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Fall 2019

Green Infrastructure

**Neponset River
Greenway Named
A Great Public
Space**

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On the cover: The Harvest River Bridge, crossing the Neponset River
 (Credit: Jessica Mink, Masspaths.net)



From the President

Hello APA-MA Members!

Brrrr, it's getting cold out there, but we are staying warm with all the activity these past two months! Here's a recap of what's happened and what to look forward to:

Planner's Therapy Sessions are in full effect. Our Planner's Therapy events are really gaining traction! We have been to Somerville, Boston, Springfield and Lexington, and each one was filled with laughter and great networking. Thanks so much to everyone who is coming out. What's on tap next, you ask? We are going to picking these up again regularly on the 4th Thursday of every month in and around Boston and Western Massachusetts! Please check our website (www.apa-ma.org) and LinkedIn Page for more details. See you there!

Thanks to our Board members! As we round out 2019, we are going to be saying farewell to several APA-MA Board members. Many thanks to these dedicated volunteers for your ideas, time and energy: Christi Apicella, Ted Harvey, Barry Keppard, Steve Sadwick, Laura Wiener, Erin Wortman, and Darlene Wynne. Best of luck to each of you!

Have you seen the new APA-MA Website? Our new website is LIVE! Check out the new look and feel, including the return of a calendar of events so you can keep track of all the professional and social opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. Visit us at www.apa-ma.org and keep following our progress as we continue to launch new pages to serve our members.

SNEAPA 2019 was a huge success. We had nearly 700 people in attendance in Springfield for SNEAPA 2019 on October 19th and 20th. This year we had great sessions, an amazing venue for the reception, and a great vendor Hall. Thank you to the Conference Organizers for all the great work you did to bring us another successful SNEAPA Conference. We look forward to seeing everyone in Providence for SNEAPA 2020.

APA is coming to Boston in 2021! Did you know that the National APA Conference is coming to Boston in 2021? It is and we have a great group of people jumpstarting planning for this premiere conference. If you are interested in joining the Boston 2021 Conference Committee, please contact our Host Committee Chair, Scott Turner at: scottturner100@gmail.com.

We hope you were able to attend our annual Awards and Holiday Luncheon on December 13 on the Tufts University Campus. We will feature the award winners in the next edition of *Massachusetts Planning*.

Happy Holidays!

Angie

Angela Cleveland, AICP
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Tri-Community Greenway Now Open

by Erin Wortman, Town of Stoneham

The Tri-Community Greenway, connecting the Greater Boston communities of Stoneham, Winchester, and Woburn, is officially open as a multi-use trail for walkers, joggers, bikers, commuters, and more. The 6.63 mile multi-use trail has different qualities through the three communities with a 45-foot-wide linear park in Stoneham, a connection of local streets and parks through Winchester, and an essential link to recreational land at Horn Pond in Woburn. All sections share the vision for connecting the towns, providing valuable recreational land in perpetuity for residents, and providing economic opportunities for the business community along the trail.



The project was first envisioned in the 1980s following the Town of Stoneham's acquisition of the abandoned Stoneham Branch railroad line from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and has been in active development over the past ten years. Each community's section of the Greenway has unique characteristics and scenic vistas with natural and man-made points of interest. The trail kicks off at the Wedgemere MBTA station in Winchester and runs parallel to the commuter rail line, eventually joining the Aberjona River greenway and crossing into Woburn. Through an old railroad tunnel, the trail passes under I-93 into Stoneham, where it runs through a 45-foot wide linear park, ending near the town's Recreation Park at Gould Street. Rest stops throughout provide respite and opportunities for picnics.

Although the trail was first wished-for nearly 40 years ago, the history of the land runs much deeper than that. In the early and mid 1800s, there were limited

options to move people and goods between communities. In order to move the freight initially, a series of canals were constructed but as the textile industry grew in Lowell and along the Merrimack River, a more modern means of transporting goods was required. In 1845, the Boston and Lowell Railroad opened to transport both freight and passengers. Additional spur lines were added over time including the Stoneham Branch in 1862 which created connections to Stoneham's many shoe factories and provided passenger service to and from the town.

The Boston and Lowell railroad later became the Boston and Maine railroad. As the interstate highway system including I-93 and Route 128 were built in the 1950s and 1960s, public transportation and railways gave way to vehicular traffic. Passenger service on the Stoneham Branch line ceased in 1958 and the land eventually reverted back to the MBTA, which still runs the original Boston and Lowell routes as the Lowell line of the MBTA commuter rail.

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The Tri-Community Greenway has always been a collaborative effort; many individuals and groups contributed their time and talent along the way.

Tri-Community Greenway *cont'd*

The Town of Stoneham acquired the Stoneham brand line land from the MBTA in the early 1980s under the provision that the land be devoted to public recreational use. In 1999, Stoneham, Winchester and Woburn came together and signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate the design and construction of the fittingly named Tri-Community Greenway and Bikeway. The project design took more than a decade as numerous challenges were faced and eventually mitigated. The design was finalized in late 2016 and the project was put out to bid. Construction began in 2017 and the region celebrated its opening in summer 2019.

The Tri-Community Greenway has always been a collaborative effort; many individuals and groups contributed their time and talent along the way. The three communities have worked thoughtfully and in partnership with the Department of Transportation, path designer Stantec, and path development by Northern Construction. The \$5 million Massachusetts Department project used a combination of federal and state funds for its design and construction.



— Erin Wortman is Director of Planning & Community Development for the Town of Stoneham. She can be reached at ewortman@stoneham-ma.gov.

Community members and elected officials celebrated the grand opening of the Tri-Community Greenway at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in June.



APA Names Neponset River Greenway Phase Two a Great Public Space

The Mattapan neighborhood in Boston once was a bustling and thriving community, with railroads and streetcars that made the neighborhood easily accessible to downtown. But in the 1960s and 1970s, real estate developers used block-busting to drive down property values in pursuit of quick profits. Redlining exacerbated the problem, and soon the more affluent, mostly white residents fled the community for the suburbs.

This period of white flight led to the loss of the businesses and civic investment that help a neighborhood thrive. The neighborhood is now predominantly African American and Caribbean American, and its commercial districts have been in decline for decades.

The Neponset River Greenway was first envisioned in a 1998 plan and developed further with a second phase in 2006. By 2016, the final portion of the greenway to be completed was a 1.3-mile stretch connecting the struggling

Mattapan neighborhood and the Town of Milton across the river, linked by the Harvest River Bridge. The segment would improve mobility options, connect Mattapan residents with the river, and include features like a Canopy Walk, multiple footbridges, and a dramatic boardwalk. This portion of the greenway would complete a continuous 4.5-mile riverfront path from the mouth of the river at Dorchester Bay to the Blue Hills.

However, communities on both sides of the river expressed concerns about this portion of the project during

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On the second day this Greenway section was open, a gentleman crossed the canopy bridge on his motorized wheelchair. It's not just a bike path; it truly is a people path. This trail makes the river accessible for families in Mattapan and other adjacent communities, many that had no idea there was a river behind those trees. Those of us from the many communities along the river who spent years helping to create the Neponset River Greenway have become friends with people that we never would have known before.

— Maria Lyons, Jessica Mink, Vivian Ortiz, and Lee Toma, members of the Neponset River Greenway Council



The Harvest River Bridge, named for the Neponset River's historic role as a bountiful fishery, restores the relationship between residents and the river, uncovering previously hidden views and providing a gathering and meeting place for local residents. Photo by Anton Grassl.

Scenes from the Neponset River Greenway

Photo: Anton Grassl



The interplay of constructed and vegetated landscape contributes to the unique character of the Neponset River Greenway. Below: Local stakeholders and champions accept the designation of the greenway as a Great Space by the APA Great Places in America Program.

Photos: Jessica Mink, masspdlis.net



Photo: Angela Cleveland



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the public input process carried out by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Some residents in the affluent Town of Milton opposed increased access to their community from what they perceived as a less safe neighborhood on the other side. Mattapan residents feared their community would bear the brunt of the construction and demolition activities.

Greenway organizers conducted extensive outreach to the communities, including small neighborhood meetings and larger public forums. Community organizations like Boston Natural Areas Network, Bike Milton, and Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition helped drum up support for the project. This long-term communication and solicitation of community input eased residents' concerns and steadily increased support for the project, which opened to the public in 2017.

Today, the extension of the Neponset Greenway between Mattapan and Central Avenue is a popular space used by both communities for walking, biking, and other activities. The Neponset River Greenway now plays an integral role in the transformation of an industrial river corridor, previously hidden from view, into a publicly accessible network of trails and open spaces that links the southernmost neighborhoods of Boston to Boston Harbor.



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Learning From Requests for Ideas (RFIs)

Jennifer Burney, Director of Planning and Land Use, Lincoln MA

Many communities struggle with wondering what type of development or use could be feasible as part of its revitalization efforts for a particular part of town or vacant/underutilized lots or property. Would the development community even be interested? Many communities have pie in the sky ideas that often are not even feasible. So why not ask the development community directly!?

A creative way to seek feedback from the development community is to put out a Request for Information or Ideas (RFI). Communities provide information about the property as well as provide a wish list. Communities should be a little vague in its wish list to allow for creativity. However, it is important to require that concept ideas must also be feasible.

I spoke to many communities who have conducted RFIs and stated that the process has been very beneficial; great ideas have come out of the process, ideas that many communities never even considered. And many concept ideas went on to become actual projects.

Communities I spoke with suggested the following considerations when putting out an RFI:

- 1) When creating a wish list do not be so specific that it stifles creativity.
- 2) Make sure you state that the RFI is non-binding.
- 3) Require that concepts must be feasible and not pie-in-the-sky ideas.

When crafting the RFI, information about the property information is given, such as a parcel map, lot size, zoning and any constraints, as well as a wish list and must-haves. A property(s) can be municipally owned or include privately held land. If a community would like to include private holdings they could consider inviting businesses and property owners to a visioning/charrette for the area. Then the property owners can be asked if they would like to be included as part of the RFI/RPI process to find out the potential their property would have for development/redevelopment. Or a community could reach out

directly to private owners to see if they would like to participate.

What's great about this process is that there is no commitment on the town's part, property owner, or the developer. It is also a great way to solicit information without the town having to spend large amounts of money to have a study done.

Below is a sampling of communities that took this approach.

■ Mercer Island, Washington

The goal was to include construction of commuter parking, public open spaces, and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity between the project site and other amenities in town (town center and transit), outdoor art, art and cultural event space, work force housing, and condos. The City issued a RFQ soliciting concept ideas (design competition) to see what could be feasible on the site and received nine proposals. The City selected five semifinalists. In the end the City issued a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) to two firms and asked them to work together as they both brought great ideas to the table. The MOU is a conceptual deal structure for future purchase and sale agreement.

Affordable housing, parking garage, arts event space and retail space will be constructed.

To learn more and view the proposals visit [the project website](#).

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When crafting the RFI, information about the property information is given, such as a parcel map, lot size, zoning and any constraints, as well as a wish list and must-haves.

■ Wellesley, MA

The Board of Selectmen issued a Request for Responses to develop municipal commuter parking lots for parking which would be offered as a ground lease to a developer as well as development of affordable and market rate housing.

The Town received six responses:

- 1) Commuter and retail parking spaces, parking structures, mixed-income rental housing
- 2) Mixed-income rental housing with a boutique hotel and parking
- 3) Residential, retail, and parking
- 4) Mixed-use rental with community spaces, public playground, small plaza, improved green spaces, and MBTA commuter lot improvements



- 5) Multifamily rental project with parking and amenities, public parking garage and improved MBTA access points and ADA improvements
- 6) Mixed-income residential that includes high-end condo units, mixed income rental, 10,000 SF art space, and parking (*this concept won the award*)


Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/uand9v2>




■ Andover, MA

The Town issued a Request for Information (RFI) for adaptive reuse on nine town-owned parcels including a DPW site and abandoned right of way totaling four acres and a 1.16-acre commuter parking lot with 150 existing parking spaces owned by the MBTA. The request was for redevelopment for creation of a Transit-Oriented Development adjacent to the commuter lot. The MBTA

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would partner with the development by allowing for the replacement of commuter parking that would enhance ridership, expand revenue and enhance ridership. The MBTA would enter into a lease agreement with the developer.

Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/tzbf3v>

Draft RFP: <https://tinyurl.com/qu4ecma>

Project Presentation: <https://tinyurl.com/vn5qrkz>

Project Page: <https://tinyurl.com/upcatyb>

■ Acton, MA

Acton put out a Request for Interest (RFI) on a town-owned property. The town acquired the 4.67-acre parcel after litigation following an application denial for a 20,000-SF daycare center. A committee worked with a landscape designer to come up with concept ideas for the space and then held a public forum for the community (40 attendees) to vote on the best five scenarios:

- 1) As of Right Zoning—7 single-family homes (0 votes)
- 2) Cottage-style multi-family with open space (10.5 votes)
- 3) Town houses and retail/café (1 vote)
- 4) Boutique historical inn with restaurant, gardens and event space for weddings in a barn (15 votes and 7 split)



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Perspective rendering for Main Street study for Acton Housing Authority.



Properties and views adjacent to the Andover Commuter Rail Station.

- 5) Retail nursery, garden center, market and café and spray pool for kids (11 votes and 7 split)

After the public forum, the Town sought and received a technical assistance grant from MassDevelopment for a feasibility study for a boutique hotel/restaurant. The Acton Housing Authority commissioned a feasibility study for the creation of affordable housing on the property. After the results of these studies were known, the RFI was issued. The RFI requested a thoughtful reuse of the property that reflected what the community desired as well as design sensitive to the fact that the property was a gateway into Acton. The RFI also stated that the concepts submitted “cannot just be an idea but an implementable idea that is fiscally, environmentally, and socially sustainable.” The Town received four proposals:

- 1) Acton Dog Park
- 2) Acton Housing Authority (AHA)—31 elderly and elderly disabled units (contract awarded to AHA)
- 3) 16 single-family homes (1,650-2,400 SF in size)
- 4) 22 single-family homes

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The Town found the process extremely helpful and liked the AHA proposal best; Town Meeting voted to transfer property to Acton Housing Authority for 31 units of senior/affordable housing.

Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/thjpfve>

■ Newton, MA — Austin Street

Newton put out a Request for Interest (RFI) for a municipal parking lot consisting of 1.7 acres with 159 spaces. Developers were asked to refer to draft zoning and provide suggestions on the zoning. The proposal stated that concepts should accommodate existing parking spaces, no less than 18 units of mixed income rental



Rendering of Austin Street project, Newton.

with affordable units that would count on the SHI, live work spaces, business uses, outdoor gathering spaces and pedestrian connectivity.

A project is now under construction as a public/private partnership that will consist of 68 one- and two-bedroom units, 5,000 SF retail space and 120 public parking spaces.

Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/tpeol5x>

■ Somerville, MA

Somerville is in the process of issuing a Request for Information (RFI) for three sites, including two former churches (a 5,380-SF church and a 10,966-SF church) and a 1.11-acre vacant property.




The RFI requests concepts for a community innovation center but left the language slightly vague per the town to allow the developer to be creative. Suggestions by the town include:

- 1) Cultural and artistic uses
- 2) Educational uses
- 3) Manufacturing and design use
- 4) Co-working and incubator spaces
- 5) Research and office space

Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/r7tvojd>

—Jennifer Burney is the Director of Planning and Land Use in Lincoln, MA. She can be reached at burneyj@lincolntown.org.

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Tunnel Vision

The Massachusetts Chapter of APA Transportation Committee and the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) Infrastructure Knowledge Community co-sponsored a special two-part event which explored tunnel infrastructure on the evening of October 23, 2019.

Part one of the event was a tour of an abandoned MBTA tunnel below City Hall Plaza. Guided by City of Boston Archaeologist, Joe Bagley, approximately 80 planners, architects, and engineers had an opportunity to learn about and explore a usually inaccessible tunnel segment that once connected Scollay Square Station to Adams Square Station. This tunnel segment was constructed in the late 1890s and decommissioned in the early 1960s when construction began at Government Center.

Part two of the event explored tunneling technologies and infrastructure considerations with Eden Almog-Goldreich, Leader of Geotechnics and Tunneling in Montréal at Arup. Eden gave an exceptional presentation that debunked common misconceptions in tunneling and reflected on his experiences with notable tunnel projects around the globe. Attendees left the presentation with a deeper appreciation and understanding about the complexities and challenges pertaining to tunnel projects.

Many thanks to both committees who worked together to plan this successful event!



Eden Almog-Goldreich, Leader of Geotechnics and Tunneling in Montréal at Arup, presenting on tunneling technologies.



Joe Bagley, City of Boston Archaeologist, leading the way to the abandoned MBTA tunnel.



Exploring the Abandoned MBTA Tunnel.

Photos: Alison Felix and Katie Lamoureux, APA-MA Transportation Committee

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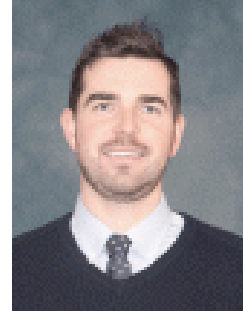
Planner Spotlight: Ted Harvey

Interview by Allan Hodges



CURRENT TITLE: Senior Planner/Manager of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Springfield, MA

BACKGROUND: Ted Harvey has a BA in archaeology and religion and an MA in Medieval History. "I have always been interested in history," he said, which originally steered him toward academia. However, idealism won out, and Ted attended UMass Amherst for a Master's in Public Administration with the goal of working in the public sector and bringing about positive change. He developed an interest in housing and community development and went to work for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), where he focused primarily on Community Development Block Grant projects. Ted lives in Easthampton with his wife, three kids, and a puppy.



Although you don't have a planning education background, what drew you to the planning profession?

I came by it accidentally and my enjoyment of planning has grown over time. During my graduate studies at the UMass Amherst School of Public Policy, I took a course on housing and community development and realized this was the path I really wanted to be on. I wasn't sure what planning was at the time. My internship at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) was my first real introduction to the planning world. I enjoyed the combination of idealism and practicality that was necessary to get things done. I also found many similarities between what I learned in the public administration program and planning.

Why did you choose to work in a regional planning agency?

It was somewhat of an accident. I received an internship at the FRCOG in Greenfield which turned into a full-time position. I liked the fact that a planning agency allows you to do many different things. I also enjoy working in an office that has multiple departments with people doing different things. Regional planning agencies really promote an exchange of ideas, which I find invigorating.

What important skills did you learn in your education in political science that you use in the planning job you have now? Or, did you have to learn new skills on the job (especially in a planning agency as diverse as the PVPC agenda)?

The biggest thing I learned from graduate school, and I think this is similar to planning programs, is how to work with people, especially residents. This is obviously a huge part of our job as planners and continues to be an ongoing learning process. That being said, there were plenty of things I had to learn on the job that I did not know, or knew at a cursory level. But I think this is true of anyone coming out of graduate school. There is this idea after leaving school that you know everything you need to know about the field, but really it is just the beginning of your learning.

What was your biggest disappointment on the job and why? What would make it a better experience for you professionally?

I don't know if I would qualify it as a disappointment, but something that has been frustrating (and something I know planners run into all the time) is the slow pace at which things get done. I remember working on developing a regional animal shelter in Franklin County and finding plans from 25 years earlier that were never able to get off the ground! On the flip side, this slow paces makes it more rewarding when you are able to get something tangible done.

What is your major accomplishment that you are most proud?

Actually getting a regional animal shelter established in Franklin County was a pretty big accomplishment. I also have been proud of the continued funding I have been able to help get in Community Development Block Grants for the small communities in the Pioneer Valley. Without these funds, there would be no way projects like housing rehabilitation for low-income families, neighborhood infrastructure projects, and social services like domestic violence prevention, would move forward. These are small communities with small budgets, and the needs can be very great.

In your opinion how has the MGM Grand Casino in Springfield helped the City and region?

So far I think it has been generally positive. As one piece of Springfield's economic revitalization, it has been great. We will see what happens down the road.

Has the improvement to AMTRAK passenger rail service really helped the Pioneer Valley planning area. If so, how?

I think so. On a practical level it provides a much needed service in the area. Ridership continues to go up, which is great. On a larger, macro level, its successes, and just the fact that rail service is now available, shows people that

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The PDO Corner

by Darlene Wynne, AICP, APA-MA Professional Development Officer

Welcome to the “PDO Corner” where I’ll share information related to earning your AICP and meeting your Certification Maintenance requirements.

Change of Command

This will be my last newsletter entry as your Professional Development Officer. I’ve enjoyed working the last four+ years to help our members earn their AICP, to help members maintain their AICP by earning Certification Maintenance (CM) credits, coordinating with the many partners in our state to provide CM credits to our members, supporting Massachusetts’ four accredited universities as they seek renewal of their accreditation, and working with APA National on its professional development initiatives.

Please warmly welcome your new PDO, Amanda Chisholm!

With the CM Reporting Period deadline of 12/31/19 fast approaching, below are some ideas on how to fulfill your CM requirements:

- Read the APA-MA Chapter’s twice monthly events email — many of the events we include provide CM credits.
- Explore [APA Learn](#), APA’s NEW online education platform. Available courses include: [planning law](#), [ethics](#), and [climate change](#), among others.
- Visit APA’s [CM Search](#) to find CM credit training opportunities near you. Search the “Filter” tab by date, state, event type, and provider.

- APA’s [Interact](#) also includes upcoming and nearby events that offer CM credit opportunities.
- Check for upcoming live webinars offered through the [Planning Webcast Series](#). CM credits can be claimed by looking up the sponsoring Chapter or Division as provider. You must watch the webinar to claim credits.

If you’re short on Law or Ethics, check the Distance Education tab on the above link to find on-demand credit for both!

- Find a listing of [free trainings](#) offering CM credits through Distance Education. Opportunities are added as they become available, so check back frequently for the most current information.
- Use the [self-reporting](#) tool that enables members to record up to eight credits within each two-year reporting period for activities that meet CM criteria but aren’t registered by a provider. Click on the “Add Self-reported credits” button located on your [CM Log](#). Other options for earning CM credits outside traditional learning sessions include: “[authoring](#),” and “[pro bono service](#)” which includes mentoring (a benefit added in 2017).

Remember to close out and certify your credits earned for the two-year reporting period in your [CM Log](#).

— Darlene Wynne, AICP can be reached at dwynne@beverlyma.gov.

Planner Spotlight *cont’d*

there are other very viable transportation options. From a planning perspective, this is very important.

The Massachusetts Chapter of APA has about 1,000 members, most located in the heavily populated eastern half of the state. What message to you have for them from a western planning agency’s perspective?

It is great to be a part of an active organization like the Massachusetts chapter of APA, no matter what part of the Commonwealth you live in. Among other things, membership gives you the opportunity to engage with other planners and learn what they are doing, the problems they are facing, and the solutions they are developing. I think it is easy to get stuck in a myopic view of planning (or any field). There are also numerous things that are being done in the planning field in western Massachusetts that I think need to be highlighted (rail transportation, regional bike share program, cleanup of

the Connecticut River, among others). There are some great models of municipal collaboration in this area. I also think there tends to be an “us vs. them” mentality between the western part of the state and the eastern—and it goes both ways. Again, this goes beyond planning, but I think there is an opportunity in the planning world to bridge these gaps since there really is a lot of overlap between the regions. As someone who has spent their planning career in regional planning agencies, you can really start to see that the boundaries we put up (municipal, county, region, etc.) are often just used for convenience or tradition rather than being useful or meaningful.

— Interviewer Allan Hodges retired in 2014 following a 50-year career in planning, the last 34 years of which were with Parsons Brinckerhoff (now WSP) as Director of Planning in urban planning and environmental impact analysis.

Long-Term Visionary Planning Has Paid Off (in France)

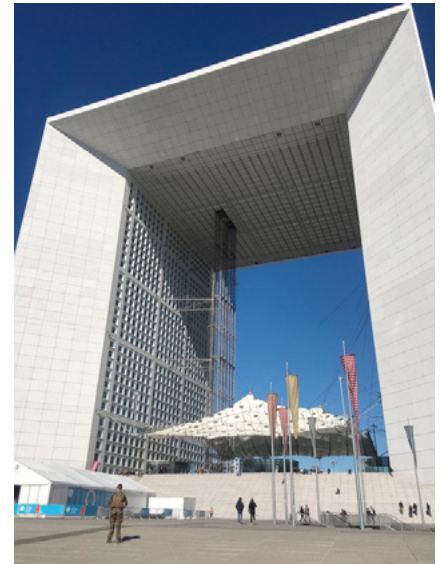
by Allan Hodges

Paris (population 2.2M, metro 12.2M) found a way to preserve its urban landscape while allowing growth. Bordeaux has redeveloped its Garonne River bank with multi-uses that have transformed the city. Toulouse, a medieval city, has created riverbank structures designed for pleasure and flood control. These projects don't happen overnight. They require vision, planning and delivery.

In Paris, in 1973, the 59-story (689 feet) Tour Montparnasse was constructed atop a large railway station. The height stunned Parisians who complained that "it was out of place with the Paris urban landscape." Two years later, Paris banned buildings over seven stories high. Nearly at the same time, in 1969, the national government and three cities designated a large area outside and west

of Paris city limits for primarily office development. The designated place, called La Defense, is now the largest business district in Europe. La Defense has absorbed the market demand

for office space for multinational firms desiring French headquarters. La Defense covers 395 acres, has a resident population of over 20,000 and contains millions of square feet of office, hotel, exhibition, housing and retail space. Most of the office buildings are of futuristic design reaching 80-stories or more (planned construction will top 1,000 feet high). Most of these buildings center on a huge public landscaped plaza dominated by the Grande Arche (larger than the Arc de Triumph), creating the western terminus of the famous Paris "Grand Axis," which stretches eastward to the Louvre Museum. La Defense's skyline is easily visible from under the Arc de Triumph and the Avenue des Champs Elysees.



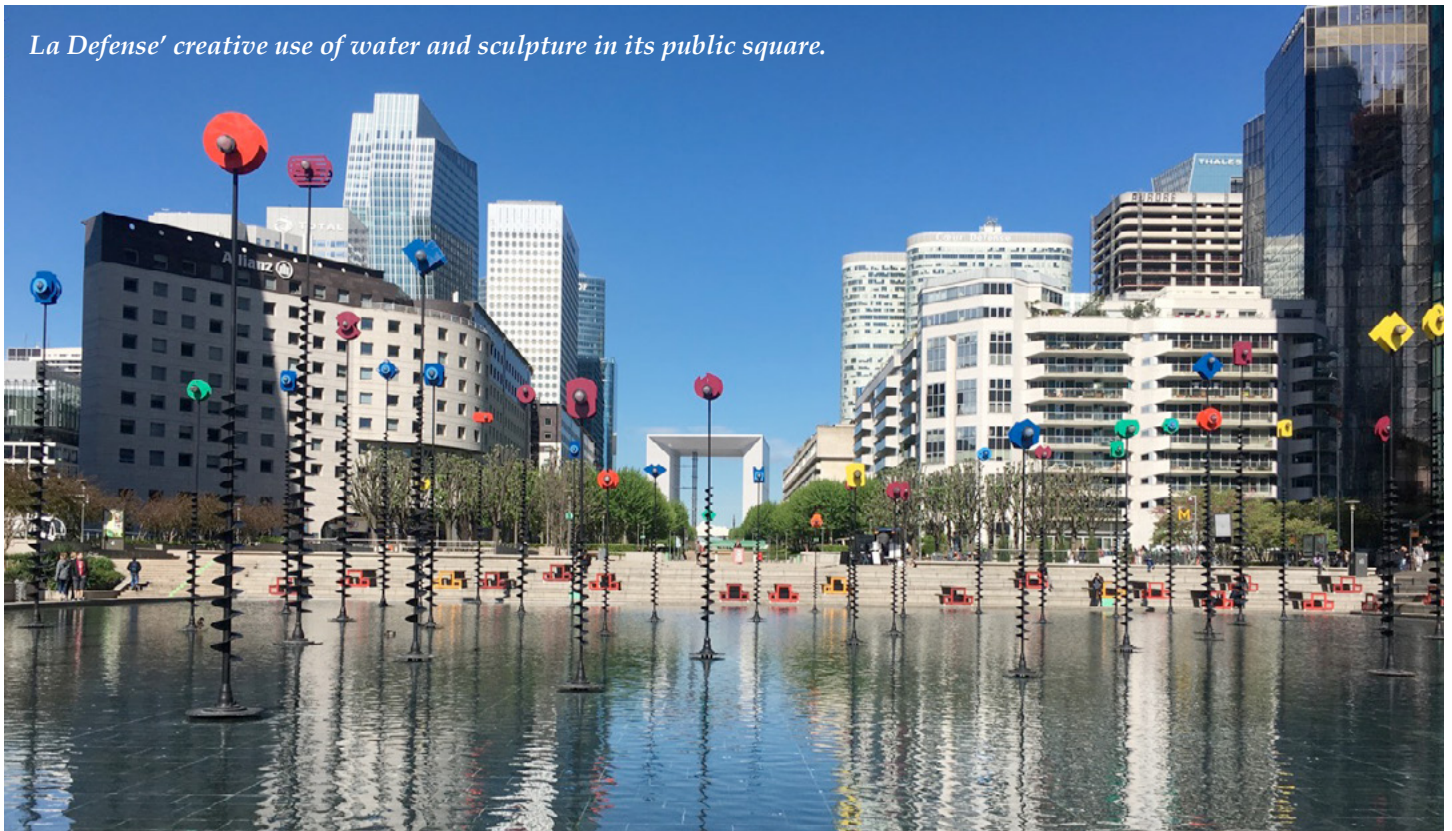
The Grande Arche at La Defense. It is 364 feet high!



La Defense striking architecture for international headquarters.

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La Defense' creative use of water and sculpture in its public square.





Towering Bascule Bridge over the Garonne River in Bordeaux

France *cont'd*

Nonetheless, the city planning concept of concentrating this insatiable market demand for office space away from historic Paris worked. Paris's famous urban landscape has been preserved.

Bordeaux (population 232,000, metro 1.1M), better known for its excellent wines, has been ridding itself from its "Sleeping Beauty" reputation by creating a renovated and lively city center that spreads dramatically along the wide bank of a graceful curve of the Garonne River. The city was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007. Historically, elegant buildings were constructed on high land away from the gently sloping riverbank. Eventually, the riverbank had been filled and secured by a bulkhead to create new land above the flood level. This new open space has since been redeveloped into a long esplanade with walkways, skate parks, cafes and shops in renovated warehouse buildings, a stunning reflecting pool in front of Place de la Bourse (a beautiful ensemble of classic buildings), a new street car line (Metro), bike path, a roadway and docking space for water taxis and cruise ships.

At the north end of the Bordeaux Esplanade sits the new Cite de Vin, a spectacular piece of contemporary architecture that houses a museum devoted to wine. The innovative museum includes high tech audio visual displays

of the history of wine worldwide, and the important Bordeaux appellation. A wine tasting room and gourmet restaurant with river views on top combine with the museum

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Flood Control structure with pedestrian walkway above in Toulouse.

to become the city's premier tourist attraction. Nearby is a monumental bascule bridge (completed in 2012) over the Garonne River with four stunning towers reaching 231 feet in height. The bridge and Cite de Vin combine to make a spectacular north gateway to the city.

Toulouse (population 433,000, metro 1.2M) has tamed the destructive force of Garonne River flooding with new riverbank structures that serve both as flood gates and new pedestrian pathways on top and paved riverbank esplanades. Also, the city has developed an all-electric driverless underground Metro system to relieve vehicular traffic on its tangle of narrow medieval streets above. La Ville Rose, so called because terra cotta brick buildings, also has a large pedestrianized city center. In sharp contrast to its historic urban scale is the sprawling aerospace industrial complex to the south of the city (AirBus), a major economic generator for this southern metropolis.

These grand projects and capital improvements have required long-term vision, implementation oriented planning and perseverance. The results are worth the wait.

— Allan Hodges, FAICP retired in 2014 following a 50-year career in planning, the last 34 years of which were with Parsons Brinckerhoff (now WSP) as Director of Planning in urban planning and environmental impact analysis.



Fun sign in Bordeaux!