The Pandemic's Impact on Planning: Foresight Into the Future

October 19, 2020

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American Planning Association
Poll 1.3:
What do you feel when you think about the future?

• I'm motivated and energized because I see lots of good things on the horizon.
• I think I'm prepared for what’s to come.
• I don't have specific feelings about the future.
• I'm apprehensive and feel challenged by uncertainty.
• I'm pessimistic about the future.
The future is more unknowable than ever before

- The only constant is change
- COVID-19 has turned cities and communities up-side-down
- COVID-19 has changed the way planners do their work
- Temporary fix vs. permanent solution?
- Is COVID-19 a rehearsal for what’s to come?
"Planners compose and offer advice on preparing for an uncertain future."


"Planners help communities navigate change."

Tim Keane, Planning Director, City of Atlanta
(Big City Planning Directors Institute, 2019)
## The APA Foresight Approach in times of COVID-19

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| **Cities & Communities**    | IDed current planning-related pain points in communities (e.g., public space issue, ...) and acted  
- Formed COVID-19 Solutions Team  
- Shared knowledge and solutions with members on a weekly basis | ID how COVID-19 will change communities and how people live, work, play, learn, and move around over the next months and prepare planners  
**Temporary fix versus permanent change?** | ID how COVID-19 will impact communities long-term and share knowledge with planners |
| **The Planning Profession** | IDed current planning process-related pain points and acted (e.g., virtual public meetings, etc., ...)  
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## The APA Foresight Approach in times of COVID-19

### Act = Emergency Response

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Emergency Response
Poll 2.1: What changes have impacted you the most over the last several months?

- Changes to role and responsibilities and environment
- Health and safety concerns
- Restrictions to in-person contact
- Consistent uncertainty
- Other
Challenges
Inputs

MEMBER CHALLENGES

CONDITIONS UPDATES

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
COVID-19 Resources

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is having a significant impact on communities, and planners are on the front lines of response and recovery. APA is committed to providing resources, information, and tools to address your immediate needs and help you prepare for what is to come.

Learn more about how we are using the practice of foresight to "learn with the future," prepare for uncertainty, and help planners navigate this disruptive change.

Turn to APA for trusted, timely, and useful resources, updated weekly.
Social Equity

• National conversation on racial equity, disproportionate impacts of COVID-19
• Planners' commitment to equitable communities
• Gather information on response, planner's role in addressing needs
• Develop content demonstrating action
Distribution of Population vs. COVID-19 Deaths by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin*

Distribution of COVID-19 Deaths

- Non-Hispanic White: 52.8%
- Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 17.2%
- Hispanic or Latino: 22.9%
- Non-Hispanic Other Race(s): 7.1%

Distribution of Population

- Non-Hispanic White: 60.4%
- Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 18.3%
- Hispanic or Latino: 12.5%
- Non-Hispanic Other Race(s): 8.8%

* As reported by counties with at least 100 COVID-19 deaths through July 15, 2020

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Provisional COVID-19 Deaths by County and Race
Preparing for COVID-19
Recovery in Seattle

Connect with Leaders
Prepare
Watch & Learn
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5 Trend Categories

- Societal Trends
- Technological Trends
- Economic Trends
- Environmental Trends
- Political Trends

Cities / Communities
Planning Profession
Trends & Disruptors

- Existing trends that will continue and may get to a point of disruption in the future (e.g., aging population, growing diversity in U.S. population)

- **Existing trends that got disrupted or accelerated by covid-19**

- New trends where we (or others) see potential impacts or disruption in the future (e.g., AI and the use of digital twins in planning, autonomous vehicles)

- **Potential new trends resulting from current disruptor covid-19**
The Digitalization of Life

For artists, the show must go on—and Zoom is their venue

Stuck at home amid the pandemic, creative people are finding new ways to use videoconferencing software that once was confined to the home office.

“Tens of millions of Americans do not have access to or cannot afford quality internet service.”

Brookings, 2020
Live-Work-Play in One Place

“75% of adults who can work remotely say they would like to do so at least 1-2 days a week once the pandemic is under control.”

Morning Consult

Over 50% of department stores in malls predicted to close by 2021, real estate services firm says


“28% of adults who can work remotely would be likely to move to a new place if their work became remote indefinitely.”

Morning Consult
How to flatten the curve(s)?

• Social inequalities
• Climate change
• Economic downturn
Planning for Recovery

• Elevating the voice of planners – essential workers
• Prioritize Equity – Hindsight | Insight | Foresight
• Upskilling Planners – Strategically develop guidance to navigate the future

There is no “normal” anymore.
Equitable, sustainable, and resilient cities and communities should be the “new normal”.

The Future of Planning

Future Literacy and Strategic Foresight
Design Thinking and Agility
People-centric and technologically-advanced

Diverse Teams
Fact-based and Inclusive
Systems Thinking and Scenario Planning
Questions?

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Stay up to date with APA:
planning.org
planning.org/resources/covid-19/