

Strategies for Public Space Utilization

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Abstract : Social life revolves around a central meeting place or gathering space. It is where the community integrates, earns social skills, and ultimately becomes part of the community. Following this premise, public spaces are one of the most important spaces that downtowns offer, providing locations for people to be witnessed, heard, and most importantly, seamlessly integrate into the downtown as part of the community. To facilitate this, these local spaces must be envisioned and designed to meet the changing needs of a downtown, offering a space and purpose for everyone. This paper will dive deep into analyzing, designing, and implementing public space design for small plazas or gathering spaces. These spaces often require a detailed level of study, followed by a broad stroke of design implementation, allowing for adaptability. This paper will highlight how to assess needs, define needed types of spaces, outline a program for spaces, detail elements of design to meet the needs, assess your new space, and plan for change. This study will provide participants with the necessary framework for conducting a grass-roots-level assessment of public space and programming, including short-term and long-term improvements. Participants will also receive assessment tools, sheets, and visual representation diagrams. Urbanism, for the sake of urbanism, is an exercise in aesthetic beauty. An economic improvement or benefit must be attained to solidify these efforts' purpose further and justify the infrastructure or construction costs. We will deep dive into case studies highlighting economic impacts to ground this work in quantitative impacts. These case studies will highlight the financial impact on an area, measuring the following metrics: rental rates (per sq meter), tax revenue generation (sales and property), foot traffic generation, increased property valuations, currency expenditure by tenure, clustered development improvements, cost/valuation benefits of increased density in housing. The economic impact results will be targeted by community size, measuring in three tiers: Sub 10,000 in population, 10,001 to 75,000 in population, and 75,000+ in population. Through this classification breakdown, the participants can gauge the impact in communities similar to their work or for which they are responsible. Finally, a detailed analysis of specific urbanism enhancements, such as plazas, on-street dining, pedestrian malls, etc., will be discussed. Metrics that document the economic impact of each enhancement will be presented, aiding in the prioritization of improvements for each community. All materials, documents, and information will be available to participants via Google Drive. They are welcome to download the data and use it for their purposes.

Keywords : downtown, economic development, planning, strategic

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