive bridges to practice.

### 4. **Moving forward**

These weighty ideals cannot be reasonably addressed within the course of months or even years, but must be looked about as part of a long-term guiding vision. Still, there are a number of short-term initiatives that this editorship can begin to work on. These include:

- incorporating a holistic definition of landscape to guide our mission;
- revising the journal's aims and scope to incorporate conclusions about each of the journal's guiding elements as expressed above;
- expanding journal content and article types to foster ideas and dialogue about the meaning of landscape and our purpose and responsibilities to it as a journal community;
- exploiting current and emerging technologies to extend the journal's reach and communications capability, particularly with respect to multimedia enhancement of published articles and online supplementary content for use by educators, practitioners, and other audiences;
- developing the editorial structure of the journal to take fuller advantage of the multidisciplinary talents of its members and providing its participants with opportunities for learning and advancement.

It is with these small steps and others like them that this third editorship can contribute to the achievements begun under the

first two, and guide the journal and its community of board members, authors, reviewers and readers into the next 100 volumes of publication.

### Editor's note

To encourage broader exploration of the essays and the ideas they present, Elsevier has kindly made the entire contents of this Special Issue available for free online access during the first year of publication. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions, and correspondence sent to the editor will be summarized and shared with the editorial board and publisher to help guide future development of the journal.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to our Special Issue reviewers who have done much to improve the conceptual clarity of the essays: William W. Budd, Silvia Calvo-Iglesias, Lindsay K. Campbell, Daniel E. Campbell, Philippe Clergeau, Tenley M. Conway, Peter del Tredici, Courtney G. Flint, Ann Forsyth, Robert Freestone, Adrienne Grêt-Regamey, Hubert Gulinck, Eric J. Gustafson, Dagmar Haase, Per Hedfors, Richard J. Hobbs, Jack D. Kartez, Kelly M. Ksiazek, Sanda Lenzholzer, Dylan Lewis, Tzu-Ping Lin, Petra Lindemann-Matthies, Melinda S. Merrick, Allegra Mount, Laura R. Musacchio, Cho Nam Ng, Charles H. Nilon, Kyushik Oh, Halil Özgüner, James F. Palmer, Stephen R.J. Sheppard,

Elisabete A. Silva, Adrian Southern, Erika S. Svendsen, Joost M. Vervoort, Stephen M. Wheeler, Donald M. Yow, Anita Zarina.

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Available online 5 March 2011