



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

Amy Minowitz

Will defend her thesis

A Method for Sustainability Appraisal of Visions

Abstract

Over the last 2 decades programs and mandates to encourage and foster sustainable urban development have arisen throughout the world, as cities have emerged as key opportunity sites for sustainable development due to the compactness and localization of services and resources (Newman & Jennings, 2008; Bai, 2008; Wheeler, 2000; Rees, 1996). In order to recognize this potential, scholars and practitioners have turned to the practice of visioning as a way to motivate actions and decision making toward a sustainable future. A “vision” is defined as desirable state in the future (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998) and scholars believe that the creation of a shared, motivational vision the best starting point to catalyze positive and sustainable change (Newman & Jennings, 2008). However, recent studies on city visions indicate that they do not offer substantive sustainability content (John, 2012), and we see that methods or processes to evaluate the sustainability content of the resulting vision (sustainability appraisal or assessment) are often absent from the visioning process. Thus, this paper explores methods for sustainability appraisal and their potential contributions to (and in) visioning. The goal is to uncover the elements of a robust sustainability appraisal and integrate them into the visioning process. We develop and propose an integrated sustainability appraisal procedure based on sustainability criteria, indicators, and targets as part of a visioning methodology and demonstrate the applicability of the appraisal method in a case study of visioning in Phoenix, Arizona. The proposed method allows for early and frequent consideration and evaluation of a vision’s sustainability throughout the visioning process and will result in more sustainability-oriented visions. Further, it can allow for better measurement and monitoring of progress towards sustainability goals, which can make the goals more tangible and lead to more accountability for making progress towards the development of more sustainable cities in the future.

Tuesday, November 12, 2013
12:00pm
Wrigley Hall, 401

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Arnim Wiek, Chair
Dr. Aaron Golub, Member
Dr. Deirdre Pfeiffer, Member