CONFERENCE REPORT   Cr Sally Pyvis

ICTC MAINSTREET 2015 CONFERENCE
Wednesday 22 July 2015
held Novotel Wollongong NSW

CONFERENCE THEME - Sharing The Secrets To Success

CHALLENGE - What makes a successful place, town and city? Thriving places? Invested communities? Flourishing businesses? Rewarding partnerships?
How do we actually do it? How do you position yourself as a place to live, work, study and visit? What do we prioritise and how do we strike the right balance with limited resources?

THE EVENT - Examined global trends and case studies with a focus on practical tools and solutions for successful mainstreets, towns and cities.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ...

MOLLY ALEXANDER - VP, Downtown Austin Alliance, Texas
U.S.Presentation: Downtown Austin: Youth, Music, Innovation and Tacos

PROF EDWARD BLAKELY - Founder and Chair, Future Cities
The Ten Elements of Great City Public Spaces

SESSIONS I ATTENDED ....

1. People, Places and Parking - Steven Burgess (MRCagney)

2. New travel behaviours don't just happen: Residential and workplace travel planning - Alice Woodruff (Senior Sustainable Transport Planner, UrbanTrans ANZ)

3. Creating Streets for People: Evidence + Partners = Boldness
Nigel Smith (Precinct Designer) & Karen Mildren (Acting Coordinator Community Safety) Yarra Ranges Council

4. Understanding the changing nature of Passive Recreation - Conrad Grayson, Landscape Architect (Sym Studio)

5. Place and the disengaged majority - Vivienne Holloway (Manager, Economic
Development and Tourism, Victor Harbour)

6. What Makes Towns Tick - Understanding the DNA of what makes a successful place in the new era of urbanisation. Susanne Pini (HDR Rice Daubney)

7. Food to Activate The Main Street – 5 Critical Success Factors for Making Food A Strong Anchor - Suzee Brain, Director, Brain & Poulter

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SUMMARY OF 2 SESSIONS I ATTENDED ...

1. THE TEN ELEMENTS OF GREAT CITY PUBLIC SPACES
Prof Edward Blakely (Founder and Chair, Future Cities)

"Great public spaces define the identity and reinforce the character and quality of great cities all over the world."

Prof Blakely has examined cities across the world and across time and identifies 10 basic principles that inform great public spaces. He argues 3 to 5 of these 10 principles must occur in order to create liveable places for residents, visitors and businesses alike.

THE 10 PRINCIPLES ...

1. STREETS THAT TEACH
A place needs to say something about where you are, what you can learn from it, what you can give to it.   Ask - what am I learning from this street? Carefully planned streets that bring people and creativity together, allowing them to experience different things as they move along the street.
Big isn't necessary better any more. Unique is in - small spaces.
More than just the goods ...service is important ... marketing training needed by all employees/owners

2. GREAT BOULEVARDS
A street must have a reputation for something (eg great merchandise, celebration, meeting place). You don't realise how far you move in NY because there is something on every block. The Mainstreet embodies the reputation for the whole city. Boulevards move people to the centre of a city whilst proving places to watch and feel a city (eg Champs Elyse, Paris; central Rome, Michigan Ave, Chicago). Refer Allan Jacobs' book Great Streets.

3. SKYLINE
Skyline tells you where you are (eg finance, technology) and buildings tell everybody who you are. Need local citizens committees .. pollies come and go but the committee is a constant. Cities are not 4 year terms .... a cross section of people is needed to decide the skyline. Great buildings (even if you have only one) ... better than having a lot of common square buildings. But they don't have to be new buildings - use every old building and transform it into something. Dallas skyline is full of award winning architecture - it is becoming a city of the arts; San Francisco's skyline is no accident - every planned building is screened through UCBerkley's visual simulation lab to

assess the visual and topographic impressions it makes from various aspects.

4. MYSTERY SPACE
This city space offers different, pleasurable aspects through serendipitous nooks and crannies that are not obviously visible from any single angle. Bazaars in the Middle East work in this way; The Rocks, Sydney; Central Venice. The Bean in Chicago offers visitors of all ages a continuous mystery - allowing people to create their own experiences.

5. ADVENTURE SPACE
Cities that change their street furniture and place interesting items in the civic arena capture both local and tourist imaginations - making the streetscape a walking art treasure. Street art done well is pleasing and entertaining - it makes a city playful as well as functional.
NY's Highline offers painting, studying, sunbathing, jogging, people making the space their own adventure. The Philosophers Path, Kyoto is experiential and offers more than the visual. Project 606, Chicago - bicycles, dogs, walkers. Rejig parks to be social spaces (read the newspaper, business people making deals) as well as a ball playing space.

6. ROMANTIC SPACE
Intimate space is important - people get married in public spaces.
Cities without vistas and small simple intimate spaces (quaint and hidden from view) are deadly dull. No mall can provide this kind of social space in the form of small stands of trees, water features, and knolls with views that feel intimate and romantic. eg London; Dublin; Singapore's romantic gardens.

7. CITY AS CRAFTED
Doesn't have to be big or new - but a city needs something that is uniquely crafted - sometimes it's just laneways. Every space needs an intellectual crafting - not just functionality.
Great cities have an architectural identity often arising out of the industrial activity that was formed as the base for the city. (eg Europe flows from a King/Duke/Church; Vienna and Prague have a rich historical historical identity with distinctive charm and character. Even modern cities such as coastal California cities have mission style architecture as the template for local architecture. Portland, Oregon's central city offers smaller equally successful crafted spaces.

8. OPEN SPACE AS ATTRACTOR
People prize open spaces as attractors - like Manly Beach where the rock formations and other natural features are attractive places to explore, walk, simply sit or contemplate nature. NY's Highline is an excellent example of this form of space attractor. Even new communities with small lakes and boardwalks are developing places of character that local people are transforming into genuine community space.

9. CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Cultural spaces should be part of the planning process and not left to chance. A church is easily recognised as a cultural space but community social clubs (that can have real roles 7 days a week) are less obvious as cultural celebration places (such as adult education, local drama and community meetings). In many cases, community cultural spaces are closed (only for members of the religion or social groupings) but these are not community cultural spaces where people can share cultural identities and social interactions.
Celebrate with different kinds of artefacts and when you get a great Architect or Landscape Architect... let them loose.

10. INNOVATION SPACE

"Artists are the canneries of modern civilization. As we drive them out the city life begins to shrivel and soon it passes because the streets die and the innovation of new technologies and techniques that spring from the creative energies of the place goes away and the community is barren."
Planners should not gentrify artists out of the city centre. The Sydney Harbour Trust and Honeysuckle in Newcastle both recognise this and place arts and creative space as key ingredients for city survival. NY's Bryan Park is a place for people with ideas to meet next to the great City Library.

CONCLUSIONS ...

- Pedestrians first
- Design for people not cars
- Space to act and activate
- Constant change - when you build a space don't let it stay the same.
- Committees run public spaces ... not the council

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2. PEOPLE, PLACES AND PARKING

Steven Burgess (MRCagney) is a traffic engineer with public and private sector experience. Has managed projects in the traffic, transport and urban redevelopment sectors including many complex inner urban projects assessing impacts of major developments and their potential to progress and revitalise urban centres.

Streets have been around for thousands of years and are one of our most valuable and extensive community assets. Streets meet the need for mobility but are also the centre of our social networks and our economies.
But since 1930s, streets have become car dominated which excludes our human requirements for open space, delight and community.
Burgess discusses how a "design for cars not people" philosophy impacts on the shape of our cities, towns and villages and what needs to be done to reinvent streets in placemaking .... mixing social, environmental and economic needs to make liveable communities.

Two types of urban public space behaviour ...
MOVING - Getting from one place to another
EXCHANGING - Ideas, Goods and services, Pleasantries etc

SYSTEMATIC REJECTION OF THE STREET AS A PLACE ....
Minimum pavement width (to maintain traffic flow and parking)
Minimum setback (for driveway parking)
Garage frontages (for car parking)
Single side or no footpath
High car speed (discourages cycling, walking and playing for all ages)

NEW PRIORITIES ... in this order ...
Pedestrians
Cyclists
Public transport
Private vehicles

What do our favourite places look like?
VITAL
ORGANIC
STICKY
AUTHENTIC

What ruins public places?
CARS
ROADS
LACK OF TREES

Focussing on the Mainstreet ...
Activity is central to it's surrounding activity
Accommodates trial, employment, leisure ...and perhaps education
Active through the day and into the night
Not isolated to big cities

What makes it harder?
- Under-priced (oversupplied) parking
- Roundabouts
- Wide streets
- Multi-phase intersections
- Minimum parking rates
- Large blocks/developments

Traffic, parking, moving, spending ..
- People traffic and car traffic are diametrically opposed in their needs &
requirements
- People spend money once they get out of their cars

What makes people stick, stop and spend?

Is it free parking? NO
Is it great streets/spaces? YES

Why pay/charge for parking ?
- Manage demand
- Repay public purse investment
- Manage modal split
- Increase pedestrian activity
- Fund local government initiatives
- Increases land values

PARKING ...
- If a town centre is active and prosperous people will find a way to get there
- modern CBD's do not need as much parking as previously thought.
- The parking and sustainability relationship has some cause and effect ....
You cannot say that reducing parking will revitalise your CBD but you should
not lose opportunities for genuine prosperous improvement to make way for
parking.
- Traffic should only have priority on road spaces on major intercity routes
where the movement of people and goods over significant distances with
tolerable delay are of economic significance.
- Cities are for people to work, live and play – not drive.

Transition ...
- Build capacity
- Use technology
- Clearly articulate where the money is going
- Monitor the turnover to set the appropriate price for parking
- Understand timing (use the planning scheme)

Touchstones for town centre parking ...
- Parking is just a traffic generating land use
- Pedestrians spend, drivers don't
- Parking doesn't generate shoppers, just drivers
- People can only contribute to a vibrant, sustainable Mainstreet once you get
them out of their car
- Convenient parking means short stay and small spend
- Make changes slowly, clearly and be transparent
- Parking is ugly
- Don't take stuff away – add stuff in

ROUNDABOUTS are an excellent traffic solution but not feasible in a town
centre ..
- detrimental to pedestrian activity
- provide an enormous advantage to people making car trips in/around the
town
- Roundabouts discourage walking and cycling and prioritise for car traffic.
- Roundabouts for aesthetic reasons? not necessary. They require far more

traffic signs that signalized intersections and use land that could be for pedestrian space/activity space.
- Roundabouts are car friendly and antagonistic to non-motorised traffic (pedestrians and cyclists).
- roundabouts marginalise to a lesser extent bus travel which is more likely to encourage short intra-town car trips and less walking trips, a key element in town centre decline.

WIDE STREETS ...
- Connection of one side of the street to another is important ... don't sacrifice that connection for extra car space.
- Wide streets estrange one side of the road from the other.
- Centre parking is an option, which can be broken up with significant central median pedestrian treatments.
- Significant design elements can be incorporated to try and break up the expanse of depressing road pavement ... work with the space you have .... public art, pedestrian movement, footway dining, public seating, public transport ... let the cars fight over what is left.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ...
- Towns/cities with a more efficient ratio of parking and traffic infrastructure will prosper more than those with an abundant supply.
- Innovative town centre solutions are often rejected in order to maintain a fictitious traffic or parking integrity. That is, to maintain traffic or parking capacity, good economic, social, urban design, built form or land use solutions have often been rejected .... this is not sustainable.
- A successful town centre is a destination and in some minds a destination equals a car park. It should be a residential, recreational, retail, commercial, cultural and tourism destination.