

landscape strips, and drainage swales that pepper my iPhoto file (many of which get forwarded to colleagues for their edification).

A big plus: My wife still loves to tell of our visit to the sewers in Paris and the myriad dams and reclaimed landfills I have dragged her to over the years. Good times!

—Paul Kelman, FAICP  
Atlanta

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### The American Dream in a tent

Planner Andrew Heben of Opportunity Village Eugene (in Oregon) has spent time in places many planners don't know and wouldn't sanction if they knew—self-managed tent cities and other ad hoc, informal housing arrangements. His book, *Tent City Urbanism: From Self-Organized Camps to Tiny House Villages* (2014; Village Collaborative; 238 pp.; \$18), is part travelogue, part autobiography, part analysis, and part vision. His goal is for the informal tent cities of the homeless and the tiny houses of downsizing families to meet in the middle in the causes of affordability, sustainability, and self-governed community.

The book comes in four parts: an introductory framework, a review of five camps (Ann Arbor, Nashville, Seattle, St. Petersburg, and Portland), a review of three villages (Portland, Olympia, and Eugene), and finally a guide proposing “tent city urbanism” and how to advocate, plan, design, and build a low-cost, low-impact village. The American tent city, he argues, is not just a symbol of hard times and homelessness: “Just maybe it is alluding to a more sustainable and fulfilling housing option—socially, economically, and environmentally.”

The author has not just visited various camps and villages; he has participated in some (and been denied entrance to one). These stories bring the book alive and also animate the final section, where Heben lays out a bottom-up approach with a number of options: sanctuary camp (in the spirit of “Shelter First”), rest area (for more transient people), transitional village, and affordable village. Moving on up the

ladder are tiny house villages, eco-villages, and cohousing. He takes one actual village through neighborhood and city approval processes. Two appendixes offer a concept plan and a village manual.

“Truly great plans,” in his view, “cause the public to see something that cannot exist, but undeniably should exist.” The down-to-earth idealism of this book should help do that.

### Seeing the “flattened” city/suburb for the first time

Judith DeJong (University of Illinois at Chicago) draws on her experiences in Houston and Chicago to show how “many suburbs are becoming more similar to their central cities, and cities more similar to their suburbs,” with results including hidden (“interstitial”) parking, big-box retail in cities, denser residences in suburbs, and hyperprogrammed public spaces. She calls this process “flattening,” and in *New SubUrbanisms* (2014; Routledge; 237 pp.; \$47.95) she sees it not as a problem, but as a new framework that will generate “more innovative thinking, more instrumental engagement, and better design in this milieu.”

The author divides the story into four “hybrid sub/urban practices”: car space, domestic space, public space, and retail space. Right away she demonstrates her ability to see obvious things that are not always seen: “Neither the car nor parking is inherently suburban; rather, initial growth in car ownership in the U.S. occurred at a time when the city remained a powerful drawing force.”

She analyzes four distinct parking systems involved in sub/urbanism: surface, layer (including an amazing urbanistic parking garage in Miami), lift and mix (“podium” parking), and fill. All play a role in a world where DeJong envisions that most Americans will drive less but few will eschew cars altogether.

Under domestic space, she sees three sub/urban trends: “shrink and expand” (auxiliary suburban units, increasing density there), “expand and shrink” (inner-city multifamily buildings becoming single family, reducing density there), and