

A15 - Urban Design 1: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century at Home and Lessons From Abroad

Presentation # 1 title: Metro Vancouver's New Regional Growth Strategy: Can Metro Vancouver Meet the Challenges of the 21st century?

Presenters:

Christina DeMarco – Metro Vancouver
Judy McLeod - City of Surrey

Abstract

This proposal is all about putting in place a new Regional Growth Strategy that will help the region maintain livability but advance sustainability at the same time, while looking out to a 2040 time horizon. The RGS has been in progress for many years. By the time the Land Summit is held, it is hoped it will be reaching its final stages. The presentation will focus on the many challenges this RGS has had to address; - this is the first regional plan that has to address the mitigation and adaptation challenges of climate change - governance- this plan needs to address changes in the Local Government Act, new governance for TransLink, the regional district model, relationship with the Province and implications for land use and transportation integration - also needs to address critical affordable housing issues, provide explicit economic goals and policies, reinforce Green Zone and farmland policies and grapple with the 'Regulation' versus 'Guidance tools' of regional planning

Speaker Biography

Christina DeMarco is the Manager of Regional Development with Metro Vancouver, formerly known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District. She has worked as a city and regional planner in Ontario, BC, and in Australia. She specializes in the relationship between land use and transportation planning, with particular emphasis on how job location shapes regions and cities. During her ten years in Australia she worked on the metropolitan plans for Sydney, Canberra, and Perth. As a planner with the City of Vancouver she was author of the City's Industrial Land Strategy and a team member on the City's Transportation Plan and CityPlan. Among her projects at Metro Vancouver, she created a comprehensive regional industrial land inventory. She is now leading a team to prepare a new regional growth strategy for the Metro Vancouver. The time horizon for the new strategy is 2040, by which time the region's population could add over 1,000,000 people and 500,000 jobs bringing the population to 3.2 million people and 1.6 million jobs. Chris is the co-author of two planning books and numerous articles. She has a MSc in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Toronto.

Presentation # 2 title: Learning from Abroad: Knowledge Transfer and Approaches to Sustainable Development

Presenter:

Jesus J. Lara - Ohio State University

Abstract

In only fifty years, the Phoenix metropolitan area has expanded from a small desert town into one of the largest urban areas in the United States. Today, it has one of the fastest rates of growth in the nation with an annual rate of 4.5%. This area has grown during a period in urban development that largely ignored local topography, climate, culture, and history. The result has been a sprawling metropolitan area with an ever increasing ecological footprint and a standardized urban design and infrastructure that works against its environmental setting rather than with it. Currently, the city of Phoenix is going through a process of urban revitalization with an increasing demand for urban living and commerce. This research explores sustainable urban design and its potential applications in the metropolitan Phoenix area through an investigation of the Dutch model. The Dutch have successfully dealt with sustainable urban design approaches and their practices represent an unusual learning opportunity for Phoenix. The Netherlands'

experience suggests three strategies/themes for rendering Phoenix a more sustainable urban form. These include the strategic planning and development of urban extensions, compact infill, and modernizing infrastructure. In the quest to find ways to improve the urban condition, getting the design and quality of the urban fabric right are crucial conditions for creating more sustainable communities. The right quality of urban fabric means that we must create well-designed places that put people first and make efficient use of the available space and environmental resources. Well-designed places require critical and multifaceted policy, analysis, and designs, taking into account the land, history, society and economics. In addition, well-designed places are urban interventions that have to be able to respond to current forces that make it difficult to achieve high-quality design such as population migration and growth and rapid urbanization. In order to address these complex issues, we must search new ideas and fresh thinking that can restore and improve degraded communities, rather than utilizing old and obsolete formulas to design our urban areas. The purpose of this research is to examine current sustainable urban design approaches and strategies in the Randstad region of the Netherlands. Very little is currently known about the transfer of knowledge through the exploration of best practices in the fields of planning and urban design. The primary body of knowledge in planning and urban design is contained in the written and visual documentation of case studies (Francis 2003). According to some authors, case studies serve as the collective record of the advancement and development of knowledge in urban design (Coupland 1997; Beatley 2000; Francis 2003). Keywords: transfer of knowledge, urban design, case study, international design/planning, and place-specific design.

Speaker Biography

JESUS J. LARA is an assistant professor of landscape architecture in the Knowlton School of Architecture. Lara received his doctorate in environmental design and planning from Arizona State University in 2006. He has previously taught at the University of New Mexico and Arizona State University. He was a Fulbright Fellow at Delft University of Technology and Wageningen University, the Netherlands, in 2003-2004. While in The Netherlands, he carried out research for his dissertation on the transfer of knowledge of Dutch policy, planning and design elements. Having explored responsive and adaptive urban environments and reactive trends in Dutch urban design and planning practices, Dr. Lara is now exploring reconstructive and proactive alternatives to these in the context of the American urban areas.