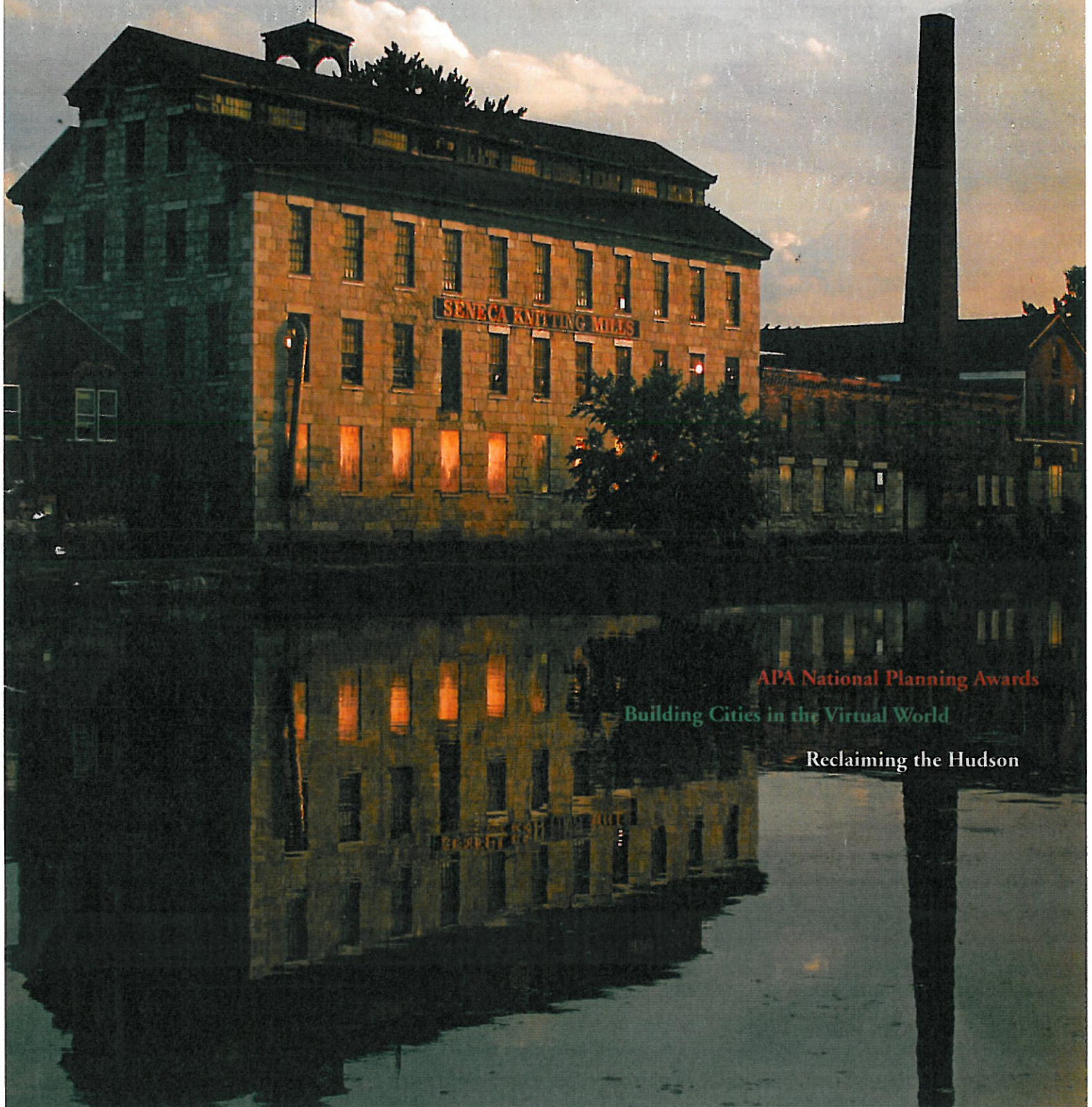


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# PLANNING



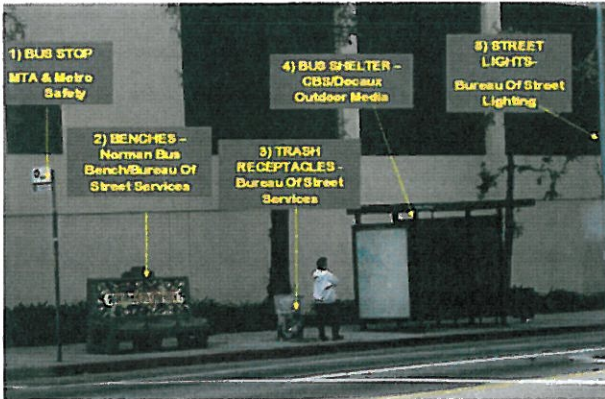
APA National Planning Awards

Building Cities in the Virtual World

Reclaiming the Hudson



Multiple agencies maintain the bus stops in Los Angeles (below). Right: A resident of L.A. conducts a bus stop inventory as part of a grassroots transportation planning effort.



Courtesy Central City Neighborhood Partners

# Transit Tenacity

By Paul Shigley

While leaving her office at the non-profit Central City Neighborhood Partners after working late one night, Veronica McDonnell learned how deeply people cared about a Community Transportation Plan that McDonnell's group was spearheading. At 9 p.m. on a chilly evening, McDonnell encountered two young mothers, their children fast asleep in strollers. Asked why they were out, the mothers said they were working on a survey of bus riders in preparation for the plan, and they wanted to ensure that nighttime riders were represented.

The commitment of those young mothers paid off in a transportation plan for five poor

communities in central Los Angeles that is the recipient of APA's Grassroots Initiative Award. The plan is intended to improve the conditions of, and access to, public transit systems on which the area's poor, minority, and immigrant families rely.

Armed with a grant from the California Department of Transportation, CCNP oversaw an effort in which about 35 volunteers assessed all 400 bus stops in the area, conducted 1,500 surveys of bus riders and residents, and participated in a dozen meetings.

CCNP is asking the city to incorporate the community transportation plan into the Westlake Community Plan update (part of the

Los Angeles general plan), which is currently under way. The group is now receiving grants to help implement some of the identified 33 infrastructure improvement projects.

"One of the unique and innovative solutions is this idea of creating community living rooms," McDonnell says of bus stops that are being transformed with comfortable benches, tables, shelters, and even a bit of landscaping. "There were several bus stops in the area that did not have a place for families to sit. They want it to be more welcoming. The community loves these living rooms."

Paul Shigley is the editor of *California Planning & Development Report*.

National Planning Excellence Award for a Grassroots Initiative  
Central City Community Transportation Plan

Los Angeles, California