

needed because FEMA couldn't care less about environmental damage.

—Michael L. Ham
Matthews Township Planning Board Member
Matthews, North Carolina

Correction

A sharp-eyed reader has noted an error in the caption on page 45 of our August/September issue. It should read this way: Blue tape on the door of Palmetto Hammock in Charleston, South Carolina, indicates where the sea level may be in 2100.

Letters may be edited before publication.
Address them to Sylvia Lewis, Planning's Editor and
Publisher, American Planning Association,
205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601;
email: slewis@planning.org.

PLANNERS LIBRARY

Bicycles paved the way

With the help of Internet search engines and a Kickstarter campaign, travel writer and editor Carlton Reid has produced a book whose title is its thesis: *Roads Were Not Built for Cars: How Cyclists Were the First to Push for Good Roads & Became the Pioneers of Motoring* (2015; Island Press; 331 pp.; \$30 paper, \$29.99 ebook). Drawing equally from UK and U.S. sources, he aims to resurrect a forgotten chapter of history. More than a century ago, bicyclists, Good Roads advocates, inventors, and motorists were often the same people.

The book is thick with apt and convincing quotations from the late 1800s and early 1900s, "when the bicycle morphed from the vehicle of rich transport progressives in the 1890s to 'poor man's transport' in the 1930s." The book includes a time line and a detailed list of automotive brands with bicycle roots.

Reid makes his case in 15 chapters that cover the important roles bicyclists played in powering the good-roads movement, the creation of durable pavement, the development of key pieces of technology necessary first to bicycles and then to cars. He proposes that earlier working "road engines" failed to catch on in Britain during the 1830s and 1860s because there was not yet a "large pool of people who had travelled long distances without recourse

to rails" (i.e., bicyclists). He draws deftly on Timothy R. Nicholson's three-volume history of the British motorcar up to 1897 while acknowledging that Nicholson disagrees with his conclusion.

As a generalist, Reid is well placed to take a variety of approaches to this issue, from lobbying and journalism to gears and pavement. In one chapter he catalogues all the parts of motoring technology that had roots in bicycle (or even sewing machine) technology, from ball bearings to tubing—not to mention a scattered, not-quite-network of long-forgotten "cycleways" connecting Albany and Schenectady, Los Angeles and Pasadena, Brooklyn and Coney Island.

This is a ground-clearing book. Nothing in it, however, speaks directly to current policy and planning issues. Bicycles

and cars once shared prominent personnel, technology, and (most importantly) the road. That does not forecast how they will or should do so in the future; that choice will depend on present-day non-Victorian concerns, and on the relative political power of the two modes. But knowing their fascinatingly intertwined history should at least do away with the aura of automotive inevitability.

Zoning and inequality

Dartmouth economist William J. Fischel revisits a meaty subject in *Zoning Rules! The Economics of Land Use Regulation* (2015; Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; 416 pp.; \$30 paper, \$12.99 Kindle). This book revises and expands his thinking in earlier books, including *The Economics of Zoning Laws* (1985) and *The Homevoter*



Motorists are often credited for the improvements made to roads in the early 1900s, but the Good Roads movement started with cyclists in the late 1800s.

Hypothesis (2001).

In Fischel's view, the triumph of zoning in the early 20th century and the brief vogue of growth management in the late 20th century were not triumphs of scientific planning. Instead, he argues that zoning became nearly universal in a short time because of grassroots movements by home owners to protect themselves from unpredictable and uncontrollable incursions of undesirable land uses or undesirable neighbors. Home owners needed protection because most of their wealth was tied up in a single immovable undiversifiable asset, and because the advent of trucks and buses in the early 20th century enabled industries and people of the "wrong" class or color to move anywhere. In the late 20th century, inflation increased home owners' stake in their single asset, and civil rights laws increased a perceived threat to that asset. So growth management policies like large-lot and open-space zoning provided "seemingly neutral" protections.

Fischel presents an ingenious piece of evidence in favor of this unconventional "bottom-up" theory about zoning. Planners wanted nonconforming uses obliterated, but from the home owners' point of view those uses were already there; they just wanted to say "no more." Planners lost that battle, implying that they were not the engine of change, but the caboose.

Fischel also elaborates on a 2013 study making a case that "zoning is not simply retarding the mobility of the poor from central city to suburbs," but that it also raises housing prices, making it increasingly difficult for people to move into more prosperous areas, what he calls "America's intranational tradition of moving to opportunity." He adduces data showing that housing prices are much more uneven from one urban region to another than they were half a century ago.

'The housing subsidy is most likely the major political basis for excessive land use regulation.'

Right or wrong, Fischel's remedies are unlikely to sweep the nation as zoning did. His proposals involve "reducing the federal tax subsidies to owner-occupied housing"—not merely reducing or eliminating the mortgage interest tax deduction but treating housing "like any other investment" for tax purposes as well. "The housing subsidy is most likely the major political basis for excessive land use regulation," he concludes, adding with perhaps undue optimism, "bringing the inflated owner-occupied housing sector down to earth would moderate the NIMBY syndrome."

He also calls into question the wisdom of perpetual conservation easements where urban development is possible, calling them "the worst form of suburban exclusion, in that they push development to remote areas and increase inefficient sprawl." Unlike many economics tomes, this one will not put you to sleep.



Community Visioning Programs: Processes and Outcomes
2015; Routledge; 137 pp.; \$51.95.

University) present eight case studies of community visioning programs in Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin, Oregon, New Hampshire, Ohio, Kansas, and Massachusetts. Most are in small towns or rural areas; the last is set in the old mill town of Lawrence. The book was originally published as a special issue of *Community Development* in 2010.

Although there is general agreement on the need for community preparation, for training opportunities, and for engaging "as many population segments in the community as possible," the contributions suggest that community visioning draws on many different theories and is evaluated in different ways. The University of

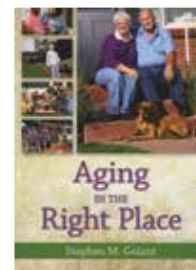
Community visioning theory

In *Community Visioning Programs: Processes and Outcomes*, 16 contributors including editors Normal Walzer (Northern Illinois University) and Gisele F. Hamm (Western Illinois

Minnesota uses a tripartite circular "social capital model" of bridging, linking, and bonding networks. (Robert Putnam's "bowling alone" thesis is much in evidence here.) Ohio State has an octagonal matrix of value/institution categories from 1958 that includes unions under "power" and business under "wealth/poverty"; Wisconsin and Montana diagram various sequences of steps in the process.

The Montana case study keeps close to the ground and enumerates specific actions taken in 15 small towns. In New Hampshire, where the visioning program is called "Community Profiles," intangible benefits were ranked high in an email survey with a 19 percent response rate representing only 21 of the 44 communities involved. Observers and participants suspected that "individuals who participated in the process over two years ago may not recall the process or the various committees' objectives." In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the program seems to have grown out of traditional Alinsky-style community organizing rather than academic or extension-service work.

Readers will find a variety of theories and approaches from which to draw for both the visioning process and its evaluation; those looking for a coherent synthesis of this popular technique can look to the editors' promised follow-up volume.



Aging in the Right Place
2015; Health Professions Press; 406 pp.; \$54.99.

Planning for old age

Gerontologist Stephen M. Golant (University of Florida [Gainesville]) speaks out against what he calls the "aging in place groupthink" in *Aging in the Right Place*. He promotes

a different approach, seeking "residential normalcy," defined as "places where [older people] experience overall pleasurable, hassle-free, and memorable feelings that have relevance to them; and where they feel both competent and in control." Options in addition to aging in place include