

THE WAGNER PLANNER

Newsletter of the NYU Wagner Urban Planning Student Association

Sept/Oct 2003

Open Space and the Environment



Washington Square Park Panorama
Photo by Joel Dabu

highlights | lowlights

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Your monthly dose of planning jargon.
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What Planners Mean When
They Say..."**

Spreading the Word About Rooftop Greening *Elevated Gardens Transform the Concrete Skyline*

*By Jennifer Coady
First Year M.U.P.*

You can see rooftop gardens all over the city: small vegetable gardens, a few trees, or some flower boxes. Individual efforts like these provide an oasis from the pollution and drabness of the city for their owners. However, like street trees, small efforts such as a small vegetable garden can have a larger impact on the wider urban habitat.

As the benefits of rooftop gardens become more apparent, cities around the world are looking to change this concept into a device to transform the negative environmental aspects of cities. "Rooftop greening" is the concept of combating the numerous problems associated with paving, concrete, and roofing materials. Among the benefits of rooftop greening are the curbing of the heat island effect, reducing energy costs for building owners, improvements in building durability and cleansing of the air.

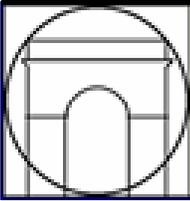
The benefits of rooftop greening are so numerous that some cities have begun requiring building owners to incorporate one into any renovation or new construction projects. Imposing this kind of regulation can have a potentially transformative effect on the environment—improving everyone's quality of life. In addition, the cost of developing green rooftops would be offset by attracting tenants with the amenity of having a private green space right at their fingertips. Imagine if all the big box stores, strip malls, new apartment complexes and similar harsh aspects of the American landscape included a rooftop park amenity. More cities could impose rooftop greening regulations and transform the city's buildings into lush green spaces.

Adding rooftop gardens to buildings would undoubtedly transform the urban paradigm in many positive ways. However, requiring a rooftop garden is a very costly idea, one

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Urban Planning Anytime at: <http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/urban.planning>

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu



UPSA: Your Planning Student Organization

THE WAGNER PLANNER

The Wagner Planner is edited by Joel Dabu and produced by the Newsletter and Communications Committee of the Urban Planning Student Association (UPSA). *The Wagner Planner* is published monthly and distributed to all students and faculty of the Master of Urban Planning (MUP) program via Adobe PDF electronic format. All MUP students are invited to submit material to *The Wagner Planner*. Interested writers and contributors should contact Joel Dabu at jmd328@nyu.edu.

Thanks to this month's principal contributors:

Jennifer Coady, Cheryl Huber, Vaidila Kungys and Meredith Phillips.

The 411 Column: Info at Your Fingertips

Mitchell Moss
Director, MUP Program
UPSA Faculty Advisor
Mitchell.moss@nyu.edu

Beverly Warner
MUP Program Administrator
Beverly.warner@nyu.edu

General Urban Planning Info:

- American Planning Assn. (APA)
National Organization
www.planning.org

- APA New York Chapter
www.nyplanning.org

- Planetizen Planning and
Development Network
www.planetizen.com

- NYC Dept. of City Planning
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/home.html>

Specialization Professors:

- Economic Development and Housing Policy

Ingrid Gould Ellen

Ingrid.ellen@nyu.edu

Michael Schill

Michael.schill@nyu.edu

Walter Stafford

Walter.stafford@nyu.edu

- Environment Transportation and Infrastructure

Rae Zimmerman

Rae.zimmerman@nyu.edu

- International Development and Planning

Paul Smoke

Paul.smoke@nyu.edu

NYUWagner Urban Planning Student Association (UPSA)

2003/2004 Executive Board

Perry Chen pmc240@nyu.edu

Joel Dabu jmd328@nyu.edu

Jen Jensen jqj4529@nyu.edu

Becky Koepnick rak253@nyu.edu

Meredith Phillips mlp275@nyu.edu

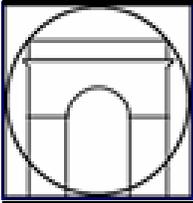
Daniel Turley dt429@nyu.edu

The Urban Planning Student Association (UPSA) is the representative body of the students of the Master of Urban Planning program at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service of New York University. A student organization under the umbrella of the Wagner Student Association (WSA), UPSA is administered by a six member executive board that oversees the activities of its four committees; Activities Committee,

Eyes and Ears, Newsletter and Communications, and Fundraising and Development. UPSA Board Members are elected in the Spring semester for the following academic school year. All NYUWagner students are invited to participate and get involved in UPSA's programs and events. UPSA is also supported by Todd Rufo the M.U.P. program Graduate Assistant and Professor Mitchell Moss, the UPSA faculty advisor. WP

ARE YOU CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY? JOIN the **HOTplanner** LISTSERVE TODAY!

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu



September : Open Space and the Environment

WP Reference Desk - So That You're In The Know

By Meredith Phillips
Second Year M.U.P.

Sustainable Development:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Brundtland Report: World Commission on Environment & Development). To see how others have defined the term - including Teddy Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson - visit ... http://www.ecy.wa.gov/sustainability/more_defns.htm.

Green Building:

The use of design and construction techniques based upon energy efficiency, water efficiency, indoor air quality and the use of products that have a positive impact on the environment. A broader definition incorporates the following 6 elements: (1) Land planning and design techniques that preserve the natural environment and minimize disturbance of the land; (2) Site development to reduce erosion, minimize paved surfaces and runoff and protect vegetation, especially trees; (3) Water conservation indoors and outdoors; (4) Energy efficiency in heating/cooling systems, appliances, lighting and the building envelope; (5) Selection of materials based on recyclability, durability and the amount of energy used to create the material (6) Waste reduction, reuse and recycling during construction and throughout the life of the home. (National Association of Home Builders www.nahb.org)

On the web...

Project for Public Spaces www.pps.org. Parks, plazas, civic design, public markets, transit and livable communities. Nominate your favorite public place to their Great Public Space/Hall of Shame lists!

Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance.

www.waterwire.net/ The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance works through education, grassroots organizing and media advocacy to include the public's voice and

values in the decision-making that will determine the future of our region's waterfront and waterways.

Neighborhood Open Space Coalition

www.treebranch.com New York City's Internet Portal to Environmental and Urban Quality-of-Life Issues. NOSC enhances, improves, preserves, educates on, and advocates for all kinds of public spaces throughout the city.

Check out the **Wagner Environment, Policy & Action (WEPA)** website to find out more about these issues and for a list of environmental courses offered at Wagner. <http://www.nyu.edu/clubs/wepa>.

A must read...

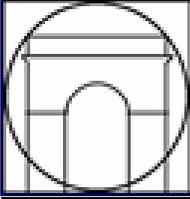
Silent Spring by Rachel Carson (1962) Rarely does a single book alter the course of history, but Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* did exactly that. The outcry that followed its publication in 1962 forced the government to ban DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson's book was instrumental in launching the environmental planning movement. Introduction by Al Gore. (synopsis from Planetizen)

On video...

Blue Vinyl, Directors: Daniel B. Gold, Judith Helfand. When Judith Helfand's parents clad their Long Island home in blue vinyl, Judith is suspicious. She figures that "any material loaded with synthetic chemicals had to pose some kind of risk" so she sets off to trace the life cycle of vinyl. Her search begins in Lake Charles, Louisiana, a manufacturing center for PVC, the key ingredient in vinyl. Helfand introduces us to a lawyer who has been gathering evidence of a conspiracy to conceal the potential dangers involved in the manufacturing process. Judith then embarks on a search to find an environmentally sustainable, low risk, cost efficient cladding as an alternative to vinyl. SCARY! (thanks to Cary Hirschstein, Todd Rufo, Nick Molinari, and Jennifer Jensen for their contributions.) WP

TO JOIN **HOTplanner**, SEND AN EMAIL TO MLP275@NYU.EDU

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu



PLANNERPALOOZA 2003 - FACES AND PLACES

Photos by Joel Dabu and Todd Rufo

Plannerpalooza Bonds NYU Planners into a Community

By Joel Dabu
Second Year M.U.P.

The end of September brings to a close the first annual Plannerpalooza, a month-long series of events sponsored by UPSA designed to welcome new and old NYUWagner urban planners back to school. Plannerpalooza included a diverse menu of events designed to orient students to academic life at NYUWagner and to the world of urban planning in New York City. Among the events that took place during Plannerpalooza were: a field trip to Governor's Island in New York Harbor, a brownbag presentation by Olivia

Stinson from *Friends of the Highline*, the first monthly Urban Issues Discussion Forum, a Community Service Clean-up of Washington Square Park cosponsored by WEPA, the Environmental Careers Panel Discussion cosponsored by WEPA and the NYU Office of Career Services and of course, the requisite HOTplanner socials and receptions. Judging by the attendance at the various events, it appears as if Plannerpalooza has succeeded in helping to knit together the Wagner Planning Department into a cohesive community. WP



▲ "Welcome Back Planner"



▲ "Welcome Back Planner" ▼



▲ "Welcome Back Planner"



▲ "First Brown Bag event"



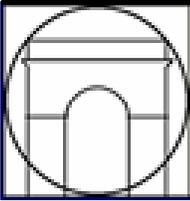
▲ "First UPSA Happy Hour"



▲ Olivia Stinson of *Friends of the High Line* at the "First Brown Bag event"



▲ Professors Michael Schill and Ingrid Ellen at "Coffee Talk Specialization Session"



PLANNERPALOOZA 2003 - FACES AND PLACES

Photos by Joel Dabu and Todd Rufo



▲ The planners of ALAS at the Wagner Club Fair



▲ The UPSA table at the Wagner Club Fair ▼



▲ The UPSA Board Members at the Wagner Club Fair



▲ UPSA Field Trip to Governor's Island



▲ UPSA Members Clean-up Washington Square Park



▼ UPSA Field Trip to Governor's Island ▲

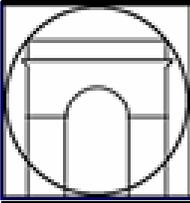


▲ UPSA Members Clean-up Washington Square Park ▲ ▼



▲ "Environmental Careers Panel Discussion"





PLANNERPALOOZA 2003 - FACES AND PLACES

(Continued from page 1)

that could impede development.

Implementing a green rooftop involves many upfront costs and additional construction elements such as: new waterproof structures, sufficient drainage and watering systems, and artificial light soils. In addition water and maintenance costs would initially increase operational costs of a building on which a green rooftop is installed. These factors would make regulations requiring the addition of greening elements a potential inhibitor of development.

To encourage the greening of buildings, builders need to be encouraged with incentives rather than regulation. Tax incentive programs would be more



Rooftop Garden Atop Chicago City Hall
Image from the Conservation Design Forum

likely to encourage developers to incorporate these greening technologies and cut costs. These tax incentive programs are currently used to encourage development of socially beneficial construction such as new affordable housing. Similar incentive programs for greening buildings should also be an easy sell with support from the development community and the pub-

lic alike.

Hopefully, over time the public and the development community will see the enormous advantages of green rooftops and help to transform our cities' concrete skylines into true urban jungles. WP

The WP Profiles Nicole Dooskin: Planning With an Eco-Conscience

By Cheryl Huber
First Year M.U.P.

New Jersey native Nicole Dooskin became interested in environmental planning and policy during her undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. As a Resource Ecology and Management major, Nicole's most memorable classes were the labs where she explored Ann Arbor's woodlands and discovered why the trees and plants grew where they did. At the University of Michigan, Nicole was an active member of the Rainforest Action Network.

When Nicole moved to San Francisco after college, she found a job protecting and preserving land at the American Land Conservancy. Projects included protecting coastal properties, urban green space, old-growth forests, historic landmarks and generations-old farms. The non-profit built public/private coalitions, lobbied for funds and drafted conservation easements to guard these sensitive areas from development.

Outside of work, Nicole became active in several

groups dedicated to environmental causes. She was a certified gardening and composting educator for the San Francisco League of Urban Gardens, and she led backpacking trips for the University of California, San Francisco's Outdoors Unlimited program.



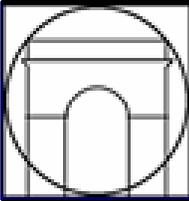
While living in San Francisco, Nicole found a great appreciation for the cityscape. "San Francisco is a great blend of urban and non-urban; surrounded by the ocean, the Bay, redwood forests and mountains... Moving to New York City, you realize how precious space is, and why it is important to use it wisely," she said. Through her work and her participation in the Bay Area Open Space Council, Nicole became interested in protecting land in higher-density areas and made

the decision to study urban planning.

Once she earns her Master's at Wagner, Nicole hopes to be involved in innovative projects that will foster smart growth, limit sprawl and give urban residents better access to areas of public green space. WP

YOU MUST JOIN **HOT**planner

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu



Looking Ahead: October is “Nuts and Bolts” Month

- **Thurs 10.9.03 | 6-7:30pm**
726 Broadway, 5th Floor, rm. 542
Meet With Representatives from the Academy of Urban Planning—A New Visions High School in Bushwick

RSVP: mlp275@nyu.edu

The Academy of Urban Planning, a new public charter high school that opened this fall, promotes student achievement through the discipline of urban planning. The school’s curriculum includes project-based learning, public presentations, lessons on consensus building, study skills, internships and college prep. Come find out about opportunities to get involved—be a mentor, lead a walking tour, develop a workshop, create a semester-long project! Help build a long-term relationship between Wagner HOTplanners and the Academy of Urban Planning. BRING IDEAS. Refreshments will be provided.

- **Thurs 10.16.03 | 6:30-8pm**
4WSN Commons Room
Speaker Series: Nicole Poindexter

RSVP: ttr203@nyu.edu

Senior Policy Advisor and Director for Empowerment Zones in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding.

- **Sat 10.25.03**
Location—TBA
Make Yourself Marketable: Professional Skills Development Workshop

An Urban Planning professional will lead a workshop to help you put that knowledge and those skills to the test. More details to come via HOTplanner.

What is “Nuts and Bolts” Month?

October will feature events that investigate the nuts and bolts of urban planning: Zoning and Land Use Regulation. *It’s not as boring as it sounds!*

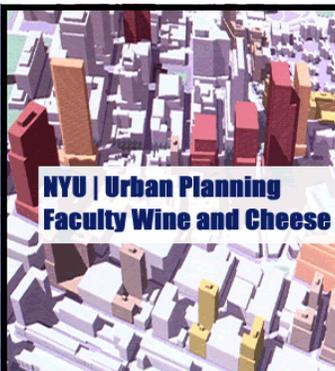
- **Fri 10.10.03 | 6-7:30pm**
La Lanterna di Vittorio
Urban Issues Discussion Group

RSVP: jmd328@nyu.edu

Meet fellow HOTplanners at La Lanterna di Vittorio (129 MacDougal St, btwn 3rd and 4th) for informal and lively discussion about urban planning theories and practice related to zoning and land use regulation. Reading will be distributed via email.

RSVP to jmd328@nyu.edu.

O C T O B E R						
Nuts & Bolts Month						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

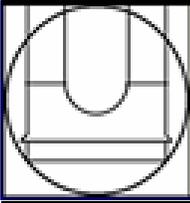


- **Friday 10.17.03 | 5-8pm**
914 Kimmel
NYU Urban Planning Faculty Wine and Cheese

RSVP: wagner.events@nyu.edu

Join the administration, faculty and fellow students and alumni of the Urban Planning Department in welcoming a new class of urban planners at the annual Faculty Wine and Cheese reception on Friday, October 17, from 5-8pm in room 914 Kimmel. For more info, email Todd Rufo at ttr203@nyu.edu.

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu



under **CONSTRUCTION**: planning for the masses

Urban PlanningSpeak 101: What Planners Mean When They Say...

*Written by Neil O'Byrne
submitted by Vaidila Kungys
First-year M.U.P.*

The Planner Said...	The Planner Meant...	And the Developer thinks...
"I like it."	<i>I like it.</i>	They like it.
"Well done!"	<i>Well done!</i>	We're done!
"I wish more projects had this feel."	<i>"I wish more projects had this feel."</i>	They like it so much maybe they'll give us more.
"Lets review this"	<i>I don't like it.</i>	It's taken their breath away!
"Does this meet the regulations?"	<i>Can we kill it through technicalities?</i>	We're OK, it meets the regulations...I think
"Well...?"	<i>We don't like it, do we?</i>	They have some minor questions.
"What do you think?"	<i>You don't like it either, do you?</i>	We're in trouble, they're thinking.
"I have some concerns."	<i>I don't like it.</i>	Well, Planners are only one vote!
"It's... too..."	<i>I don't think I could ever like it.</i>	Maybe we overdid the gargoyles.
"Is the applicant here?"	<i>Can we talk, or do we have to be diplomatic?</i>	No! After spending all of this energy, to say nothing or a King's ransom in fees, the applicant has decided to go to the racetrack where the odds are better.
"Have you tried...?"	<i>This doesn't work.</i>	There's not enough in the budget to do it once, let alone twice.
"Let's look at the landscape plan."	<i>Maybe we can just hide it.</i>	There goes the landscape budget!
"That's an... 'interesting' approach."	<i>What planet did this come from?</i>	They like it.
"Lets get other staff involved."	<i>Maybe the other staff can tell you what we've been unable to communicate.</i>	Who do they think got us into this mess? There goes another month.
"It's too...er...googie."	<i>There's no way I can teach them what's good design, so I'll get technical.</i>	He doesn't like the gargoyles.
"Yes, we've heard the argument that planners breed design mediocrity."	<i>We'd be happy if this was even mediocre.</i>	They know we're going to blame this "camel" on them.

UPSA Wants YOU. Get Off Your Bum...Join a Committee...Get Involved

Send questions or comments to Joel Dabu | jmd328@nyu.edu