

Airing Planning's Dirty Laundry

We organized a clothesline event in Temple Buell Hall from 3 to 5 pm on Thursday April 24th. The goal was to create a display of the good, the bad and the ugly done by planners and policy-makers to affect people's lives and communities through history. Planning happens at many levels some coordinated and some not but they all intend to affect change for someone. This project was really trying to bring to the fore, the inequality wide spread in planning practice.

We hung laundry with phrases and descriptions of planning and policy decisions, programs, and projects from the past and present for all to see. Around thirty students and faculty from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning participated in the event. The clotheslines were displayed in the atrium of the building for two hours, and participants had the opportunity to write and display their thoughts in T-shirts, pants and other clothes. Some examples of the planning projects and policies were: "Sundown towns", "Using parks to promote racist drug-enforcement policy", "Bad planning affects good people", "Urban renewal", "Red lighting", among others.

We want to dispel the myth of the benevolent planner and demystify the results of harmful policy-making. Community decline is not a natural process but is the result of often racist and gender blind planning and policy making such as redlining, restrictive covenants, boarding schools for Native Americans, and anti-immigrant ordinances. Planning has a lot of dirty laundry and it is time we air it out and clean it up!