

Introductory Report Track 2:

Valuing What Already Exists

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Urban planning is today recognised as one of the most important tools for delivering sustainable development at the local level. Planners, architects and other city design professionals are increasingly called upon to manage urban change in proactive ways that will protect and enhance long-term quality of life and environment.

Planning is not just a starting point; it is a process and a collaborative one at that. It is not static but evolving over time as it adapts to new challenges even as it remains true to its core principles. This brings inevitable choices among different values, objectives and uses including among modern and historic architecture, new and old economy, etc. The negotiation of choices has created both challenges and opportunities to learn from the past and the existing as planners and other city design professionals generate new functions and future growth that ‘make the difference’.

The Call for Papers for the 49th Congress has posed a number of inter-related questions in the present discussion of valuing what already exists:

- How do cities protect or create their identities given rapid urbanization and how do they adapt to change?
- What strategies should be used to evaluate the trade-offs between urban renewal, gentrification, protection of historic sites and neighbourhoods, and the inevitability of urban expansion? How could a reorientation of values from economy-driven development to striving for liveability be achieved?
- How can existing assets be valued and compared with future assets? In short, what planning practices have been shown to succeed, what works, what doesn't? How could long-term thinking start to replace short-term profit orientation?
- Are new or re-shaped models of planning and urban design practice required to protect what already exists? How can - after decades of international uniformity – a respect for the “genius loci” and a more sensitive approach to the individual situation be regained, especially in light of the revived appreciation for identity?

Track 2 presents a total of 31 papers, drawing from both research and practice. Many of the papers are grounded in empirical and case studies, explicating the policies and practices implemented by a cross-

section of large, medium and small cities in the developed and developing countries. A number of the papers are theoretical expositions, expounding frameworks and models to better guide planners' work in urban management and design.

The 31 papers are structured around two focus areas – sub-theme 1: wider ecological impact of urbanization and sustainable communities; and sub-theme 2: dealing with urbanization on the macro- to micro-scale, learning from existing qualities in cities and neighbourhoods. These two main themes are discussed over several sessions. The intent is to leave enough time for dialogue and discussion among speakers and session participants.

2.1: Actualising Sustainable Communities

Against the stark reality of climate change has come renewed attention on sustainable development and development programmes that achieve the economic, ecological and social objectives that define sustainable development.

How to plan a more resilient, future-proof city has become a preoccupation of many planners, especially among those working with coastal cities. The discussion under this sub-theme will interrogate recent work on simulations, tools and impacts (current and future) of sustainable community development including the issues of increasing population and population density, employment and employment distribution, public transport coverage and shifting economic climate, water quality and building energy consumption, environment and climate change as well as possible solutions. It will highlight the values and potentials of sustainable communities through developments such as urban waterfronts and post-disaster reconstruction.

It will also reflect on the vulnerabilities and threats including those stemming from wrong planning decisions, illustrated by case studies. Organized over two consecutive sessions, the 12 papers in this sub-theme span a broad geographical coverage, from Australia to Europe, the Caribbean and Asia.

2.2: Dealing with Urbanization

Urban development is here to stay. Over 50% of the world's population is living in cities. This growth is expected to continue and accelerate in the coming decades, especially in the developing countries of Africa and Asia. This will have serious development implications for cities (the population growth receptacles) as well as rural areas (the population depletion areas). How to plan for healthy, quality urbanization will challenge planners in the years ahead.

What kinds of identities, regulatory and governance structures, forms and territorial approaches will be required to equilibrate and effectively deal with the impacts of rapid urbanization? Can we move towards a new kind of urbanization and a new model of city development that is low carbon and provide improved treatment and access to social services? Is it possible to build on the intellectual agitation of urban life - its economics (e.g. informal urban economy), social needs (e.g. food, housing rights, poverty)

and physical dimensions (e.g. green space, transport and infrastructure) - to bring about win-win developments for both urban and rural areas?

This sub-theme hosts two lines of inquiry. The first, comprising 5 papers, discusses macro scale issues, exploring the range of urban challenges from migration, food and housing needs, mining and environment to urban heat island effect and water quality including impacts on indigenous people. Urban innovations and solutions such as green infrastructure and various other instruments of territorial management are also discussed. The role of land use and spatial plans are addressed in the presentations.

The second line of inquiry turns the focus to micro scale issues such as the development of urban neighbourhoods, urban regeneration, cultural resources, the built environment and zoning. How to protect and reuse cultural and heritage resources? How to integrate new and old urban developments in the dynamics of urban change? How to ensure long-lasting quality of design? What are the approaches, methods and tools to help planners and other city design professionals gain a better understanding of these micro scale issues and guide local development while enhancing liveability and sense of place?

A special focus is on cities refocusing on their identity and thereby the rediscovery of the importance of the public realm. Arranged over two consecutive sessions, the collection of 14 papers offers a panorama appreciation of some of the development opportunities and tensions confronting cities in balancing a city's past and future, its economics versus preservation of the built heritage in countries around the world, from Australia, Canada, Poland, Portugal, Norway to Africa, China, India and Turkey.