

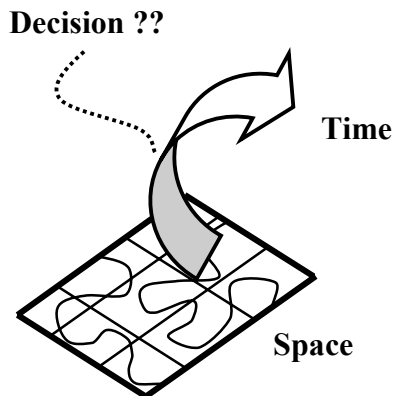
Has Planning Lost Its Relevance to the Future?

You Take **the Test**....

Many assume that planning is focused on building better futures – that its principal role is to manage change over time in order to achieve desired ends.

However, the majority of planning academics seem to say that planning is focused on decisions about spatial patterns of land use and environment. The time dimension attending these matters is not paid much attention. It is only incidental.

Can time be incidental in planning? Without deliberate focus on change and development over time, planning loses its ability to effectively intervene in ongoing processes that are making the future. Planners may lose their authority to comment on time trends or the future if they cannot command more authority about temporal processes than other professionals. Is the future really only incidental to planning?



The three fundamental dimensions of planning are inextricably linked: space, time, and decision. But have planners lost focus on time..... and thus lost sight of the future?

YOU TAKE THE TEST. Consider the **BEST** overall paper you have seen presented at the World Planning Schools Congress. Does that paper address all three of planning's fundamental dimensions, or only two, or only one?

Consider also the one paper you think best includes time in its narrative: How fully is time really addressed?

For both these papers – the best overall and the best that focuses on time – try to answer the following questions:

1. Does the paper emphasize urban changes that are under way or that are desired?
2. Does the paper offer a temporal analysis to support its argument, or is change only presumed?
3. Does the paper make any explicit effort to bridge from the **past** (when data were collected) to the **present** (when decisions are contemplated) and to the **future** (when results will unfold)?
4. Does the paper integrate differences of opinion on these temporal processes and future outcomes into discussion of the pending current decision?
5. Does the paper address time and the future with any greater expertise than a geographer or political scientist might command?

Please email your replies to Dowell Myers, University of Southern California, <dowell@usc.edu>. For publications expounding on time & future in planning, see <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~dowell/chartingourfuture.html>