Petra Doan is a Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University. She conducts research on planning issues on transgender experiences of the city and explores the relationship between urban planning and the wider LGBTQ community. Most notably, she has edited two books: Queerying Planning: Challenging Heteronormative Assumptions and Reframing Planning Practice published in 2011 by Ashgate and Planning and LGBTQ Communities: the Need for Inclusive Queer Space published by Routledge in 2015. She also has published a number of related articles in Gender, Place, and Culture, Women’s Studies Quarterly, Environment and Planning A, and the Journal of Planning Education and Research.

The transgendered population has been experiencing an epidemic of violence within urban areas (Namaste, 1996; Doan, 2007, Doan 2010). The most vulnerable people within the LGBT spectrum appear to be trans youth and trans women of color who are sadly the vast majority of those memorialized each year on the Transgender Day of Remembrance website. The fact that most of these women are also involved in sex work simply underlines the point that for many of them discrimination is so intense that this line of work may be their only means of source of income. These ongoing patterns of violence make the need for safe spaces for transgendered and gender queer individuals a pressing need. However Doan (2010) has argued that gender policing in the form of the “tyranny of gender” can have a variety of negative impacts on transgendered individuals across a wide range of spaces, making the need for safer spaces even more imperative. Although planning has been accused of a heterosexist bias (Frisch 2002), this paper challenges the profession by asking what might be the role of planning in creating safer spaces within cities. The paper will use an extensive review of the literature as well as a selection of field visits and interviews in several cities to lay out the dimensions of a trans safe space policy. While some people might argue that existing queer spaces or gayborhoods should be adequate refuges for the gender queer, these spaces have evolved through intensified gentrification into zones of highly commodified urban property (Doan and Higgins, 2011). In many such neighborhoods the twin forces of homonormativity and increasing property values have decreased tolerance for crossdressing and/or transgendered individuals who don’t fit into the upscale vibe. The paper will in particular examine the cases of Toronto, Atlanta, and San Francisco to compare and contrast the effects of municipal policies and their impacts on transgendered individuals. One aspect of these policies has been attempts to regulate sex work, especially by transgendered sex workers operating in and near traditional gayborhoods. This paper examines how alternative policies and planning initiatives might be used to create gender neutral safe zones where the visible display of non-normative genders would not only be protected, but encouraged.

References
Doan, Petra. 2010. The Tyranny of Gendered Spaces: Living Beyond the Gender Dichotomy. Gender, Place and Culture, 17, 635-654.