

A4 - Urban Subcultures & Precincts: A New Theory Of Urban Vitality & Authenticity

Presentation title: Urban Subcultures and Precincts - a new theory of urban vitality and authenticity

Presenters:

Michael Gordon - City Of Vancouver

Mark Holland - HB Lanark

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Speaker Abstract

The planning and design professions have figured out the principles of creating places and communities that generally look nice but lack vitality and authenticity as memorable places. New urban places based upon urbanist theories such as New Urbanism, Transit Oriented Development may be safer and denser, but they fall short of being places where one can engage the authentic and eccentric reality of one's neighbours in great public places or find support for one's creative impulses. In our presentation we will aim to steer clear of jargonistic and dramatic design statements and in short, suggest approaches for creating places that are full of vitality and reflect our community's diversity. One often hears the word "authenticity" and yet the design professions remain challenged in creating places that are experienced as authentic. While the public policy world is rich with work on diversity, we suggest that conventional classifications of diversity fail to create deep and sustained vitality when applied to the design of the physical dimension of cities. The future of diversity and its expressions of authenticity in our communities lies in a wide variety of urban subcultures that are not necessarily defined by the traditional parameters of ethnicity, gender, age and sexual orientation. We will be suggesting a new approach for creating "precincts" where their design is consciously derived from the activities of individuals and households whose lifestyles can be defined by their values and daily patterns and pursuits. Further, we shall explore how one can cluster these individuals and households into one or more of a variety of urban subcultures. In this presentation, a sustainable development consultant (Mark Holland of HB Lanark), a city planner (Michael Gordon of City of Vancouver), and one of BC's leading demographic pollsters (Angus McAllister of McAllister Research) pose some new theories of community planning for vitality and diversity based on the merging of their experience and several years of working together on subcultural diversity and vitality issues including their insights into why Granville Island works and why other public market areas have been able to successfully imitate it. Learning objectives: "X To explore the fundamentals of subcultural diversity in our communities and what their values and lifestyles mean to creating vital areas of a city; "X To explore the concept of "precincts" as ways of creating places where subculture groups feel at home and where others want to visit to experience something authentic, unique and interesting; "X To discuss the 5 key aspects of a successful precinct; "X To explore examples and ideas for subculture precincts, including the key subculture precinct factors that have helped make Granville Island, Commercial Drive and Newport Village (Port Moody) successful.

Speaker Biography

Michael Gordon is Senior Central Area Planner for the City of Vancouver overseeing planning in the downtown peninsula.

Mark Holland is a LEED™-accredited planner who holds professional degrees in both Landscape Architecture and Community & Regional Planning. He is a principal with HB Lanark Consultants (formerly Holland Barrs Planning Group), one of Canada's leading sustainable development planning and community design firms.

Working at any given time in projects in up to 40 countries, Angus McAllister is one of Canada's most creative pollsters and public researchers. With a pedigree of working with Environics and Angus Reid and others, McAllister has gone on to be the steward of the country's leading environmental tracking system the Canadian Environmental Monitor.