

# Urban design and cities



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**How cities be improved by urban design? Comment on the difficult of new project.****ABSTRACT**

In this essay I will look at the ways in which urban design might be useful by pre-existing cities in an effort to improve functionality, sustainability and the general living experience for city residents. I will focus on the need for quality in urban planning and design, looking at ways in which planning and design must be integrated as a creative and utilitarian process, not ignoring the end goal of regenerating urban space and improving living conditions and the different between traditionalism and modernism. I will examine the theory of 'cities of tomorrow', exploring the ways in which previous generations have planned for the future through urban design, and also study the developments being made by today's planners and designers to prepare for a new futuristic movement in architecture and design.

In order to combat the mistakes of the past and the potential for failings in the future I will look at confusion in urban design, described by Lang as originating from three disciplines working in an unorganized and competitions fashion.

In the final section of this essay I will examine the theory of sustainability, and the ways in which planning and design strategies are being created around the need for sustainable urban regeneration, particularly in older cities where resources and space may be limited. It is in these areas where successful urban design will provide the most benefits, building on the foundations of pre-existing developed land and incorporating the design and planning knowledge of the past with that of today.

**The Problem**

Urban design is a term focuses on improvement of environment physically, and later in implementation it focuses on managing the development (private) by planning schemes and different legal development controls.

The question arises how cities can be improved through urban design? The cities can be established in terms of economic patterns, land use and development, environmental perfection and in the quality of life.

**Economic**

Research predicts that the people who want to purchase houses are will to pay more if the neighborhood is more pedestrian oriented. A survey of Americans was taken which elaborates the people are concern with sidewalks and areas to walk and exercise for fun is important to almost 79 percent and very important 44 percent. (Belden, Russonello and Stewart).

The informative and service providing essence of the new economy flourishes the network, creates accessibility and the creativity that the pedestrian oriented communities have a tendency to develop. (Ryan). It was founded by the American Economic Review that by doubling the population density, a 6 percent of productivity can be improved thought out the remaining estate.

A good urban design also has the influence on trade and local economies. Planners make every effort for walk able place for pedestrians. There should be specified routes and wider areas for consumers rather than having broad roads and narrow walk able passages. The less traffic and its slow pace the commercial area will be more visible to the customers from which more

business can be encouraged. The more the people are on streets the more the local business will be served. The study of most of the 22 U. S cities indicates that administrations have started their multi lane traffic in order to slowdown the pace of traffic through which pedestrian feel more comfortable, business activities are improved, more investments on the street. However a protective environment will be created with the improved livability, attraction and a sense of society. (Victoria Transport Policy Institute).

### **Land Use and Development**

The experts have suggested that the traditional theories of urban design have precious benefits for good urban design such as mass transit, intensive land uses or vertical growth and mixed land use development. They also suggest that green belts are positive areas in residential development to avoid environmental pollution. According to the most of scholars horizontal expansion of the cities should be avoided to decrease the cost of living.

### **Environmental**

It has been believed that there are not direct advantages of environment from the improvement of urban design. However it is noteworthy that by designing a city in a compact form avoids the environmental pollution or CO<sub>2</sub> generated by a large number of vehicles. (Ewing et al).

Many studies have been done on environmental pollution or generation of green house gases which can create problems within horizontal extension of cities due to a large number of traffic. According to the study in California by improving the compact design of a city reduced 20 percent less emission per household compared with household in suburbs.(Cervero)

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One of the key components is the drainage system of the city. Urban design economizes its cost through the compact development. The studies in New Jersey suggested that 30 percent reduction in runoff and 83 percent water utilization can be reduced through the compact development compared to the traditional suburban development.

### **Quality of Life**

The core importance of urban design is to improve the quality of lifestyle. The economic growth and environmental perfection is useless unless people are facilitated. The modern urban design flourishes the standards of living. Compact development beautifies the societies through walkable neighborhood and the set up of green places.

The smart growth movement emerged in the USA in the mid 1990's. Major principles of smart growth were mix land uses, take advantage of compact building design, create a range of housing opportunities and choices attractive communities with a strong sense of place, provide variety of transport choices preserve open space, form land, natural beauty and critical environmental areas make development decisions predictable, fare and cost-effective. Smart growth is concerned to protect land from (premature) development and promote development in desired directions. (Michael Pacione)

Second question arises that what hindrances will be faced in order to implement a new urban design?

### **Functional Integration or Mixed Used Development**

Functional Integration or Mixed Used Development is an anchor of new town building. Duany et al in this book Suburban Nation advice developers to build corner stores within every new neighborhood this can lead to even more retail development that is well connected to the rest of the neighborhood. The idea of mixed land use is an idealistic situation which will not be appropriate. In addition to functional integration they note more socio-economic and life-cycle integration by encouraging the mixture of income levels and generations in their neighborhoods.

### **High Density in the Central City**

The suggestion of compact development may create traffic congestion and high density of population near commercial zones.

### **Economic Constraints**

The development programs require a large space of land; the modern urban design can be too expensive to most of the developers. The degree of such programs is sensitive to the market conditions that can not give developers less priority to the design principles according to New Urbanism professionals.

### **Zoning**

Another barrier to a modern urban design is to confront zoning. Zoning is simply the establishment of district that permits on specified types of land use. It became the best, most politically attractive way to control nuisances and to maintain the property values. In contrast the modernization in urban design encourages integrated land uses.

**Background to the Problem**

Urban design has rich history, dating back to the ancient Greeks. It was Hippodamus who introduced the idea that settlements could be designed in a rationale and orderly way. Of course such sentiments did not always lead to ordered communities. Some communities were exceptionally well ordered often a long cosmological line, with the city being setup as a microcosm of heaven on earth, with particular attention paid to the orientation of the structures within the city and to the city itself.

Urban design can be well thought-out as branch of the wider field of urban planning. Professional planning began to take form in the late 19th Century, as urban areas grew larger and more complex. By the early 20th century, planning moved away from the ideals of a few charismatic visionaries towards the practice of a cadre of dedicated and certified professionals. Today planning is carried out by many people who would not necessarily be considered professional planners. Professional planning has evolved as means to add rational thought, methods and experience to the process.

Changes in urban form over time, from pre-industrial to post industrial/ post modern cities, have been accompanied by change in the dominant form of architecture.

**Research Design**

The devised research design for the above study is:

1. To collect data by primary and secondary sources.
2. To analyze data by using qualitative and quantitative methods

3. To review existing literature related to the study.
4. To look at the ways in which urban design might be useful by pre-existing cities in an effort to improve functionality, sustainability and the general living experience for city residents.
5. To focus on the need for quality in urban planning and design, looking at ways in which planning and design must be integrated as a creative and utilitarian process, not ignoring the end goal of regenerating urban space and improving living conditions and the different between traditionalism and modernism
6. To examine the theory of ‘ cities of tomorrow’, exploring the ways in which previous generations have planned for the future through urban design
7. To study the developments being made by today’s planners and designers to prepare for a new futuristic movement in architecture and design.
8. To look at confusion in urban design, described by Lang in order to combat the mistakes of the past and the potential for failings in the future as originating from three disciplines working in an unorganized and competitions fashion.
9. To examine the theory of sustainability, and the ways in which planning and design strategies are being created around the need for sustainable urban regeneration, particularly in older cities where resources and space may be limited. It is in these areas where successful urban design will provide the most benefits, building on the foundations of pre-existing



developed land and incorporating the design and planning knowledge of the past with that of today.

### **Expected Results**

Expected results will be relied on the Lang's theory of Distributing Responsibilities thought which complexity in urban design can be resolved. According to him the cities of tomorrow would be the combined effort of different specializations like geographers for site selection, engineers, architects, developers and planners which will accompanied by the sustainable growth in each sector.

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