Rethinking Urban Governance: Knitting together Foresight and Sustainability

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What does ‘sustainable anticipatory governance’ look like in practice? This paper describes a combined course-workshop that applied concepts and methods of future studies, anticipatory governance, and sustainability in the context of urban development in Phoenix. The studio course followed a structured curriculum enabling ASU graduate students, stakeholders in the City, and urban planners to craft sustainability visions, develop conceptual and data-driven analysis of the current state of Phoenix, outline scenarios for 2030 and develop governance strategies for transformational change. The collaborative research project sought to realize the transition from the current state to sustainable states taking into account existing path-dependencies by building the capacity of a wide array of actors to think and act differently. By detailing the methods, challenges, findings and outcomes of this applied project, this paper details the inner workings of an emerging potential of governance to become more democratic and transparent, creatively anticipatory, and strategic with regards to sustainability issues.