

Briana Robinson

Millennials and Planning

The world of city planning is heavily influenced by the citizens involved! Contemporary planning revolves around the people living in the areas being planned for. As we move into the future, people and their priorities change. Particularly, the age of millennials, or Gen Y, have reached an age where the impact of their preferences is beginning to show in the planning world. Also, as more millennials enter the workforce, there are more planners within this generation! This generation is composed of people born between 1980 and 1996. (Stump, 2018.) This makes the current ages of millennials between 39 and 23 years old. The current average age of Urban & Regional Planners is 44.1. (Data USA, 2016) As millennials age and enter the workforce as planners, I imagine we'll see some changes among planners and priorities. Millennials are known for their eco-conscious tendencies and new ways of doing things!

The Search

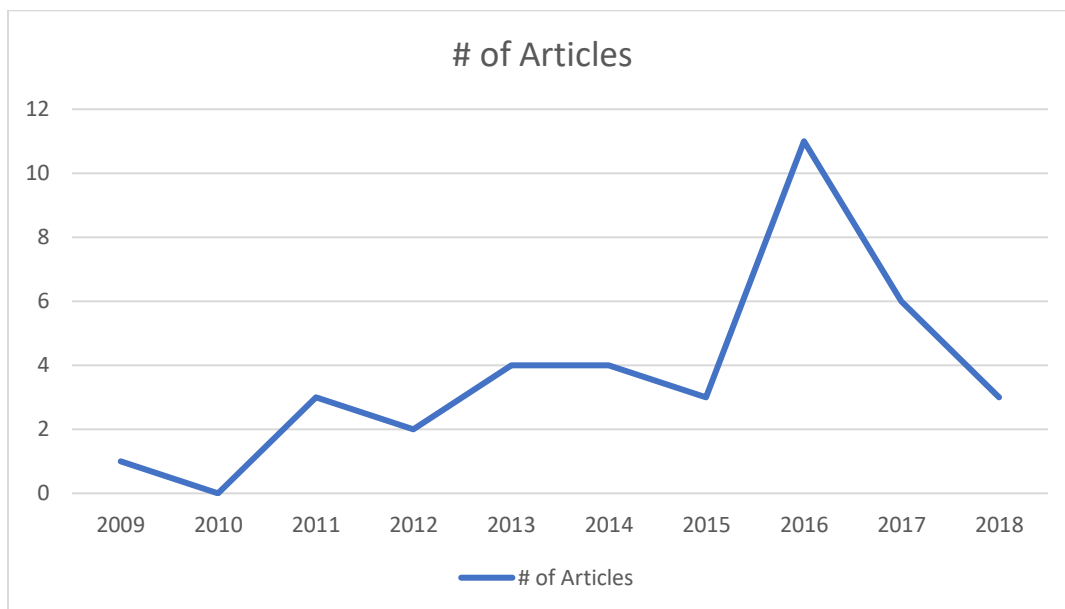
Finding Planning magazine articles on millennials was a little more difficult than one might think. Since this age of people is still relatively young, as well as up and coming, there are few articles focusing on the effects of this generation. Many articles found in my search were not focused specifically on millennials, but focused on changes being seen in contemporary planning and mentioning millennials preference in the matter. Millennials being mentioned in these articles shows that they are having a notable effect! I found all of the articles using the Auburn Library website, specifically looking in Planning Magazine. I searched within the ProQuest electronic holding, which contains issues from 12/01/1987 to present. I specifically searched for the word 'Millennials' as well as Gen Y when I noticed that they were being used interchangeably in a few of the articles. I only pulled articles from the last 10 years, which was

surprisingly easy, as most of the articles mentioning millennials were published within the last 6 years.

Coverage

Upon my initial search, I found around 40 articles, but not all were relevant. Many articles only mentioned the word ‘millennial’ once, so I had to comb through and find articles in which the topic was a bit more relevant. Most of the articles seemed to be theory based. The coverage on this topic has definitely increased over the last 10 years. This seems predictable, as the age of people in question has more of an effect on contemporary planning with every passing day.

CHART: Trends 2009 - 2018



Discussion:

Millennials in the Workplace:

Advantages & Disadvantages

Millennials are known to have different work ethics and priorities like the baby boomers that came before them. The millennial generation, or Gen Y, is very diverse. The age of millennials currently places them right at present in the field of planning, or beginning their

entrance into it. If current practicing planners are not working with people from this generation now, then they will be soon as they are the future of the profession. “There are about 74 million millennials in the US (23.5% of the total population). Most of the new planning staff members in the public and private sectors are millennials, and they are the future of their profession.” (Foote 2014, 30.)

Managing millennials come with advantages and disadvantages. They are known to have, “a strong sense of community, civic duty, and volunteerism; they're focused on networking with friends through social media; they have a global worldview and tolerance for cultural diversity; they're skilled with electronic gadgets and very technologically savvy.” (Foote 2014, 30.) These are all positive characteristics to have! However, people of this age are also known to have a sense of entitlement and expect high levels of attention. This could make managing young planners difficult for someone of a different generation.

New Kids on the Block

As there is an increase in the job market for planners, the millennial generation is jumping in to fill these roles! “As technology brings people closer, expands the realm of the possible, and engages citizens more profoundly, major planning issues like climate change, sustainability, health, and social equity continue to intersect.” (Hammon 2014, 13.) There are issues arising that are new territory for new and old planners alike. New and bigger issues create more problems to solve, with planners coming to the rescue. “Between 2010 and 2013, the annual number of job postings on APA Jobs Online increased from 993 to 1,552—a 56 percent jump.” (Hammon 2014, 15.)

The competitive job market comes with the requests for new skills as well. Many young planners are expected to know how to use GIS, coding, and many other technological skills. Luckily for millennials, technology is something they are known for having a strong hand in.

Public v. Private

“New planners are entering areas such as community development, city management, and sustainability. They're working at private startups, think tanks, and incubators. They're pursuing careers with law firms, developers, marketers, engineering firms, logistics companies, and tech firms. And in some cases, they're bouncing back and forth a bit.” (Holeywell 2017, 15.) Put simply, millennials have options! They want to see the impact of their work, and in the public sector that can sometimes take quite a while. Millennials are interesting in seeing their work come to life.

Workplace or Playplace?

Millennials are also having an effect on the working office environments! Many property owners are feeling forced to renovate their spaces to keep up with the demand for mixed-use and walkable areas! Millennials tend to not like traditional sterile working environments, so many organizations are moving towards live-work-play environments. They're trying to revamp and expand their single-use building and want coffee shops, hotels, parks, amenities, and other things millennials crave nearby.

The issue is that if property owners don't renovate then they often find themselves with no renters. The generation of millennials have choices. “As Andrea Cross, Americas head of office research for commercial real estate services firm CBRE, puts it: "People have more choice about where to work than ever before, and if you have an environment that's not appealing, they're going to choose to go somewhere else." (Spivak 2017, 35.) This is creating some issues

for planners, as renovation of areas like these can lead to zoning changes, a need for new designs, and the challenge to obtain community approval.

Transportation:

Public Transportation

Millennials are sometimes credited with being extra eco-conscious in their commuting habits, but being environmentally friendly is not always the motive for them. Technology could actually be the leading cause! That's right, apparently millennials are very digital centric and they don't like to waste time behind the wheel of a car. They like to avoid "dead time." What used to be seen as private space, driving your own car, is now not as necessary to some, as their digital devices make it possible for them to feel "private" even when surrounded by people on a public transit. They can simply pop in some earbuds and be in their own little musical world for a while.

"What does this mean for planning practitioners? The key point is that travelers are increasingly placing a premium on technologically friendly environments, thus creating a new competitive advantage for modes that are often considered slower than driving or flying." (Schwieterman 2011, 32.) If a public transport offers free Wi-Fi or adequate space to bring out a laptop, then more young people are likely to use it! Planners can use this knowledge to their advantage and bring more people on board public transits, thus lessening the amount of car traffic and carbon emissions. Technology can be a major asset in encouraging carpooling and public transit systems. It's all too easy now for people to check an app and see when the next train comes, or call an Uber.

Car-Free Generation?

Recently, there has been a drop in automobile use! “The drop is strongest among millennials. Nearly 30 percent said they were willing to give up their cars even if it meant paying more to get around, compared to only 11 percent of other groups, according to a 2015 survey by Deloitte. They are also less likely than other generations to buy a car or commute by car. Millennials are two to three times more likely to use transit, according to another study-this one by TransitCenter-and more likely to use more than one mode in a week.” (Sigall 2016, 27.) Planners need to recognize this so they’re able to properly assess the future for their comprehensive plan! Millennials want to live close enough to where they work that they don’t need a car. If planners planned around this lifestyle choice, it would be more sustainable for everyone. However, there are always hurdles to jump over, the main ones being monetary and gaining community support, as things would have to change for this.

Homes and Living:

Suburbs?

Millennials are also known to rent more than buy homes. This could still change, as obviously this generation still has some aging to do. Many people in this age group are renting due to student loan debt and the competitive job market. Affordable homes are not widely available either, as many from the generation before millennials are choosing to stay in their homes longer. This could potentially lead to more millennials moving to the suburbs! Whether that is their preference or not, the suburbs offer affordability and many millennials still consider buying a house to be a goal. “The association also notes that even if millennials wanted to live in an urban area, there is limited availability in their price range and few entry-level condos for

sale, making it extremely difficult to buy there.” (Tomasulo 2016, 3.) Also, with public transport growing, it’s a more viable option for people who do not want to drive their commute.

Home Life

Another factor contributing to millennials renting more than buying is their family habits. The millennial generation is still relatively young and they are changing the traditional timeline for families. “There is a shift in lifestyle - younger generations are waiting longer to get married and start traditional family-based households.” (Tomasulo 2016, 2.) They don’t need big houses right now, so of course they’re renting more. Developers and planners alike are working to attract buyers at further out suburb locations. This can be an issue for them. The unprecedented future for millennials could lead to zoning issues and makes it more difficult to form a comprehensive plan.

Summary and Conclusion

From a planning standpoint, millennials represent a generation of changes and challenges. Their transportation habits, work lives, and personal home lives all have an impact on the planning agenda.

Millennials work lives alone are changing the planning work world in major ways! They are the planners of the future, after all. They also pose a whole new set of challenges in just that they require different management techniques than the generations past. They expect more, and aren’t afraid to walk away from a job that’s not what they want. The millennial age is phasing out single-use office spaces which is affecting zones and new developments as well. They’re coming out of school with more technological experience, which is very valuable in the hiring process currently.

Millennials being called the car-free generation just shows the impact they've had. If they continue in the habits they're exhibiting, there will be more and more planners and cities focused on public transport, instead of focusing on single car commuters. The use of technology in public transport makes tech friendly spaces a priority for planners as well. Planners can use this in their favor to create a more sustainable long-term solution.

The lifestyles of millennials differ from those before them as well. They're current lack of buying homes makes it hard for practicing planners to form a comprehensive plan. If they do move to the suburbs, they have a different set of requirements that they're looking for. They value community and amenities. The challenges arising from this are causing current planners to come up with new designs and look into different applications of zoning.

“There are about 74 million millennials in the US (23.5% of the total population). Most of the new planning staff members in the public and private sectors are millennials, and they are the future of their profession.” (Foote 2014, 30.) Millennials are the planners of the future, and they're changing what needs to be planned for. Their lifestyle differences from the generations before them make them a hot topic for the planners of today. It's important that they read these articles and understand that this generation is not like the ones before them. I believe that we will see more changes among public transport, in the workplace, and in the zoning and design of suburbs as time goes on. The millennial generation comes with many changes to be made.

Bibliography:

Data USA. 2016. "Urban & Regional Planners." Data USA. Accessed March 19, 2019.
<https://datausa.io/profile/soc/193051/>.

Foote, Brian, A.I.C.P. 2014. "MANAGING THE MILLENNIALS." *Planning* 80 (11) (12): 30-31.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1639615767?accountid=8421>.

Hammon, Mary. 2014. "New PLANNERS ON THE BLOCK." *Planning* 80 (10) (11): 13-18.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1625410270?accountid=8421>.

Holeywell, Ryan. 2017. "A NEW COURSE." *Planning* 83 (7) (07): 12-21.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1923949219?accountid=8421>.

Schwieterman, Joseph P. 2011. "The Travel Habits of Gen Y." *Planning* 77 (5) (May): 30-33.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/875640077?accountid=8421>.

Sigall, Jonathan. 2016. "Planning for the Car-Free Generation." *Planning* 82 (5) (05): 26-30.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1788718944?accountid=8421>.

Spivak, Jeffrey. 2017. "RENOVATE OR DIE." *Planning* 83 (10) (11): 33-38.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1967312651?accountid=8421>.

Stump, Scott. 2018. "Born between 1981 and 1996?." Today.com.
<https://www.today.com/news/born-between-1981-1996-you-re-millennial-now-according-pew-t124232>.

Tomasulo, Katy. 2016. "One Size does Not Fit all." *Planning* 82 (7) (07): 1-9.
<http://spot.lib.auburn.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1807680988?accountid=8421>.

