Editorial

Antônio Nelson Rodrigues da Silva PhD

Associate Professor, University of São Paulo – USP, São Carlos School of Engineering – Department of Transportation Engineering, São Paulo, Brazil

The two briefings and four papers in this issue feature many distinct aspects of planning practice and research. Readers can find interesting connections among the papers presented, as I will demonstrate below.

Psychological aspects are present in the briefing written by Childs (2014), which discusses three ways in which evidence is used in urban design and related fields. The author's statement 'each of these uses of evidence can improve the design of the built environment', has a direct connection with the later paper by Harvey *et al.* (2014).

The next briefing deals with public transport. Burley and Baev (2014) summarize the initiatives conducted by a consortium of consultants for the implementation of two major public transport projects in the Bulgarian cities of Burgas and Plovdiv. The focus in both cases is essentially on the same objectives, that is, increasing the attractiveness of public transport, prioritising environmentally friendly modes of transport, reducing traffic congestion and emissions, and improving transport safety. All such objectives shall be achieved by a determined use of new technologies for operation, management and fare collection, and the upgrading and replacement of obsolete infrastructures.

The first three papers in this issue by Hossain and Rahman (2014), Hewitt *et al.* (2014) and Harvey *et al.* (2014) address very different, but important challenges to the planning profession.

The first is related to an essential aspect, which is the clear definition of basic elements of planning. This is discussed by Hossain and Rahman (2014) in a study that questions the validity of the municipal definition criteria contained in the Bangladeshi Municipal Ordinance 1977 (Paurashava Ordinance, 1977) and Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009 (2009). Among the 18 municipalities analysed in the study, only one had met all the criteria found in the Municipal Ordinance 1977. Furthermore, two municipalities were established without having met any of the declaration criteria. In other words, inadequate criteria may result in an ambiguous classification, which affects all subsequent planning efforts. Based on these results, the authors suggest that the municipal definition criteria should be reviewed so that other factors, such as health, education, transportation and communication, income and expenditure could be included.

The second challenge is discussed in Hewitt *et al.*'s (2014) paper, which deals with planning activity after a natural disaster (in this case, Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Mississippi–Alabama Gulf Coast, USA). According to the authors, the management of post-disaster recovery may provide interesting opportunities for planners, given that many parts of urban areas have to be rebuilt from scratch. Conversely, time becomes a crucial component of recovery planning, since fast and precise action is required. The study carefully examines the steps of the process in New Orleans and shows the impacts on the different groups involved, including the planning profession. The situation is certainly not usual, but unfortunately no longer rare. We should learn from this example to be prepared for future events, which may take place anywhere.

The third paper deals with a topic also essential to planning. Harvey *et al.* (2014) examine the role of some psychological factors in the adoption of urban plans and sustainability policies. They discuss examples found in the literature and case studies to explain the reluctance of some people to engage in sustainable behaviour. The paper highlights some important issues and recommendations on how to encourage responsibility, motivate people and communicate consistently and responsively. The role of governmental action and legislation, and of engineers and planners is also discussed.

The paper by Harvey *et al.* (2014) is also connected with the study by Hakkaart and Morrissey (2014), which discusses policy challenges for transit-oriented development (TOD) by analysing the case of Wellington, New Zealand. Although the authors acknowledge the fact that TOD represents a challenge to planners, developers and private enterprises, they do not limit their discussion to the barriers for TOD. Opportunities for the application of TOD principles in car-dependent cities are also identified. An important point raised by the authors is the need to involve the private sector in TOD initiatives through an associated public–private business model, which may be managed by an organization formed specifically with this purpose.

Finally, the issue is closed by a book review of the report *Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility*, recently released by UN-Habitat (Rodrigues da Silva, 2014). Once again, there are evident connections with Hakkaart and Morrissey's (2014) paper and the briefing by Burley and Baev (2014), given that they deal with transport planning issues. Moreover, also

worth reading in such a context is the study of Harvey *et al.* (2014), since among the biggest challenges of sustainable mobility planning are undoubtedly the psychological barriers that hamper the implementation of some of the required changes.

REFERENCES

- Burley R and Baev I (2014) Briefing: Two new EU-funded public transport projects in Bulgaria. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 148–150, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.13.00035>.
- Childs MC (2014) Briefing: Urban design evidence. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 145–147, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.14.00003>.
- Hakkaart A and Morrissey JE (2014) Policy challenges for transit-oriented development. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 175–184, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.13.00026>.
- Harvey J, Heidrich O and Cairns K (2014) Psychological factors to motivate sustainable behaviours. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 165–174, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.14.00001>.
- Hewitt J, Wilkinson S and Potangaroa R (2014) Change and continuity in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 156–164, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.13.00017>.
- Hossain R and Rahman S (2014) Municipal status in accordance with declaration criteria. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 151–155, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.13.00025>.
- Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009 (2009) Ordinance No. 58 of 2009.
- Paurashava Ordinance (1977) Ordinance No. XXVI of 1977.
- Rodrigues da Silva AN (2014) Book review: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Urban Design and Planning* **167(4)**: 185, <http://dx.doi.org/udap.14.000009>.