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**Item title:** Planning sustainable cities and regions:  
Towards more equitable development, by Karen  
Chapple: : London, England, Routledge, 2015

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A Review of *Planning sustainable cities and regions: Towards more equitable development*, by Karen Chapple: London, England, Routledge, 2015.

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Karen Chapple, *Planning Sustainable Cities and Regions: Towards More Equitable Development*, (London: Routledge, 2015).

Rising income inequality, continuing racial disparities, and climate change are three of the most pressing current challenges. Policymakers are seeking ways to limit greenhouse gas emissions, reduce residential segregation by race and income, and increase access to opportunity, often all at once, through a variety of policies, from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (2010) and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule (2015) to California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (2008) to many cities' sustainable development plans.

Karen Chapple's new book, *Planning Sustainable Cities and Regions*, brings a much-needed, multifaceted perspective to urban sustainability that simultaneously considers the environment, the economy, and social equity. Unlike some discussions of sustainability that claim to take economic and equitable factors into consideration but really focus solely on the environment, Chapple foregrounds the lens of social equity in her evaluation of regional sustainability planning, economic development policies, and approaches to alleviating poverty.

Chapple convincingly argues that urban planners have to expand their toolkit as we experience significant changes in the nature of work, in transportation preferences, and in choices regarding housing and neighborhoods. She divides her analysis into three sections: one on neighborhood change, one on economic development, and one on social equity.

In Part I, Chapple focuses on the role planners can play in guiding neighborhood change in a context characterized by the increasing segregation of the affluent. She starts from a recognition that "the push for sustainability planning is occurring in a context of regional disparities and, without proactive policymaking, will exacerbate" those disparities (p. 158). Chapple then asks how planners can make places both more dense (thereby contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and stronger economic growth) and, simultaneously, more equitable. Acknowledging that income segregation is shaped by regional land use regulations and municipal fragmentation, Chapple suggests that "equity goals may be better served by shifting scale" to the promotion of diversity at the larger district or regional scale while allowing homogeneity at the smaller scale, such as the parcel or the block

Part II focuses on economic development, pointing out that investments in endogenous development are more valuable than a race to the bottom among cities competing with subsidies and tax-breaks to lure away already established businesses from other metropolitan areas. The endogenous development that arises from agglomeration economies, their knowledge spillovers, and their proximity to suppliers and markets can be supported through tools such as revolving loan funds or business incubators, among others. Chapple also advocates for policies such as industrial land trusts or regulations protecting industrial uses to protect manufacturing zones near the urban core in order to give small businesses the flexibility to expand. Recognizing that these policies limit higher-value uses despite market interest and thus have potentially negative effects

on the local tax base, Chapple suggests that protecting industrial uses nevertheless advances equity by supporting the growth of high-quality jobs that match the skills of local low-wage workers while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions by keeping jobs close to housing and thus limiting vehicle miles travelled.

Chapple addresses the changing dynamics of poverty in Part III. Challenging the idea that opportunities for low-income households are best obtained by supporting moves to the suburbs, she examines how planners can intervene to connect people to circumstances that allow them to thrive in the city, by improving access to employment and maintaining connections to support networks. Chapple argues that “the toolkit available to deconcentrate poverty is a set of dispersal strategies—public housing demolition, HOPE VI, and vouchering out—rather than strategies that provide the information or skills necessary to connect residents to opportunities to which they are already near” (p. 249). Chapple argues that proximity to opportunity alone “is not solving the problem for either the concentrated urban or suburban poor” and that what is needed is more investment in place and more attention to education, health, and community development interventions that build social networks that can support families and connect individuals to jobs.

Chapple, however, almost seems to have given up on efforts to foster racial and economic integration in wealthy suburbs: “Integrating affluent suburbs is probably the most challenging policy problem; it may be more effective to pursue remedies for income inequality at the national level” (p. 134). Although national policies to address income inequality are certainly essential, significant successes in fair housing law and policy after the book’s publication, including HUD’s Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule and the Supreme Court’s 2015 decision confirming the viability of disparate impact liability under the Fair Housing Act suggest that advocates should not give up on this challenging policy problem at the local, regional, or national levels or the larger challenge of achieving more equitable distributions of local government resources.

Chapple distills the essence of the book into three main ideas necessary for more equitable development. First, a recognition that one size does not fit all and that a mixture of context appropriate strategies are necessary, from infill development in the urban core to the protection of industrial land close to the city center, to economic development that supports entrepreneurial small businesses. Second, that planners should shift their focus from the scale of the parcel or neighborhood to the bigger picture of the district or region and ensure that there is affordability for all income groups within that region. Third, that planners need to be more creative in capturing the increases in value that come with public investment and then use that captured value to improve social equity, for instance by funding more affordable housing and protecting spaces for local manufacturing.

The book is sure to become a frequent resource in undergraduate and graduate community economic development and sustainability courses, as it covers a tremendous amount of scholarly territory in a relatively compact and readable volume. The lens of social equity that it brings to this wide ranging analysis is a particularly important contribution to the field. Reducing environmental impact while increasing access to opportunity and social mobility is arguably the core challenge that planners face in the current moment, whether the specific focus is transportation, housing, or community development. This volume will be a tremendous resource to both students and practitioners for years to come.