



Introduction to the 49th Congress

Frontiers of Planning: Evolving and Declining Model of Planning Practice

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ISOCARP's 49th World Planning Congress asks: What is effective planning practice at the global frontiers, whether planning for the local community, or mature metro, or mega-city, or vast urbanizing region? Authors and speakers will try to answer that question in our program on October 3-4 by assessing the lessons from the past, both successes and failures, and future practice at the new frontiers.

As noted in the Call for Papers, contemporary urbanization is different from past city development. Above all else we have now entered the urban millennium in which cities and city planning are critical to the majority of the world's now urbanized population. In this sense we have entered a "new world." The scale and speed of change challenge the traditional plans of governments in rapidly changing urban regions. The drivers of urbanization may still be what they have always been – agglomeration advantages, economic opportunity, more exciting lifestyles, and intensified interactions – but their impacts are now multiplied many times over.

While traditional physical planning and urban form and design are still critical for sustainable outcomes they may need new thinking and new styles of planning practice to be effective. Effective new styles of planning practice will build on past successes, if planners can find better ways of applying what they already know. Discovery and new approaches are needed as well. It's all about that new frontier, improving what we know and how we practice it.

This year's congress offers five concurrent tracks of papers that cover the topics posted in the Call for Papers, namely:

- Migration as the new face of change
- Valuing what already exists
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- International Planners Exchange
- Forum on Planning Education: Are we doing it right?

The tracks will include four sessions on October 3 and two morning sessions on October 4. Some tracks may run concurrent sessions due to the large volume of papers. The sessions will be hosted by co-chairs from an outstanding international congress team of ten members representing ten countries. The sessions will provide an opportunity to hear enlightening case studies and to engage colleagues about the new frontiers of planning. We have built in plenty of time for discussion and hopefully this will spur



dialogue between speakers and congress participants. This is the exciting part about ISOCARP congresses, learning from each other.

The congress team received over 270 abstracts, a record for ISOCARP congresses. The quality of the abstracts was quite good and the congress team had the difficult task of selecting ones to fit a program of 120 papers. Unfortunately many good abstracts were not accepted. In evaluating the abstracts, the team members rated them according to five criteria: problem definition and planning approach; methodology; relationship to congress themes; applicability to other projects and regions; and potential findings, outcomes, and lessons. The review was conducted in a “blind” fashion, whereby the authors’ names and affiliations were not revealed to the congress team. We believe this improved the quality of the proposals.

The 49th Congress also added a new activity to meet the needs of many of its members: Peer Review of Papers. This was ISOCARP’s first foray into peer review, and it was highly successful. The ten congress team members and six other volunteers participated in the peer-review process as members of a review panel. Similar to the abstracts, the papers were reviewed in a blind fashion. Each paper was evaluated by at least two members of the review panel and their comments were forwarded by the ISOCARP Directorate to their respective authors. Over 40 papers underwent peer review. They are noted in the program as having achieved this status.

Whether peer reviewed or not, this year’s program contains an exciting array of papers. Authors from 48 countries comprise a truly international program. Papers in the first track address the issue of migration and how seismic demographic changes have created new urban challenges. This track is co-chaired by Amos Brandeis of Israel and Njeri Cerere from Kenya. Track 2 papers describe how planners are increasingly being called upon manage change while protecting what is valuable, valued, culturally precious and essential to life. It is co-chaired by Silja Tillner of Austria and Belinda Yuen from Singapore. Papers in the third track address the complicated question of whether we are fully engaging the important stakeholders in our communities through effective engagement techniques and programs. This track is co-chaired by Warren Batts of our host country of Australia and Pietro Elisei of Italy/Romania.

Track 4 papers comprise the International Planners Exchange, which can address any relevant topic of city and regional planning and may include best practice cases, planning methods and strategies. This track is co-chaired by Agatino Rizzo of New Zealand and Stanley Yip from Hong Kong in China. Finally, Track 5 addresses planning education and seeks to determine whether planning education and certification programs need to be retooled. It is co-chaired by Saskia Spijkerman of The Netherlands and Griet Geerinck from Belgium.

Introductory reports for the five tracks are provided by the congress team members. We trust that our program will help elucidate the new frontiers of planning practice.

On behalf of the congress team, welcome to the 49th Congress.