

A FORUM FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Future of Places



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PUBLIC SPACE IN THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Future of Places is a forum for public space with the purpose to contribute to the New Urban Agenda, particularly the Post-2015 SDGs and Habitat III in 2016.



A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE

- *Future of Places* was initiated by UN-Habitat, Ax:son Johnson Foundation and Project for Public Space.
- It brings together decision-makers, academia, international organisations, professionals, civil society, private sector – over 300 organisations and 1000 individuals.
- FoP has over 7000 followers on twitter!



FoPI CONFERENCE STOCKHOLM 2013

- The first conference in June 2013 in Stockholm gathered more than 220 participants from 50 countries.
- The final statements were brought to the seventh World Urban Forum in Medellín at a workshop focusing on Public Space in Slums.



FoPII CONFERENCE BUENOS AIRES 2014

- The second conference “Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of Urban Prosperity” in Buenos Aires in September 2014 gathered 350 participants from 40 countries.
- The key messages coming out of FoPI and FoPII were thereafter discussed with the Habitat III Secretary-General in an Open Consultation prior to the first Habitat III PrepCom in September.



FoP KEY MESSAGES

- These key messages arose out of both FoPI and FoPII and reflects the principles of the Charter of Public Space and Draft Toolkit on Public Space.
- The following key messages reflect the views of the Future of Places participants and may provide policy guidelines or form recommendations for governments' urban development strategies or international urban development agendas.



People-centred approach to spatial planning

As an arena for public use and social interaction, public spaces are most often developed, managed and maintained on behalf of the municipal government. If the municipal government adopts a people-centred approach to urban planning, where the people guide the development of the city, they will more effectively achieve sustainable development. Emphasis needs to be placed on a shared responsibility between community and private entities in regards to the localized planning and maintenance of public space.



Inclusive public space for all, particularly vulnerable groups

Planning and designing public space for all implies taking special account of the most vulnerable portions of the population and those who are excluded from formal processes. Attention needs to be placed on members of the population that are in vulnerable situations, recognizing their contributions, and ensuring equal, safe and healthy access to the public realm. Vulnerable groups, most particularly the urban poor, those in high-density neighborhoods, and those with small dwellings, need to be satisfied from a social, political and spatial perspective when it comes to the public realm. This is not only a matter of social justice; evidence shows that, when equitable access to the public realm is not secured, the entire city under-performs socially, environmentally and economically, relative to its potential.



The importance of public space in rapidly urbanizing cities

Cities urgently need to establish spatial plans, strategies and frameworks that aim to accommodate and guide urban population changes and rapid growth rather than constrain or fragment them. Orderly re-densification, revitalization and expansion processes are all needed with the aim of defining a coherent public realm through fine-grained block patterns, arterial and street grids and other forms of public spaces. Informal processes should be accommodated and guided, giving residents the capacity to be active co-creators of their city and its public spaces. Catalytic investing in main squares and parks with the help of legislation can help to create a high quality public realm, despite periods of rapid change.



Public space at a human scale

Studying the social behavior of the users of public space is essential. Through observation and understanding of human biomechanics, senses and behavioral patterns throughout different intervals in time, public space can be designed to cater to a variety of human variables, including speed, shape and distance. This can then be followed by simple temporary interventions to promote positive behavioral patterns.



Public space- a citywide approach

The consequences of poor urbanism can be detrimental and that is why a holistic, evidenced-based approach to the city is needed. When designing public spaces, attention needs to be placed not only on the space itself, but the form, function and connectivity of the city as a whole. Promotion of public space interventions directed at enhancing passages, establishing crossings, breaking down barriers and upgrading other functional localities throughout the city should be promoted.



Public spaces designed as multidisciplinary arenas of sustainability

Public space has a responsibility to be flexible enough to serve a variety of users and uses, ranging from informal to formalized activities. Properly designed public spaces not only contribute to improve the overall visual character of a city, but they also stimulate economic activities and enhance the functionality of the city. Compact, livable areas with adequate public spaces and infrastructure that facilitate non-motorized and public transport encourage walking, cycling and other forms of eco-friendly living, thereby reducing carbon emissions and cutting down reliance on fossil fuels and other limited resources.



Street networks as interconnected public spaces

Streets in cities of the 21st century should serve as multimodal networks of social and economic exchange, forming the urban framework of interconnected public space. Walkability, social interaction and multimodal mobility should be supported by a fine-grained block and street network lined with buildings providing amenities and services with a mix of uses. Tools and regulations to strengthen the relationship between the ground floor and the street will improve the interaction between private, semi-private, semi-public and public spaces.



Co-benefits of public space

Evidence shows that investing in public space can have powerful social, economic and health benefits for cities. If people are committed to their future in a specific place, they tend to invest more time and capital in that place; as a result, having a positive impact on the local economy and creating a virtuous cycle of economic growth. The economic factor shows that public space has potential to offer localized economic returns on investment. Land value capture can be utilized as a tool employed by the municipality to collect captured value in the form of taxes as a result of their public investment.



Access to public space- public and private spheres

Globally, there has been a substantial reduction in access to urban public space creating unclear boundaries between the public and private spheres; this has the potential to limit democracy. There is a need for a new paradigm that should recognize the inability of the market alone to ensure the creation of a hierarchy of public and private open spaces protected over time. We need a more nuanced approach to planning with new tools, protecting and designing the urban hierarchy of open places including semi-public and semi-private space.



Public space reflected in the sustainable urban development agenda

The decline of functional public space is a core component of unsustainable urban growth, and its restoration must be a key goal of sustainable urban development. In order to create people centred cities, public space, as an interdisciplinary and intermodal sphere of interaction and capacity that interacts with all segments of the population, needs to be highlighted in the international sustainable urban development agenda. There is a need to establish a network of public space actors equipped with common principles and tools to ensure that adequate policy and management of public space are adopted and monitored in and beyond the Post 2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals and the new urban agenda that will arise out of the Habitat III conference in 2016.

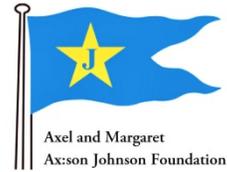


FoP III CONFERENCE STOCKHOLM 2015

- The third Future of Places conference will take place 29 June – 1 July in Stockholm.
- The conference will build on the key messages and provide policy guidelines and form recommendations on Public Space in the New Urban Agenda towards the Post-2015 SDGs and Habitat III.
- Register to participate at www.futureofplaces.com



Future of Places



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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



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