

Metropolis Annual meetings

“Circles of Sustainability and Integrated Urban Governance”

A joint Melbourne-Berlin session – 17 July 2013

Presenters:	<p>Mary lewin Manager International Affairs, Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (Melbourne), and Director, Metropolis Initiative “Integrated Strategic Planning and PPPs”</p> <p>Hanns-Uve Schwedler Managing Director, European Academy of the Urban Environments (representing Barbara Berninger, Regional Secretary for Europe: Metropolis)</p> <p>Yondela Silimela Executive Director, Development Planning, City of Johannesburg</p> <p>Eugène Zapata International Adviser to the Mayor, Mexico City</p> <p>Renu Khosla Director, Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), New Delhi</p> <p>Petra Warman, Expert Trainer on ‘Crime Prevention through Environmental Design’, Berlin</p> <p>Paul James Director, RMIT Global Cities Research Institute, and Director, UN Global Compact Cities Program, Melbourne</p>
Facilitator:	<p>Sunil Dubey Metropolis Country Advisor – India (Sydney)</p>

This session related to the Melbourne led ‘*Integrated Strategic Planning and Public Private Partnerships*’, and the Berlin led ‘*Integrated Urban Governance – Successful Policy Transfer*’ initiatives. The meeting was co-chaired by Mary Lewin and Hanns-Uve Schwedler (who represented Barbara Berninger).

The session consisted of two parts. The first included presentations on integrated urban policies and projects that highlighted the challenges, benefits, as well as the pitfalls of integrated approaches to governance. The second enabled participants to familiarise themselves with the ‘Circles of Sustainability’ methodology as a tool for assessing the sustainability of their cities.

1. Summary of presentations

Hanns-Uve Schwedler, provided an overview of the Berlin Initiative, '*Integrated Urban Governance – Successful Policy Transfer*' with its focus on identifying successful policies of integrated urban governance and the sharing of experiences with other cities, and how an integrated approach to governance can assist in realising sustainability goals.

He acknowledged the synergies with the Melbourne led '*Integrated Strategic Planning and Public-Private Partnerships*' initiative, notwithstanding their different foci with Berlin's priority on inter-city learning and peer reviews, and Melbourne's on capacity building and stakeholders involvement in the strategic planning process.

Mary Lewin provided an overview of the *Integrated Strategic Planning and Public Private Partnerships* project with its focus on building the capabilities of key Indian government and municipal staff in the use of integrated strategic planning methods with community and business sector participation in the decision making and implementation processes.

The challenges of rapid urbanisation with attendant environmental degradation and social disparities were highlighted, as were the critical factors that impact on the ability of cities to respond to those challenges, e.g. availability of requisite funding, robust governance processes, and workforce expertise. To meet those challenges head on, an integrated strategic planning approach that engages with all key stakeholders is vital for considered and efficient responses – ones that meets the needs of the community overall.

The role of government in a market driven economy was also explored: how do they correct market failures such as unemployment and inflation, and how they go about redistributing wealth? It was contended that such responsibilities cannot be left to the private sector. In promoting sustainable economic development, governments need to take necessary steps to minimise environmental impact and guarantee social justice.

Yondela Silimela, in her presentation titled '*The Joburg paradigm – directing the development trajectory*', spoke about the challenges her city faces and the use of integrated and inclusive strategic planning approaches to achieve sustainable urban development. The new paradigm underlines the future development of Johannesburg, transforming it into a resilient, sustainable and liveable city.



Children celebrating the opening of a new community park at Sophiatown, developed as part of an *Extreme Park Makeover* program.

In this context urban environments are seen as landscapes within which to reduce inefficient administration, minimise social divides, and improve significantly the life of the urban poor. An important aspect of this trajectory is the city's aim to overcome divisions created in the past through the apartheid spatial planning. This transformation includes the use of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to establish a compact urban form aligned to 'Corridors of Freedom' that connect different parts of the city via existing mobility forms and other transport forms, to ensure the 'right to the city'.

Critical aspects of this integrated approach include:

- A robust, but flexible, administration that builds partnerships with key players in the urban space.
- Holistic land-use tools that are supported by appropriate levels of funding.
- Emphasis on the four domains that underpin the new paradigm: human and social development, economic growth, environment and services, and governance.
- Consultative, participatory mechanisms that involve all the key stakeholders, that empower members of the community and counter the prevalent cycle of dependence.

Eugene Zapata Garesché spoke about the Mexico City's '*Participatory Neighbourhood Improvement Program*' that is being implemented in an urban environment that embodies a concentration of challenges: slum areas with defective urban infrastructure, environmental degradation, income disparities, rampant crime, lack of community spaces, and absence of community pride and ownership. The program focuses on the sustainable recovery of public space through citizen participation in each step of the implementation process, from the selection of improvement projects to design, budgeting, management and evaluation. It seeks to promote the 'right to the city' for all the inhabitants of Mexico City, engendering a sense of community, and reducing crime rates.

The program was introduced in 2007 with a goal to improve 200 public spaces each year. In 2012 a total of 213 projects were approved from a total of 750 submissions, clearly signifying high level of community acceptance.

An example of a successful project is the New Tenochtitlán, a neighbourhood skating rink which was built in an abandoned field with the support of neighbours, in response to ongoing complaints about the dangers of this neglected space. At a neighbourhood meeting local youths expressed their desire for a recreational space and undertook responsibility for its construction. Following its adoption by the community, the project was allocated a budget of 687,000 pesos (about USD 45,000). Young people now practice their skating with the neighbours regularly sponsoring their contests.



Youths at the New Tenochtitlán skating rink.

An important lesson was that such projects are frequently more about partnerships, empowerment and a sense of belonging rather than the infrastructure, with the greatest benefits gained by community members. Significantly, the Participatory Neighbourhood Improvement Program won three international awards, in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Renu Khosla's presentation '*Informalising the Formal: Unthinking Inclusion*' provided examples of successful involvement by local communities in the development of sanitation and wastewater facilities that serve as models for future inclusive planning.

Savda Ghevra, a suburb on the periphery of Delhi, was established as part of a slum resettlement program but where the authorities literally forgot to include essential sewerage infrastructure. And although community toilets were provided, these proved impractical and the inhabitants who could not afford the costly individual toilets with septic tanks, defecated in the open. A creative solution was realised through a CURE led project to build a cluster of septic tanks, but which required municipal authorities to be more practical and relax rigid regulatory controls in poor neighbourhoods. The project was undertaken in partnership with the local inhabitants who carried on intense on-the-ground research to identify and prioritise needs and expectations, and who participated not only in the planning process but also in the construction of the septic tanks and the laying of the interconnecting pipes. The outcome is a cluster-based sanitation system which lends itself to gradual improvement over time by individual home owners, via the installation of simple elements such as rainwater collectors, individual basic toilet bowls and shared black water collection.

The second project was the Taj East Drainage Improvement Plan, which related to the establishment of a sewerage system in a slum area to the east of the Taj Mahal and included the construction of a drain, collection and treatment of liquid wastes, collection and disposal of solid wastes, and landscaping of surface drains as safe community spaces. Given the significance of the Taj Mahal, the project was led by the Tourism Department, starting with a small circles of partners (local agencies, CURE and the community) who collaborated in evaluating possible solutions that ultimately led to the pooling of resources, allocating budgets and amending bylaws to facilitate a common intervention plan. The circle of partners grew over time to include the Water Trust, other government departments and donor agencies.

Both examples reflect the importance of participatory mechanisms that go beyond tokenism and are sincere about stakeholder engagement. An important lesson was that authorities need to be flexible and less formal when dealing with community needs that require innovative and nuanced solutions.



Construction of the septic system.

Petra Warman shared Berlin's experience in creating sustainable public spaces in her presentation '*Place making – Safer Cities as an Interdisciplinary Task*'. The concept of 'place making' allows cities to work with community members in identifying resources needed to convert spaces into accessible, well designed, functional and safe areas for people. Intrinsic to this concept is the understanding of community expectations, how people experience public spaces, and that functionality alone is not sufficient if members of the public do not feel safe. Thus public spaces are defined as places that are welcoming and enjoyable and in which everyone feels safe; places that are open and do not have structures or hedges that may hide criminal activities (assault, theft etc).

A key consideration in this approach was that design alone does not create a public space, and that the creation of successful public places demands made-to-measure solutions.



Places for people

The Berlin authorities' preferred approach was that people create public spaces, and therefore need to be involved in the planning process. This approach is underpinned by the premise that public spaces are essential to healthy neighbourhoods as they contribute to social cohesion and engender a strong sense of ownership.

Key findings of Part 1

- Sustainability is complex and requires the involvement of all the key stakeholders – government, community and the business sector.
- In a context of ever-increasing urbanisation and diversity, inclusive cities cannot be managed effectively in isolation.
- Entrenching sustainability in urban strategic planning is an ongoing process of careful analysis and of balancing between competing goals.
- Public spaces are not about design alone. Their creation entails community participation in all aspects of their development.
- Participatory budgeting is a tangible way in which communities can be involved in and own development projects. Costs are frequently insignificant when contrasted with the benefits to the community.
- Real community participation extends well beyond the surveying of stakeholders for their opinions. It requires a paradigm shift in the way authorities engage with the community, to identify alternative solutions that truly reflect their needs. With real participation comes a sense of belonging.

In closing Part 1 of the session, **Sunil dubey** noted the importance of inter-city relations and that such engagement, frequently, yielded better outcomes than nation-to-nation interactions. He also acknowledged the importance of networks such as Metropolis, as they provide structured opportunities for inter-city engagement.



The presenters at the first session, from left to right. Standing: Renu Khosla, Petra Warman, Yondela Silimela, Sunil Dubey. Seated: Eugene Zapata, Mary Lewin, Hanns-Uve Schwedler

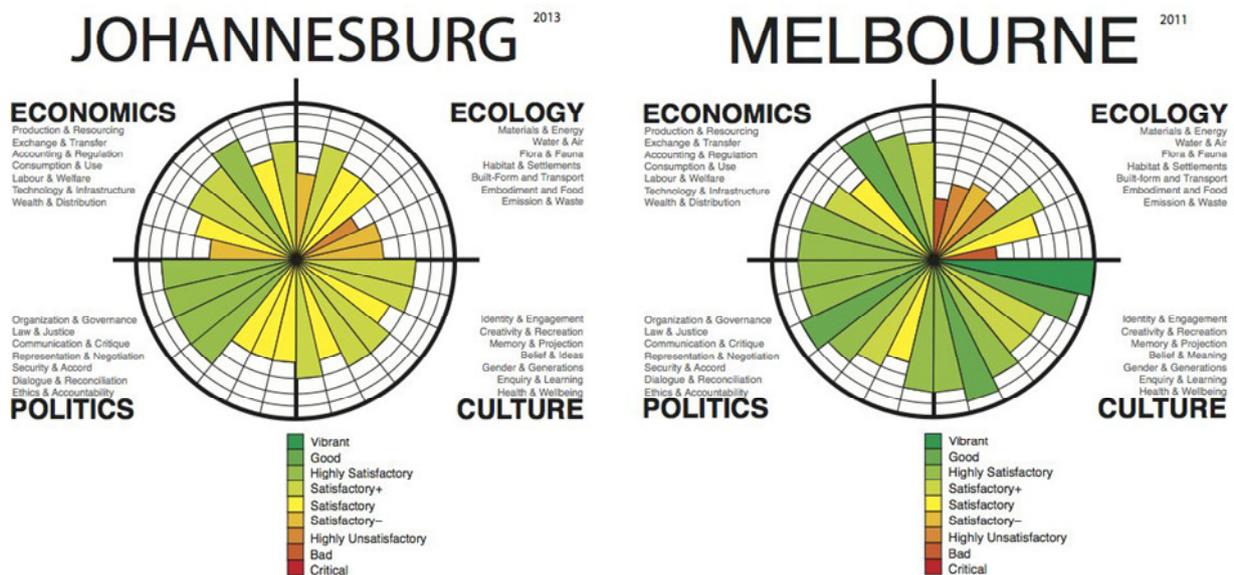
2. Circles of Sustainability methodology

Paul James drew on the ideas arising from the initial presentations, pointing out that although the concept of 'sustainability' features increasingly in our daily discourse, its associated complexity frequently acts as a barrier to the establishment of measurement systems and prevents appropriate responses. While many see the growth of cities as bringing prosperity and contributing to well-being, he proposed that cities often hinder the realisation of these ideals. Therefore, increasing the sustainable liveability of cities is vital and requires careful management and balancing of contradictory pressures (e.g. exclusion/inclusion; needs/limits; mobility/belonging).



The Circles of Sustainability is a methodology for integrated strategic planning and a tool for assessing the sustainability of cities. It is used by cities to deal with seemingly intractable and complex issues, and allows for analysis across four interrelated domains: economy, ecology, politics and culture. In this way, sustainability extends beyond the traditional focus on the environment, building a holistic understanding of a city's unique strengths and areas of weakness. The tool serves as a mechanism for "continuous improvement through reflexive learning", with analysis taking place through steps that include engagement with individuals, the community, policy documents and publicly available data. Each step in the analysis pathway assists in driving improved understanding of sustainability.

Applying the methodology to Johannesburg resulted in a preliminary 'map' of the city's sustainability levels. For comparison purposes, the map was juxtaposed with that of Melbourne:



In the case of Johannesburg, the area of governance emerged as most 'sustainable', with further work required in the other three domains. By contrast, Melbourne emerges as least sustainable in the ecology area.

While appearing simple at face value, the Circles of Sustainability tool also draw attention to potentially unintended consequences that one set of targets may have on others, especially with a global view of urban targets and the resulting behaviours needed to drive balanced and sustainable development.