

# AGENDA

ALLIANCE  
FOR  
LIVABILITY



AFL

## Board Members:

Shaun Biel • Trevor Bosworth • Ben Bozek • Regina Bradley • Asante Cain • Amy Cogswell • Lamont Cole • Robert Dean  
Joe Elliot • Steve Faber • Christian Frank • Erika Hanson • Johanna Jelks • Nicole Kosheba • Lynn Locke • Lance Marconi  
Jon Oeverman • Haley Patrone • Kelli Jo Peltier • Marcia Rapp • Jenn Schaub • Jay Schrimpf • Rachael Tamez • Aaron Terpstra  
Lynee Wells

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November 28, 2016

11:00a – 12:30p

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment, Current Business – 3 minutes per person
3. July Minutes, Downtown Ambassador Report, GRPD Report – 10 minutes – *motion*
  - a. Downtown Ambassador Reporting Update (Eledge)
4. Potential Public Restroom Concept (Larson) – 10 minutes
5. Dwelling Place Downtown Residential Survey (Schaub) – 10 minutes
6. “Cities for People: 1.3 – The City as Meeting Place” Discussion (Wells, All Members) – 25 minutes
7. Work Groups (*time permitting*) – 20 minutes
  - a. C/S/B – Sidewalk/Blockface Assessment Tool, Public Art RFP review
  - b. Engagement – Resident Network Events Review, Future Planning
  - c. Mobility – BikeShare and Bike Parking Update
  - d. Urban Rec – Parks Master Plan & Skate/BMX Update
8. Public Comment, Old Business – 3 minutes per person
9. Adjourn



DOWNTOWN



DOWNTOWN  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

## Alliance for Livability

September 26, 2016

1. Call to order- Wells called the meeting to order at 11:04am
2. Members Present- Shaun Biel, Trevor Bosworth, Asante Cain, Lamont Cole, Joe Elliot, Nicole Kosheba, Lance Marconi, Haley Patrone, Kelli Jo Peltier, Marcia Rapp, Jenn Schaub, Lynee Wells  
  
Members Absent- Ben Bozek, Regina Bradley, Amy Cogswell, Robert Dean, Steve Faber, Christian Frank, Erika Hanson, Johannah Jelks, Lynn Locke, Jon Oeverman, Jay Schrimpf, Rachel Tamez, Aaron Terpstra  
  
Others Present: Officer Eric Gizzi, Bill Kirk, Jennie Kovalcik, Tim Kelly, Melvin Eledge
3. Approval of July Meeting Minutes-  
*Motion: Lamont Cole, supported by Marcia Rapp, moved approval of July 25, 2016 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*
4. Ambassador / GRPD Report-  
Officer Gizzi said officers are busy with the crowds of ArtPrize. Officer Gizzi said there is a push to have night shift community officers that may be realized in the fall with a budget amendment. Eledge said the trash can art is finished and the cans have been deployed on South Division. Eledge said twenty (20) more cans were added to fill gaps that existed downtown. Eledge said more staff are on the streets during more times of day centered around ArtPrize.
5. Calder Plaza Design Update-  
Kelly presented Calder Plaza design updates and overview to the alliance. Kelly said the Calder Plaza Steering Committee created stakeholder focus groups and conducted two (2) surveys. Kelly said the survey results indicated an interest in activation, access, design, and amenities. Kelly said the consultant team helped create three (3) designs, and presented each. Kelly explained that not simply one of the three (3) concepts will be chosen, but rather parts from each will become the final preferred

choice. Kelly said in-depth workshops will be conducted at the end of the week on Thursday and Friday, and invited anyone interested to join either session. Kelly said next steps include a final public meeting proposed for the first week of November and a final preferred concept plan by mid-December. Rapp asked if there has been collaboration with the Disability Advocates of Kent County. Kelly replied yes; a walking tour was conducted and comments have been made on all concepts. Kelly added that the Disability Advocates will be present at the meetings later this week. Cole said an interesting design concept seen in other cities that could apply here is an emblem reflected onto the ground that can be seen from all angles around the plaza. Marconi said the design should be more about the experience than strictly what elements to add. Marconi asked if any considerations were made to the route of skywalks and bridges, sound, AV systems, and acoustics to create an experience. Kelly responded those elements will be part of the stage system, and discussions with event producers will nail down specifics. Marconi added, water features can also be used as a therapeutic experience and create sound rather than just being a grand feature. Elliot suggested making the skywalk more of an experience and not just a method to get from one destination to the other by creating a seating area or place to view the skyline. Kelly said survey results show people are moving towards the bridge connectivity, allowing for more in-depth discussions. Elliot asked what will happen after December. Kelly said discussing funding will be a priority. Kelly added DGRI will work with the City and County since they own the plaza property. Peltier asked what the budget is for the future concept. Kelly said the budget has not yet been developed, but cost estimates will happen in December. Cole asked if there was a way to tie the blue bridge lighting to the plaza to create a city-wide lighting system. Kelly replied lighting will be a part of the final plan and noted the suggestion. Cain asked if the City and County had provided feedback. Kelly said members of each are on the steering committee and communication with their employees is ongoing. Wells asked if all three (3) concepts include making Ottawa a two-way street. Kelly said yes. Bosworth said all concepts are respectable and include GR Forward goals, without overdoing any one element. Marconi noted the need for alternative transportation options, like bike storage. Marconi asked if adding a historic piece has been considered. Kelly said there are currently a statue and memorial near the Ottawa entrance to the plaza, but thoughts to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in 2019 are underway. Kirk asked if the update will be added to next year's budget. Kelly said the project will most likely straddle the next couple of fiscal year budgets. Kirk said the link to the survey will be sent out to all members, and encouraged emailing Kelly any feedback.

6. Project Updates-

- a. ArtCans: Kirk said the ArtCans have been deployed, hugely in part by Dwelling Place. Schaub said Dwelling Place worked with sixty four (64) community artists to complete the project. Eledge said a coat of anti-graffiti spray was added to allow for cleaning without ruining the art.
- b. Walkability Enhancements: Kirk said the Pearl Street project just wrapped up, noting it is a dramatic improvement that can be seen on the DASH ride that will be taken later today. Kirk said the underpass lighting is installed and operational. Kirk said pedestrian counters are installed and providing good data thus far. Kirk added considerations to presenting the data are underway. Kirk said a consultant is being brought in to analyze Sheldon for redesign

concepts. Kirk noted that Kelly is on the steering committee for that project so ongoing feedback will be provided.

- c. Public Art: Kirk said plans for a large mural by the Downtown Market on a retaining wall have been postponed due to construction. Kirk added other areas, such as the underpass by Michigan, are being considered for a long term investment. Kirk said the signal box art RFP will go out in the next month.
- d. Sidewalk Assessment Tool: Kirk said the goal is to complete a sidewalk assessment quarterly. Kirk added DGRI will be asking for volunteers from this group to conduct the assessment when the time comes to ensure we are keeping up with beautification and clean efforts.
- e. Bikeshare Feasibility RFP: Kirk said a demand and feasibility study should take less than five (5) months, and this project has just been kicked off.
- f. Bike Parking Workgroup: Kirk said the group is looking into bike coral parking, sidewalk parking, and other bike enhancements. Kirk added the group is considering artistic treatments for these enhancements over the next month with the help of the mobility working group.
- g. Accessibility Audit: Kirk said DGRI is getting another audit from the Disability Advocates of Kent County with improvement recommendations. Kirk said the last large audit was conducted in 2006, and any upcoming improvements will help form some public right of way construction over the next few years.

7. Public Comment/Old Business-

Bosworth said a streetscape improvement will be applied to Newberry Street from Monroe Avenue to Division Avenue. Bosworth said construction has kicked off and any updates will be provided over the next few weeks. Schaub echoed Officer Gizzi's mention of community officers for evening shifts by asking for letters of support. Schaub said there is no budget for this type of support right now. Schaub said specifically in the Heartside Neighborhood, community support is needed versus police officers because of the invested knowledge that community officers would have while working the late hours to create solutions. Cain asked what the evening hours would be. Gizzi said the 5pm-3am slot would be filled by community officers. Schaub said the only other day there would not be coverage is on Sunday, due to their slow nature. Gizzi said police officers can change their hours throughout the week to fit needs, as well. Kirk asked Schaub to share any information with the alliance members. Kirk also announced the next Resident Network event will be hosted on November 9.

8. Adjourn-

Wells adjourned the meeting at 12:21pm to participate in a DASH trip.

Minutes taken by:

Jennie Kovalcik

Administrative Assistant

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.



# **Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador Program**

**September & October 2016**





# Hospitality Highlights



Rick & Marcia prep for a tv spot



Abbie talks with a customer on Monroe Center

## Place Holder

September and October saw an increase in pedestrian traffic with the onset of Art Prize 2016. The event often brings large crowds of school kids throughout the week days and visitors throughout the evenings and weekends.

## Feedback

Hi I was downtown yesterday and came across your employee Joshua Collins on the sidewalk. I appreciated his work and wanted you to know he is doing a good job!

thanks!

## QUICK VIEW

Sep 01, 2016 -- Oct 31, 2016

- 5** Suspicious Package
- 9** Request for Police
- 12** Suspicious Person
- 13** Request for Fire/EMS
- 17** Panhandling - Aggressive
- 20** Motorist Assist
- 24** Observation - Fighting
- 27** Umbrella Escorts
- 59** Panhandling - Passive
- 78** Bicycle (miles)
- 96** Business Contact
- 761** Safety Escort
- 1097** Sidewalk Violation (skateboarding/Bicycling/Rollerblading)
- 1316** Outreach Contact
- 3859** PA - Directions
- 7980** PA - Information
- 1468** PA - Program Information
- 26864** PA - Other

# Beautification



Ellen waters the new planters along Ottawa Ave.



Rick uses the Billy Goat to remove confetti from Monroe Center

## Accomplishments

Our horticulture team continues their efforts in watering the planters, trimming the plants and mitigating issues that have come up (like plants getting trampled).

Art Prize 2016 brought large crowds into the downtown and with the crowds we saw a large increase in trash collection with an extra 500 bags being picked up each month by the ambassador program; this doesn't count any trash, recycling or compost collected by the public works department.

## Feedback

Constantly, we have clients visiting from out of town and one of the first things they say is how clean downtown Grand Rapids is. Joshua Collins, I had the chance in meeting today. Very nice, and respectful. Respectfully,

Dan Waskiewicz

## QUICK VIEW

Sep 01, 2016 -- Oct 31, 2016

**1710** Graffiti - Removed

**1887** Weed Abatement (block faces)

**3253** Trash (Bags collected)

**7780** Planters Watered



# Special Projects



Rebecca & Melvin deliver the first wave of the new art cans



Melvin works to install the art on the new cans

## Accomplishments

Special projects focused their efforts on repainting and deploying additional trash cans throughout the downtown. While the cans were designed to help provide additional infrastructure during Art Prize they will be permanent installations throughout the district.

We also focused our efforts on finishing up the Art Can project designed to enhance the South Division corridor with trash cans with art installed that would replace existing cans and fill some of the identified gaps in that area as well.

## QUICK VIEW

Sep 02, 2016 -- Oct 31, 2016

- 21.5** Backpack Blower (hours)
- 24.5** Billy Goat Hours
- 32** Power Washing (block faces)
- 68.9** ATLV Hours



# Highlights



Rebecca wipes off a cigarette urn



Marcia changes a trash bag on Monroe Center



New Logos for the brutes promoting the SORT program



Evangeline trains Betsy on clean operations

# Statistics

Equipment Usage	Activities	Sept. 2016 Totals	Sept. 2015 Totals	Variance
	ATLV Hours	27.9	NA	27.9
	Backpack Blower (hours)	2	NA	2
	Bicycle (miles)	66	169	-103
	Billy Goat Hours	1	NA	1
	Segway Hours	1	39	-38
Engagement	Business Contact	56	147	-91
	Graffiti - Removed	555	59	496
	Motorist Assist	14	11	3
	Observation - Fighting	7	16	-9
	Outreach Contact	765	2304	-1539
	PA - Directions	2161	6038	-3877
	PA - Information	5081	10310	-5229
	PA - Other	14105	15876	-1771
	PA - Program Information	736	3655	-2919
	Panhandling - Aggressive	8	119	-111
	Panhandling - Passive	17	85	-68
	Planters Watered	4970	NA	4970
	Power Washing (block faces)	32	NA	32
	Request for Fire/EMS	4	27	-23
	Request for Police	1	14	-13
	Safety Escort	625	4103	-3478
	Sidewalk Violation	636	1395	-759
	Suspicious Package	4	5	-1
	Suspicious Person	1	129	-128
	Trash (Bags collected)	1529	323	1206
	Umbrella Escorts	4	33	-29
	Weed Abatement	858	NA	858
Totals		32169	44649	-12480

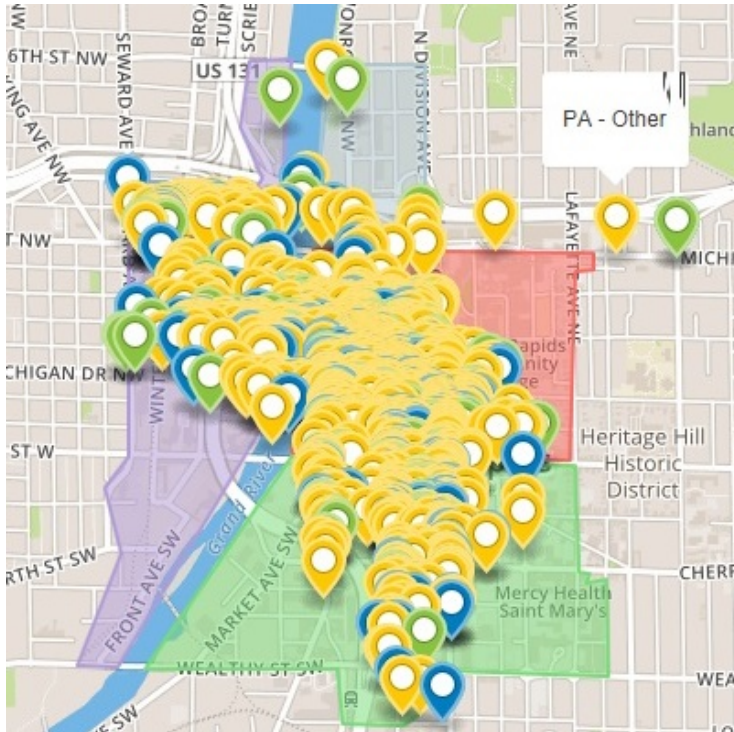
Statistics overview for September 2016 and 2015 shows the ambassador program down over 12,000 contacts from the same period last year. Recruiting for the team has been a constant challenge and we unfortunately went into Art Prize understaffed.

Equipment Usage	Activities	Oct. 2016 Totals	Oct. 2015 Totals	Variance
	ATLV Hours	41	NA	41
	Backpack Blower (hours)	19.5	NA	19.5
	Bicycle (miles)	12	56.2	-44.2
	Billy Goat Hours	23.5	NA	23.5
	Segway Hours	0	16	-16
Engagement	Business Contact	40	279	-239
	Graffiti - Removed	1155	181	974
	Motorist Assist	6	23	-17
	Observation - Fighting	17	34	-17
	Outreach Contact	551	1387	-836
	PA - Directions	1698	2582	-884
	PA - Information	2899	3853	-954
	PA - Other	12759	7208	5551
	PA - Program Information	732	1326	-594
	Panhandling - Aggressive	9	137	-128
	Panhandling - Passive	42	58	-16
	Planters Watered	2810	NA	2810
	Power Washing (block faces)	2	NA	2
	Request for Fire/EMS	9	25	-16
	Request for Police	8	12	-4
	Safety Escort	136	347	-211
	Sidewalk Violation	461	426	35
	Suspicious Package	1	3	-2
	Suspicious Person	11	61	-50
	Trash (Bags collected)	1724	221	1503
	Umbrella Escorts	23	23	0
	Weed Abatement	1029	NA	1029
Totals		26122	18186	7936

Statistics overview for October 2016 and 2015 shows the ambassador program up almost 8,000 contacts from the same period last year. The team was much closer to being fully staffed this month and the warmer weather helped to keep people out and about throughout downtown.

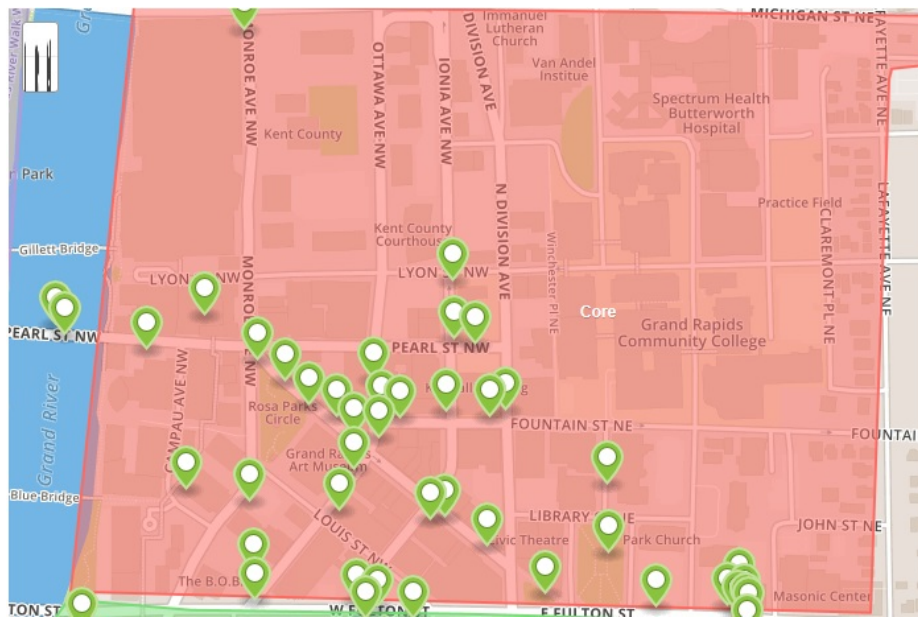


# Statistics – New Capabilities (Preview)



**(Top Left)** Ambassador Statistics by location, the map at left shows all statistics captured for the month of September 2016 throughout the entire district. Currently not all of our statistics are able to be captured with this type of location data, however we will be getting a hardware upgrade that will allow statistics for all ambassadors to be gathered with the corresponding location data.

**(Bottom Left)** With the location data in place we are able to pin point specific tasks and filter down where the ambassadors are gathering the data in the field. We will be able to tailor this data and include it in reports based on the needs of DGRI.



**(Left)** The pinpoints at left indicate various points where graffiti was removed in the downtown core area.



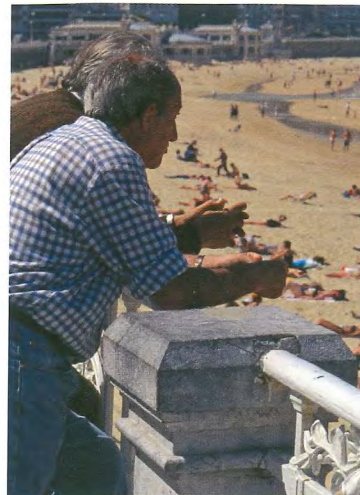
*Necessary activities are an integrated, non optional part of every day. Here we have no choice.*



*Optional activities are recreational and fun. City quality is a decisive prerequisite for this important group of activities.*



*Social activities include all types of contact between people and take place everywhere people go in city space.*



## 1.3 The city as meeting place

there is much more to walking than walking!

As a concept, "life between buildings" includes all of the very different activities people engage in when they use common city space: purposeful walks from place to place, promenades, short stops, longer stays, window shopping, conversations and meetings, exercise, dancing, recreation, street trade, children's play, begging and street entertainment.<sup>19</sup>

Walking is the beginning, the starting point. Man was created to walk, and all of life's events large and small develop when we walk among other people. Life in all its diversity unfolds before us when we are on foot.

In lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities, the prerequisite for city life is good walking opportunities. However, the wider perspective is that a multitude of valuable social and recreational opportunities naturally emerge when you reinforce life on foot.

During the many years in which pedestrian traffic was primarily treated as a form of transport that belonged under the auspices of traffic planning, city life's bounty of nuances and opportunities was largely overlooked or ignored. The terms used were "walking traffic," "pedestrian streams," "sidewalk capacity," and "crossing the street safely."

But in cities there is so much more to walking than walking! There is direct contact between people and the surrounding community, fresh air, time outdoors, the free pleasures of life, experiences and information. And at its core walking is a special form of communion between people who share public space as a platform and framework.

it is also — and most particularly about — the city as meeting place

If we take a closer look at the city life studies mentioned earlier, we can see that in city after city where conditions for life on foot are improved, the extent of walking activities increases significantly. We also see even more extensive growth in social and recreational activities.

As mentioned earlier, more roads invite more traffic. Better conditions for bicyclists invite more people to ride bikes, but by improving the conditions for pedestrians, we not only strengthen pedestrian traffic, we also — and most importantly — strengthen city life.

Thus we can elevate the discussion from traffic issues into a far broader, more wide-ranging and important discussion concerning living conditions and human options in the city.

multifaceted city life

A common characteristic of life in city space is the versatility and complexity of the activities, with much overlapping and frequent shifts be-





tween purposeful walking, stopping, resting, staying and conversing. Unpredictability and unplanned, spontaneous actions are very much part of what makes moving and staying in city space such a special attraction. We are on our way, watching people and events, inspired to stop to look more closely or even to stay or join in.

necessary activities  
— under all conditions

A clear core pattern emerges from the great diversity of activities in city space. One simple way to look at them is to put the most important categories on a scale according to their degree of necessity. At one end of the scale are the purposeful necessary activities, that is, activities that people generally have to undertake: going to work or school, waiting for the bus, bringing goods to customers. These activities take place under all conditions.

optional activities  
— under good conditions

At the other end of this scale are the largely recreational, optional activities that people might like: walking down the promenade, standing up to get a good look at the city, sitting down to enjoy the view or the good weather.

The great majority of the most attractive and popular city activities belong to this group of optional activities, for which good city quality is a prerequisite.

If outdoor conditions make walking and recreating impossible, such as during a snowstorm, just about nothing happens. If conditions are tolerable, the extent of necessary activities grows. If conditions for being outdoors are good, people engage in many necessary activities and also an increasing number of optional ones. Walkers are tempted to stop to enjoy the weather, places and life in the city, or people emerge from their buildings to stay in city space. Chairs are dragged out in front of houses, and children come out to play.

versatile city life depends largely on invitation

For good reason, climate is mentioned as an important factor for the extent and character of outdoor activities. If it is too cold, too hot or too wet, outdoor activities are reduced or rendered impossible.

Another very important factor is the physical quality of city space. Planning and design can be used to influence the extent and character of outdoor activities. Invitations to do something outdoors other than just walking should include protection, security, reasonable space, furniture and visual quality.

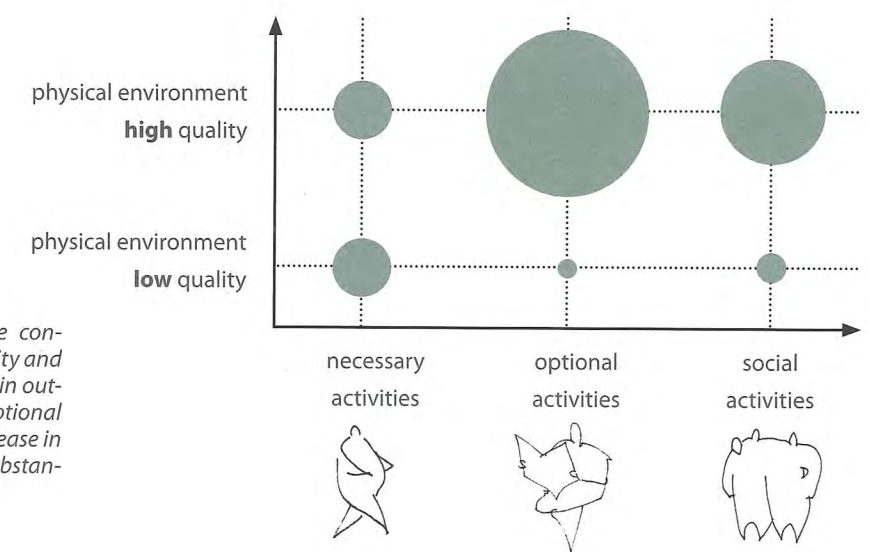
The city life studies mentioned also document the great opportunities for actively inviting people not only to walk but to participate in a versatile and varied city life.

diverse city life – as an old tradition and contemporary city policy

Cities and urban areas can set the stage for specific activities. In the inner city streets of Tokyo, London, Sydney and New York people walk: there isn't room for anything else. In vacation and tourist areas, where passing the time, consumption and pleasure are top priorities, people are invited to stroll and stay a while. In traditional cities such as Venice, people are invited to a versatile and complex city life where there are good conditions for both pedestrian traffic and staying. Corresponding patterns of activity can be found in Copenhagen, Lyon, Melbourne and in other cities, large and small, that have significantly improved conditions for life in city space in recent decades. Pedestrian traffic has grown, and the number of recreational, optional activities has swelled.

interplay between city life and the quality of city space.  
Example: New York

Although pedestrian traffic has traditionally dominated the streets of Manhattan in New York City, in 2007 an extensive program was launched to encourage greater versatility in city life.<sup>20</sup> The idea was to provide better options for recreation and leisure as a supplement to the extensive purposeful pedestrian traffic. For example, on Broadway expanded



Graphic representation of the connection between outdoor quality and outdoor activities. An increase in outdoor quality gives a boost to optional activities in particular. The increase in activity level then invites a substantial increase in social activities.





*In 2009 Broadway in New York City was closed to traffic at Times Square and Herald Square, which brought quiet, dignity and 7,000 more square meters/75,000 square feet to city life. The activity level in the new spaces has been impressive from day one.<sup>21</sup> Left: Times Square before and right after the redesign.*



sidewalks have provided room for café chairs and places to stay, while a number of new car-free areas with many opportunities to stay have been established at Madison Square, Herald Square and Times Square. In all these cases the new opportunities were adopted at once. Almost day-by-day the new invitations have enriched city life and made it far more multifaceted. Even in New York City there is obviously a need for city space and great interest in participating more in city life now that there are more opportunities and solid invitations.

necessary and optional activities  
as prerequisite for social city  
activities

That both the character and the extent of city life are influenced dramatically by the quality of city space is in itself an important connection. The connection becomes even more interesting if we look at the relationships between necessary, optional and the important group of social activities. If city life is reinforced, it creates the preconditions for strengthening all forms of social activity in city space.

social activities  
— the city as meeting place

Social activities include all types of communication between people in city space and require the presence of other people. If there is life and activity in city space, there are also many social exchanges. If city space is desolate and empty, nothing happens.

Social activities include a wide spectrum of diverse activities. There are many passive see and hear contacts: watching people and what is happening. This modest, unpretentious form of contact is the most widespread social city activity anywhere.

There are more active contacts. People exchange greetings and talk to acquaintances they meet. There are chance meetings and small talk at market booths, on benches and wherever people wait. People ask for directions and exchange brief remarks about the weather or when the next bus is due. More extensive contact can sometimes grow from these short

much to look at and important  
information

greetings. New topics and common interests can be discussed. Acquaintanceships can sprout. Unpredictability and spontaneity are key words. Among the more extensive contacts are children's play or the young people who "hang out" and use city space as a meeting place.

Finally, there is a large group of more or less planned common activities: markets, street parties, meetings, parades and demonstrations.

As mentioned earlier, see and hear activities are the largest category of social contact. This is also the form of contact that can most directly be influenced by urban planning. Invitations largely determine whether city spaces have the life that gives people the opportunity to meet. The issue is important because these passive see and hear contacts provide the background and springboard for the other forms of contact. By watching, listening and experiencing others, we gather information about people and the society around us. It is a start.

Experiencing life in the city is also diverting and stimulating entertainment. The scene changes by the minute. There is much to see: behavior, faces, colors and feelings. And these experiences are related to one of the most important themes in human life: people.

"man is man's greatest joy"

The statement that "man is man's greatest joy" comes from Hávamál, a more than 1,000-year-old Icelandic Eddic poem, which succinctly describes human delight and interest in other people. Nothing is more important or more compelling.<sup>22</sup>

Even from their cradles babies strain to see as much as possible, and later they crawl all over their homes to follow the action. Older children bring their toys into the living room or kitchen to be where the action is. Outside play takes place not necessarily on playgrounds or in traffic-free areas, but more often on the street, in parking lots or in front of entrance doors, where the grown-ups are. Young people hang out by entrances and on street corners to follow along with — and perhaps join in — events.



*All over the world, guests at sidewalk cafés turn toward the number one city attraction: city life (Strasbourg, France).*



"man is man's greatest joy"



the city's greatest attraction:  
people

delight in life in the city  
— in perspective drawings

the city as meeting place  
— in an historic perspective

under pressure from the car  
invasion and modernistic  
planning ideology

Girls look at boys and vice versa — throughout their lives. Older people follow the life and activities of the neighborhood from their windows, balconies and benches.

Throughout life we have a constant need for new information about people, about life as it unfolds and about the surrounding society. New information is gathered wherever people are and therefore very much in common city space.

Studies from cities all over the world illuminate the importance of life and activity as an urban attraction. People gather where things are happening and spontaneously seek the presence of other people.

Faced with the choice walking down a deserted or a lively street, most people would choose the street with life and activity. The walk will be more interesting and feel safer. Studies from inner-city shopping streets in Copenhagen show how happenings, events and building sites where we can watch people perform, play music or build houses attract far more people to linger and watch than shops along building façades. Studies of benches and chairs in city space show correspondingly that the seats with the best view of city life are used far more frequently than those that do not offer a view of other people.<sup>23</sup>

The placement and use of café chairs tells a similar story. The most important attraction of a sidewalk café has always been the sidewalk and thus the view of life in the city, and the majority of café chairs are placed accordingly.

Nothing speaks greater volumes about "life between buildings" as an attraction than the architect's perspective drawings. Regardless of whether the human dimension is carefully treated or totally neglected in the projects, the drawings are full of cheerful, happy people. The many people depicted in the drawings give projects an aura of happiness and attractiveness, sending the signal that good human qualities are in abundance, whether or not this is the case. That people are people's greatest delight is obvious — at least in the drawings!

Throughout history city space has functioned as a meeting place on many levels for city dwellers. People met, exchanged news, made deals, arranged marriages — street artists entertained and goods were offered for sale. People attended city events large and small. Processions were held, power was manifested, parties and punishments held publicly — everything was carried out in full public view. The city was the meeting place.

City space continued to function as an important social meeting place in the 20th century, until the planning ideals of modernism prevailed and coincided with the car invasion. The discussion of "death and life" in cities, raised defiantly by Jane Jacob's book in 1961, dealt in large part with



the neglected cities  
— and city life cancelled!

the city as meeting place  
— in the 21st century

the gradual breakdown of the opportunities of city space to function as a meeting place.<sup>24</sup> Even though the discussion has continued since then, city life has in many places continued to be squeezed out of city space.

Dominant planning ideologies have rejected city space and city life as untimely and unnecessary. Planning has been heavily dedicated to the ideal of developing a rational and streamlined setting for necessary activities. Increasing car traffic has swept city life off the stage or made travel by foot totally impossible. Trade and service functions have largely been concentrated in large indoor shopping malls.

We can see the results of these trends in many cities, particularly in the southern USA. In many cases people have abandoned cities and it is largely impossible to get to the various facilities in the city without a car. Pedestrianism, city life and the city as meeting place have all been cancelled.

Access to indirect information and contacts has grown explosively in recent years. The TV, internet, e-mail and mobile telephone give us extensive and easily accessible contact to people all over the world. From time to time the question arises: can the function of city space as meeting place now be taken over by the host of electronic options?

The development of life in cities in recent years suggests a completely different picture. Here the indirect contacts and stream of images depicting what others have experienced in other places does not out compete life in public spaces, but rather stimulates people to join in and play an active personal role. Opportunities to be there in person, face-to-face meetings and the surprising and unpredictable character of experiences are qualities tied to city space as meeting place.

*Towns devoid of people are a widespread phenomenon in the southern United States. Pedestrians and city life have given up and everything must be done by car (Clarksdale, Mississippi).*



*New indirect forms of communication are on the march. They can supplement but not replace direct meetings between people.*



It is interesting to note that in these very same decades in which city life has undergone a remarkable renaissance, electronic means of contact have been introduced. We need both options.

Many social changes, particularly in the wealthiest parts of the world, can explain the increased interest in getting about and staying in the city's common space. Longevity, plentiful free time and better economy in general have left more time and more resources for recreation and pleasure.

By 2009, half of Copenhagen's households were inhabited by only one person.<sup>25</sup> Shrinking households increase the need for social contacts outside the home. As a result of the numerous changes in the way society and the economy are organized, many people now live an in-

*Walking in the city invites direct experiences for all senses as well as attractive extra opportunities to exchange smiles and glances (Robson Street, Vancouver, Canada).*







Public space has significant social importance as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions.



creasingly more privatized life with private residence, private car, private household machines and private offices. In this situation we see steadily growing interest in strengthening contacts to the civil society at large.

These new opportunities and needs can largely explain the dramatic increase in the use of the city's common space that is evident in all the cities that have worked in recent years with reviving invitations to city life.

city as meeting place  
— in a societal perspective

To a far greater extent than private commercial arenas, public democratically managed city space provides access and opportunities for all groups of society to express themselves and latitude for non-mainstream activities.

The spectrum of activities and actors demonstrates the opportunities for public city space generally to strengthen social sustainability. It is a significant quality that all groups of society, regardless of age, income, status, religion or ethnic background, can meet face to face in city space as they go about their daily business. This is a good way to provide general information to everyone about the composition and universality of society. It also makes people feel more secure and confident about experiencing the common human values played out in many different contexts.

Newspapers and TV represent the opposite of this obvious opportunity for people to experience firsthand the daily life of the city. The information these media communicate focuses mainly on reports of accidents and attacks, and presents a distorted picture of what actually goes on in society. Fear and gross generalizations abound in this kind of atmosphere.

It is interesting to note that crime prevention strategies emphasize strengthening common space so that meeting people from various groups of society is a routine part of everyday life. We can think of close-

the democratic dimension

the city as meeting place  
— small events and large perspectives

cities by people and for people

ness, trust and mutual consideration as the direct opposites of walls, gates and more police presence on the street.

Public interests determine the playing rules in the common space of the city and thus help to ensure people's opportunities to exchange personal, cultural and political messages.

The importance of city space is underlined in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which sets out freedom of speech and the right of assembly for its citizens. This importance is also underscored by the frequent bans on assembly in city space decreed by totalitarian regimes.

As an open and accessible interface between people, city space provides an important arena for large political meetings, demonstrations and protests, as well as for more modest activities such as collecting signatures, handing out flyers or staging happenings or protests.

Social sustainability, security, confidence, democracy and freedom of speech are key concepts for describing societal perspectives tied to the city as meeting place.

Life in city space is all-encompassing: from momentary glances to minor events to the largest collective manifestations. Walking through common city space can be a goal in itself – but also a beginning.

Unlike the city space of Venice, the reconquered city space in Copenhagen, Melbourne and New York does not represent a nostalgic traditional idyll. These are contemporary cities with solid economies, large populations and versatile city functions. What is remarkable about them is that they reflect a growing understanding that cities must be designed to invite pedestrian traffic and city life. These cities recognize the importance of pedestrian traffic and bicyclists for sustainability and health in society, and they acknowledge the importance of city life as an attractive, informal and democratic meeting place for their residents in the 21st century.

After almost 50 years of neglect of the human dimension, here at the beginning of the 21st century we have an urgent need and growing willingness to once again create cities for people.