Review

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In their edited book *Advancing Equity Planning Now*, Norman Krumholz and Kathryn Wertheim Hexter provide contemporary examples of equity planning. The book is divided into four sections. The first, "Local Equity Planning," includes three chapters. The second, "Regional Equity Planning," includes two chapters. The third, "National Equity Planning," includes four chapters. The fourth, "Looking to the Future," includes two chapters. These sections are followed by a concluding chapter by Krumholz and Wertheim that discusses the future of equity planning practice. Individually, the substantive chapters of the book provide readers with a broad view of equity planners' accomplishments, ongoing challenges, and the promise of this *modus operandi* in urban planning. Yet, when considering the chapters in their totality, readers are left with a more uncertain picture of the prospects for equity planning due to the changing structure of urban policy and governance systems in the modern era.

The chapters in the first section of the book discuss equity planning in the local context. This section includes chapters focusing on gentrification and displacement in Portland, Oregon, the evolution of Cleveland's community development system, and social entrepreneurship strategies used to "self-gentrify" the South Bronx. The most insightful chapter in this section of the book is authored by Lisa Bates. She chronicles how grassroots organizations advocated for more equitable neighborhood revitalization policies in Portland. Her discussion of these efforts revealed that although Portland is often lauded as a place where equity planning is embraced, it still remained difficult to prompt planners in local government to weave equity measures into local policies. Instead, the thrust of advocacy for equity planning came from outside, through practitioners embedded in the nonprofits sector and academics who worked closely with them. Unlike discussions of early experiments with equity planning in cities such as Cleveland where planners in city hall led efforts to empower low-income, minority communities, contemporary equity planners are more likely to bring demands to city hall from the outside organizations. Nonprofits, scholars, and advocacy organizations have become the driving force of advocacy planning, while city

halls are seen as increasingly entrenched and resistant to equity concerns. This emerged as a recurrent theme throughout the book and one that Krumholz and Hexter return to in their concluding chapter.

The chapters in the second section of the book discuss equity planning in the regional context. This section includes chapters focusing on the theoretical underpinnings of regional equity planning, and a case study of regional equity planning in metropolitan St. Louis. Both chapters are thought-provoking, but the first chapter in this section has broader implications. In this chapter, Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor develop a theoretical framework for regional equity planning. This framework expands the scope of equity planning to regional issues linked to housing, workforce development, transportation, education, the environment, and a litany of other policy realms. Benner and Pastor also explain how regional equity planning is much more dependent of advocacy emanating from "epistemic communities" which encompass networks of professionals, grassroots coalitions, and interests that function across sectors and levels of government. The takeaway from this section of the book is that inequity that manifests itself at the neighborhood level stems from sets of complex regional socio-economic arrangements. To address these problems, metropolitan-wide action is necessary. This point punctuates how city halls are ill-equipped to meaningfully address inequities without the infusion of leadership, expertise, and resources from regionally focused intermediaries, nonprofits, and advocacy organizations.

The chapters in the third section of the book discuss equity planning in the national context. This section includes chapters focusing on transportation policy, economic development, public housing, and aging. As a group, the chapters offer a potpourri of national policy frameworks from which to examine equity planning. However, these topics are not all-encompassing, and some core issues of concern to advocacy planners are absent, such as policy discussions of policing and criminal justice reform, environmental justice, primary education, and fair housing. Like the previous sections of the book, the overarching message is that while space for advocacy planning may be limited inside of city

halls, national networks of intermediaries, nonprofits, and policy advocates are found at the state and federal levels which promote equity planning goals. In particular, these epistemic communities find fertile ground inside of federal agencies which are focused on developing and implementing policies to improve conditions for their core constituencies. Unlike city governments that serve a more malleable and amorphous public interest, federal agencies often administer programs that target discrete constituencies whose needs align with equity planning. This nexus is exemplified in Patrick Costigan's chapter describing the genesis of the rental assistance demonstration (RAD) program. This program was designed to improve conditions for public housing residents, and advocacy inside the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) became a vehicle for a national network of equity planners to work out the details of the RAD program and plan for its implementation.

The chapters in the final section of the book discuss the future of equity planning. This section includes chapters focusing on the scope of equity planning in higher education curriculums and the application of tools such as public participation geographic information systems (PPGIS) to equity planning goals. Of the two chapters, the first identifies a number of challenges that remain in the academy for urban planning scholars. In this chapter, Kenneth Reardon and John Forester discuss the emergence of equity planning discourse in higher education and ongoing efforts to sustain it. Central to this chapter is the assertion that equity planning has become grounded in the core of urban planning curriculum. Although there is evidence to support this assertion, the scope and depth of equity planning in the discipline remains erratic across universities and in professional associations such as the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). Moreover, in flagship planning journals, equity planning remains peripheral and compartmentalized. Resulting tension between traditional planning and equity planning paradigms has caused some academics to retreat into disciplinary subfields such as community development and to publish in other disciplinary areas such as urban affairs, public administration, and

social work. As a consequence, much of the discourse about equity planning has found its way into urban planning from outside disciplines. This situation is analogous to the way advocacy for equity planning has increasingly found its way into city halls from outside organizations and groups. Reardon and Forester offer suggestions to strengthen equity planning's position in the discipline through curriculum enhancements related to ethnographic training, participatory action research and deeper engagement with inequality, race, ethnicity, and political economy in planning theory. In the end, Reardon's and Forester's discussion begs the question as to whether equity planning is properly placed in the planning discipline. Perhaps the time has come for equity planning to jettison the need to accommodate the reservations of traditional urban planners and evolve into its own distinct discipline.

In their concluding chapter, Krumholz and Hexter summarize the main points made by contributors to their edited book. They also highlight an irony central to contemporary equity planning. At the same time that calls for social justice in society have increased, equity planning has been pushed to the margins of planning practice in the internal discourse of city halls and possibly the planning academy. In the face of growing obstacles to equity planning, they urge practitioners and scholars to be persistent in their advocacy. Tenacity is needed since calls for social justice are increasingly salient, although the levers for change may be found in different places than they were in the past. They point to recent accomplishments at the regional and national levels facilitated by advocacy within epistemic communities made up of policy experts, academics, and networks of advocacy planners in intermediary, nonprofit, and grassroots organizations. Many of these equity planners self-selected out of planning positions inside of city halls to release themselves from institutionally imposed constraints to pursuing social change. Although advocacy planners increasingly encounter a suffocating environment for discourse about equity inside of city halls, it has become increasingly possible for them to have more profound, and positive, impacts on policy agendas and their implementation as this discourse proliferates elsewhere.