

maps the interactions between development alternatives and natural systems. These demonstrations of the future impacts of different development scenarios can be shown interactively in real time at public meetings, giving the public a means of making informed comments on long-range regional design decisions like the selection of highway routes. This is one way that today's urban designer can gain a seat at the decision-making table.

### Urban Design as a Civic Vision

"The sponsors have avoided the term Civic Design as having, in the minds of many, too specialized or too grandiose a connotation," reads the introduction to the 1956 conference summary in *Progressive Architecture*. "Urban Design" was the name that the Harvard University Graduate School of Design selected for its 1956 conference and for the "joint work of the architect, landscape architect, and city planner." By explicitly discarding the term *Civic Design*, the sponsors were disavowing the City Beautiful with its park and boulevard plans repeating formulations worked out in Haussmann's Paris and the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago ("too grandiose"), and its emphasis on public buildings grouped in a civic center ("too specialized"). Defining urban design as collaboration among professionals, rather than as a series of specific design objectives, reflected the then current thinking in the city planning profession, which was giving up on end-state plans and redefining planning as a continuous process.

Partly because of the 1956 Harvard conference, *urban design* has become the accepted term; it is too late to wonder about changing it. Many present problems in implementing city designs were described by the conference participants, but the conference also helped formulate urban design in a way that has itself contributed to current difficulties in creating coherent, well-designed cities. Discarding the word *civic* marked a significant change in city design priorities. The illustrations that accompany the summary of the conference express utility and, perhaps, social equality, but aside from the diagrams of Radburn and Welwyn Garden City, there is little in these drawings to connote more complex societal aspirations.

While the design vocabulary for civic design in the United States was drawn from palatial European examples, Americans had never accepted such designs as if they were creating a place to watch the royal coach roll down the boulevard on the way to a state occasion.