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Wellbeing principles for British Land



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Introduction

Happy City is pleased to present Wellbeing Principles for British Land.

This report is intended as the foundation of an initiative to build wellbeing throughout British Land's placemaking practices. It draws insights from research in public health, neuroscience, behavioural economics and environmental psychology, as well as evidence from placemaking successes around the world. It also takes inspiration from British Land's own guidelines and policies (listed in Appendix A).

The report contains a brief summary of the evidence on the connection between wellbeing and placemaking, and a rationale for taking a wellbeing approach. Then it offers seven key wellbeing principles for British Land. Each principle is accompanied by a broad set of goals, strategies, examples of concrete actions, and examples of metrics for measuring success. Case studies offer inspiration from the field.

These proposed principles represent the beginning of a process through which we hope British Land will be able to identify its own unique approach to wellbeing in placemaking. Naturally this will require careful consideration of the benefits and risks associated with adopting strategies in place design, management and community engagement. But the evidence suggests that a wellbeing approach to placemaking can help British Land build value for shareholders while improving the health and happiness of tenants, retail customers and local communities.

Sincerely,
[The Happy City team](#)

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Image: Happy City

Rationale: an evidence-based approach to placemaking

As a leader in sustainability, British Land is right to consider its role in fostering wellbeing in urban places.

This work has precedent at the national and international level.

Organisations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have begun efforts to integrate happiness and wellbeing concepts into their policies and guiding principles. The British Government has been using a broad set of indices to gauge success in improving wellbeing since 2010. It is time for city builders to catch up.

Urban spaces and systems influence how inhabitants feel, behave, and interact with each other in ways that city builders and policymakers often fail to realize. As a developer and manager of urban places, British Land has an opportunity to build and manage environments in ways that improve the health, productivity, life years, economic activity and happiness of site employees and visitors.

Learning from the evidence

Efforts to build health and happiness into cities demand an evidence-based approach. Fortunately,

researchers and urban changemakers have produced powerful insight on the connection between placemaking and wellbeing. Placemakers can draw lessons from public health, neuroscience, behavioural economics and environmental psychology.

Ever since Dr. John Snow traced the 1849 London cholera epidemic to a public water pump on Broad Street, the field of **public health** has worked to prevent disease, prolong life and promote health by combining evidence with action in design and policy. But in recent decades, public health researchers have gone beyond the focus

on disease and safety to explore the strong systematic relationship between urban design and physical wellbeing. They have found, for example, that urban design has a direct influence on the amount of physical activity people get every day. Meanwhile, city systems mediate the amount of time people spend with family and friends. These factors have a direct impact on heart health, stress indicators and life expectancy.

From **neuroscience**, we have learned that there are physical markers to subjective wellbeing. People who say they are happy have more activity in the pleasure centres of the brain, and lower levels of stress hormones in their blood. Neuroscientists have found that urban shapes, scents and sounds can have an immediate effect on human emotions. For example, sharp angles, long, blank walls and traffic noise can trigger a stress response, which in turn influences how places attract or repel people.



The field of **behavioral psychology** builds on lessons from neuroscience. Drawing from hundreds of studies as well as survey data on subjective wellbeing from around the world, researchers note strong correlations between self-reported happiness and various conditions. According to the 2015 World Happiness Report to the United Nations, the top three factors correlating with happiness were: levels of social trust and support; years of (healthy) life expectancy; and the level of freedom people perceive they have to make life decisions.

From this work it is clear that absolutely nothing contributes more to human wellbeing than positive social relations. What is remarkable is that our relationship with strangers can be as important as our connections with family and friends. For example, research from the University of British Columbia has shown that casual contact in public has as strong an effect on day-to-day happiness as time with family and close friends.

It is crucial to build public spaces that draw people into trust-building encounters rather than conflict.

From **environmental psychology** we learn about the broad behavioural effects of urban design. We know, for example, that people who are exposed to nature in cities are more productive, but they also tend to be more generous, neighbourly and helpful. We know car drivers pay more attention to road design than posted speeds when deciding how fast to drive. And we know that walking is a potent contributor to day-to-day happiness. In fact, surveys of British commuters show that drivers who switch to transit report becoming happier – an effect that researchers attribute to the walk at the beginning and end of every transit ride. This means the quality of walking environments really matters: shoppers are willing to walk more than three times as far along streets lined with small shops than they will through parking lots.



Image: British Land



Image: British Land

Broad **interdisciplinary research** offers lessons about the relationship between placemaking, people’s sense of belonging, and the success of local business. For example, the Knight Foundation’s Soul of the City survey examined “attachment to place” in the USA, and found that communities with the highest levels of place attachment also had the fastest GDP growth. Notably, people’s sense of belonging comes not just from place design, but also from the degree to which they feel welcomed and included in the creation and everyday life of urban places.

In short, there is a strikingly broad array of evidence to support the use of placemaking as an effective and necessary strategy to building wellbeing. The good news is that this approach can help British Land create “places people prefer” while building value for shareholders.



Image: Happy City



Image: British Land

Wellbeing, placemaking, and British Land

British Land has reviewed its sustainability strategy to incorporate elements of wellbeing into its design guidelines and management practices. Specifically, the company has set an ambitious goal to “drive preference with retailers, shoppers and office occupiers by designing and managing spaces that promote wellbeing and productivity.”

British Land has made a strong start in its efforts to address wellbeing. Its recently adopted social and environmental supply chain standards stand out. The company has also demonstrated leadership by addressing wellbeing through conventional metrics such as employee and user health and safety, occupier satisfaction and quantifying environmental impacts. British Land rightfully considers the effect of indoor environments on tenant satisfaction. Notably, British Land’s Sustainability Brief for New Developments includes guidelines for engaging stakeholders in the design of new projects from inception through site management.

We believe that the adoption of an evidence-based strategy to build wellbeing through placemaking can add to this foundational work and ultimately add value for British Land shareholders.



Put bluntly, happiness and wellbeing are good for business. Happier employees are more productive. Happier retail staff offer stronger customer service. Tenants are increasingly willing to pay a premium to situate themselves in high-quality, walkable, and connected urban environments – places their employees and customers prefer. In particular, the millennial generation values walkability and vibrancy for both home and work. Resilient green buildings and infrastructure also meet tenants’ triple bottom-line business goals.

Economic geographers have found that environments that promote more face-to-face interactions are associated with stronger GDP growth and creativity. Wonderful public realms that encourage pedestrian traffic also attract and hold customers. Consumer research shows that the sociability of shopping environments can be the biggest contributor to customer satisfaction. Placemaking strategies aimed at sociability – such as the maximization of small-footprint retail along busy streets – also serve to maximize leasehold revenues.

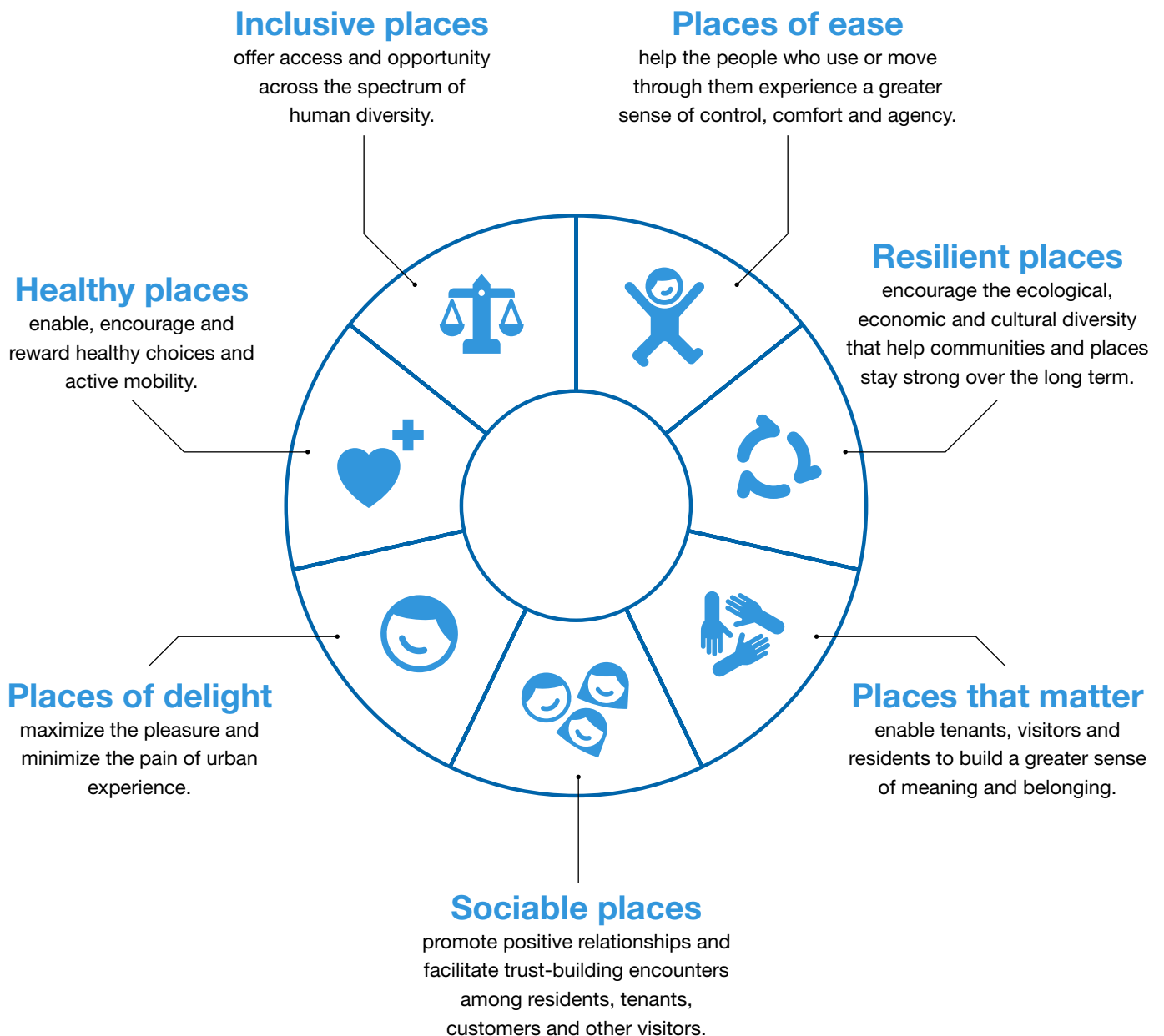
Places that are more flexible, that offer people more opportunities to network, learn and create together, are also more able to adapt to short and long-term economic, social and environmental changes. They are more future-proof.

Finally, a robust program to work collaboratively with surrounding communities on site design, management, and programming can improve relations, boost loyalty, and ensure that properties take advantage of broader markets.



Wellbeing Principles

How can wellbeing evidence guide placemaking, site management and community engagement activities? Happy City has reviewed hundreds of peer-reviewed studies and dozens of urban examples, and synthesised the most relevant findings into seven key wellbeing principles to guide British Land's placemaking practices.



In the following pages, we describe seven principles to guide placemaking practices. Each principle is accompanied by a broad set of goals, strategies, examples of concrete actions, and possible suggested metrics for measuring success. Case studies offer inspiration from the field. These case studies may demonstrate success in meeting one or more wellbeing principles.

Terms and contents:

Wellbeing principles and goals

Each principle demonstrates a relationship between the evidence on wellbeing to placemaking goals. Each principle is associated with several high-level goals. These goals are high-level aspirations, not specific targets.

Strategies

These are broad areas of work through which British Land can achieve goals set out for each principle. Strategies are realised using a variety of specific actions.

Action examples

These are examples of specific actions associated with each strategy area, meant to illustrate practical applications. Many actions have system effects that will help achieve goals from various other wellbeing principles. Actions are drawn from hundreds of possible interventions. They are context-specific. What may be appropriate for a dense urban environment may not be appropriate for suburban retail.



This symbol denotes actions British Land is already taking, as identified through review of British Land reports and policies. We also acknowledge that British Land is already undertaking numerous placemaking strategies, some of which are encompassed in actions not formally identified with an icon.

Possible metrics

These are examples of various ways British Land may measure its success at meeting goals associated with wellbeing principles. Each measure is accompanied by an example of a method for gathering data. Here we offer a sample of objective and subjective measures. An objective measure may compare data to clear deliverable targets such as percentage of roads with protected bike lanes, or percentage of females cycling to work. A subjective measure may assess psychological effects such as surveying cyclists on their perception of safety, or using focus groups to gain a broader understanding of attitudes towards place.



Healthy places enable, encourage, and reward healthy choices and active mobility.

Goals

- People choose and enjoy active modes of transportation.
- People can easily grow, purchase and prepare healthy food.
- Nature is woven into every-day experiences.
- People are able to live, work, learn, shop and play in the neighbourhood.
- People have opportunities to participate together in social, physical and volunteer activities.

Rationale

Physical health is an essential element of human wellbeing. Interestingly, people's assessments of their own health is a better predictor of life satisfaction than their doctor's objective assessment. In other words, feeling healthy is just as important to happiness as actually being healthy.

Urban design directly influences people's health outcomes and feelings by mediating our exposure to risks, pollutants, and physical danger. But it also leads us to sickness or health by nudging us towards more active or passive forms of mobility, and by mediating the frequency and quality of our social interactions.

A holistic approach to healthy places starts with insulating people from environmental threats such as unsafe roads, slipping hazards and noxious pollutants. But it also acknowledges the way that our environment influences our feelings and behaviour.

For example, sitting has been likened to smoking for its effect on health and longevity. We can fight the toxic effects of sedentary living by reducing the amount of time people spend sitting during their commute. That means creating mixed-use places where people can walk from home to work or services. It means situating new developments near frequent transit nodes. And it means ensuring that streets and public spaces privilege pedestrians, cyclists and transit users so these ways of moving are easy and pleasurable. This is good for both health and happiness: surveys show that people who commute by foot and bicycle experience more joy and less fear, rage and sadness than car drivers.

Surveys show that people who commute by foot and bicycle experience more joy and less fear, rage and sadness than car drivers.

Nature boosts productivity: just having a view of trees or park from a work or study space reduces stress and improves mental performance.

Public health researchers have noted that urban places have a strong influence on what people eat, by providing healthy food choices in or out of reach of a short walk. Healthy restaurants, grocers and food gardens should be considered essential elements of the neighbourhood mix.

But the most overlooked ingredient for healthy placemaking is nature. The more access we have to parks and nature, the more we tend to exercise, the better we feel, and the longer we live. Nature boosts productivity: just having a view of trees or park from a work or study space reduces stress and improves mental performance. Even small doses of nature help. But placemakers serious about health need to give people opportunities to do more than look at nature. Urban gardens have now been found to improve mental health, physical fitness and social connectedness in participants. Nature may also lead us a more sustainable thinking. New research has found that exposure to nature leads people to care more about the future.

In all, investments in green and healthy places are not just good for population health. They make for happier space visitors, more productive employees, and more connected and supportive local relationships.

CONTACT WITH BACTERIA FOUND IN SOIL AND ON PLANTS HAS BEEN FOUND TO REDUCE STRESS AND INCREASE BRAIN FUNCTION IN MICE. THIS HAS SCIENTISTS SPECULATING THAT EXPOSURE TO BACTERIA WHILE GARDENING MAY ACTUALLY MAKE PEOPLE SMARTER.



Healthy places: strategies

Put people first: prioritise and incentivise active mobility such as pedestrians, cyclists and transit.

Action examples

Increase street connectivity by including more intersecting paths, walkways and streets in order to provide a variety of walking routes.

Use social media platforms or create a signage campaign that provides information on walking times and routes. For example, this modified version of the [London Underground Tube map](#) showing the number of calories burned by walking between stations.

Ensure that pedestrian crosswalks offer a direct, comfortable and clear path across streets at street corners and within long blocks. Avoid corralling pedestrians with fences.

Provide showers and changing facilities that can be accessed by all occupants of the building.



Put cars in their place: reduce, discourage, and separate single-occupant cars.

Action examples

Ensure that building facades face street edges and walkable environments to make access safer and more attractive to pedestrians.

Charge market rates for parking in order to increase turnover of parking spots and to ensure highest and best use of land.

Perform a road diet: reduce the number of lanes for single-occupancy vehicles in order to provide space for dedicated bike lanes.

Protect people: ensure that all systems of mobility are safe. Insulate people from environmental threats such as unsafe roads and noxious pollutants.

Action examples

Provide separate (buffered) walking and cycling lanes where traffic speeds exceed 5mph. Buffers may include planted barriers and/or rainwater gardens placed next to busy roads.

Eliminate or reduce the number of one-way streets.

Reduce speed limits on neighbourhood streets to 20mph or less.

Install usable, active traffic control, and calming features, such as road median gardens.

Promote public transportation: connect to, and integrate with, flexible and frequent transportation nodes.

Action examples

Promote flexible work schedules to reduce rush hour commuter traffic.

Choose infill sites that are located near existing transportation hubs that provide frequent and flexible service.



Provide safe and easy access to existing transportation systems.



Reach for nutrition: ensure that healthy food and services are available within walking distance.

Action examples

Provide incentives for local, healthy food vendors such as strategic lease rates, popup shop opportunities and space at local farmers' markets.

Limit exposure to the advertising of unhealthy foods in public space by incentivizing signage opportunities for vendors of healthy food choices.

Go green: enable people to experience nature with all their senses every day.

Action examples

Ensure views of nature by coordinating placement of windows and transparent facades with placement of trees, parks and natural spaces.

Provide spaces for food gardening, preparation and sharing including access to sunshine, fencing, watering systems, and secure storage space for tools, tables, and washing facilities.

Use trees and plantings to create an appropriate seasonal balance between sunlight and shade along all streets and in parks and plazas.

Mix it up: ensure neighbourhoods feature a mix of uses including places for living, work, and play.

Action examples

Promote and develop mixed-use properties to bring housing closer to shopping, recreational, and work destinations.

Provide a rich diversity of community services or neighbourhood assets such as groceries, child-care, libraries, dry-cleaning and restaurants within a five-minute walk of residences or employment sites.



PEOPLE IN THE UK WHO
SWITCH
FROM DRIVING TO WALKING, CYCLING OR EVEN TRANSIT REPORT GREATER HAPPINESS AFTER THEY SHIFT MODES.



EACH ADDITIONAL KILOMETRE WALKED PER DAY REDUCES YOUR PROBABILITY OF BECOMING OBESE BY
4.8 PERCENT.
BUT EACH HOUR SPENT DRIVING INCREASES THAT PROBABILITY BY
6 PERCENT.

Image: Happy City

Image: Space Syntax



Healthy places: possible metrics

- Percentage of cyclists who feel safe using site streets and routes.

Method: Utilise in person or online surveys, using the question: “I feel safe using the cycle routes on X site. Answer on a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being very safe.”

- Walkable access to healthy food and health services.

Method: Use online tool such as Walkscore.com.



- Ratio of bicycle parking spaces to car parking spaces.

Method: Create target: minimum of 1 bicycle space per 10 parking spaces. Alternatively, calculate based on retail square footage. E.g. 1 bicycle space per 5,000 sq. ft.

Case Study

Thornton Place: a complex ecosystem approach to suburban health. Seattle, WA, USA

Project team

Lorig Associates and Stellar Holdings, Master plan by Mithun. Bioswale/park, daylighting and biofiltering of the headwaters of Thornton Creek; SvR Design Company with Seattle Public Utilities.

Originally built in the 1950s, Northgate Mall was designed and developed around cars, with wide, fast roads, superblocks, large surface parking lots and segregated zoning for distinct uses. In recent decades, the City of Seattle had attempted to convert the area into a true urban center. However, even with the establishment of a bus transit hub and the future establishment of a light rail station (planned for 2020), the area was seeing little growth.

The spark of change came from environmental activists, who called for the daylighting of Thornton Creek, a waterway long buried under the mall’s vast sea of parking lots. What could have been a hindrance to growth – the wish to recreate a complex riparian ecosystem – ultimately became the gravitational centre of a dynamic new neighbourhood where once sat nine acres of car parking.

Thornton Place emerged from a collaborative process to both restore the long-buried creek and create a walkable neighbourhood that is environmentally and economically resilient. A stakeholder group brought together a broad balance of community, environmental and business interests, which helped focus and drive the design, resulting in a design that integrates both environmental and commercial concerns.

The restored Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel is now a delightful oasis. Its lush plantings, overlooks, and paths have added

2.7 acres of public open space to the Northgate Urban Center. A system of pools and terraces designed to mimic the performance of a natural creek treats urban stormwater runoff from the entire 680-acre catchment area, including the mall.

The restoration attracted a diverse range of housing, retail and community facilities and amenities. The redevelopment added 50,000 square feet of retail space and 530 units of housing where once there were none. Many of the homes look directly out onto the creek ecosystem, which also serves as a new pedestrian corridor to the mall and new transit hub. Research indicates that these infusions of nature will improve population health by both reducing stress and encouraging people to get outside.

Meanwhile, the \$14.8 million investment in Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel (\$10.7 million of which was funded by Seattle Public Utilities), is believed to have generated over \$200 million in adjacent private development.

By Chessa Adsit-Morris and Kaid Benfield.





Sociable places promote positive relationships and facilitate trust-building encounters among residents, tenants, customers, and other visitors.

Goals

- Space visitors, tenants and residents feel high levels of safety and trust in other people.
- Streets and public spaces are animated by pedestrian activity.
- Visitors exhibit pro-social behaviour.
- People experience light, trust-building encounters with the same individuals regularly.
- Places where people can see, be seen, and interact with a diversity of people.

Rationale

After core needs are met, social relationships are the most powerful driver of human health and wellbeing. People with strong, positive relationships are happier. They are healthier. They are more productive at work. They live, on average, 15 years longer than people who are socially isolated.

The power of social trust goes beyond relationships with family and close friends: Cities and societies in which people express high levels of trust in neighbours and strangers are happier. Superficial, trust-building encounters in public raise people's spirits as much as time with close friends. There's a strong correlation between face-to-face encounters, economic growth and creativity.

Urban design can either draw us together or push us apart. People with long commutes generally have thinner social networks. People who commute by car report experiencing the highest levels of rudeness and incivility. So one of the

best ways to build sociability back into city life is to draw people out of their cars and onto their feet. Walkable places boost opportunities for positive face-to-face encounters. They promote the sorts of repeat encounters that boost social trust, creativity and enduring relationships.

Architecture, public space, and street design can all influence how we regard and treat other people. Streets with lower levels of vehicle traffic are associated with stronger local social connections. Fine-grained street edges and building facades that offer more destination opportunities cause pedestrians to slow down – and this can cause a change in their behaviour. For example, Happy City's research in Seattle found that pedestrians were more likely to show kindness to strangers along active street edges than alongside blank walls. Meanwhile, evidence from the new field of neuroscience and architecture suggests that familiar architecture and rounded corners produce greater feelings of comfort and trust than sharp-edged modernism.

Although positive social relations contribute to happiness, it's important to acknowledge that people need the ability to moderate our interactions with other people, or we retreat. So it's also important to reduce involuntary crowding, and create places that offer people a broad spectrum of opportunities for social contact.

Streets with lower levels of vehicle traffic are associated with stronger local social connections.





Sociable places: strategies

Offer full-range sociability: give people a greater sense of control over their social interactions by providing a variety of spaces along the public/private continuum.

Action examples

Create semi-private spaces along frequent access routes shared among a small numbers of households in multifamily buildings. These both increase the frequency of contact with familiar faces and correlate with better space care and maintenance.

Offer seating in parks and plazas that allow visitors to watch social activities from a distance without feeling pressured to participate.

Provide movable chairs in public spaces to empower people to convene together or sit apart at a comfortable distance as they wish.



Ease the way: minimise daily conflict and frustration, especially while moving around.

Action examples

Ensure that public transit stops and hubs have ample space for bi-directional movement of pedestrians, as well as space for lingering, waiting, and relaxing.

Ensure cyclists do not encroach on pedestrian infrastructure by providing safe, protected bicycle routes and crossing zones.

Convert parking spaces into parklets to ease pressure on sidewalk space near busy cafes.

Send social signals: ensure that the conscious and unconscious messages in architecture, building facades and public spaces lead to greater feelings of trust, sociability and altruism.

Action examples

Avoid loitering-deterrence devices such as anti-sit spikes or signs in favour of amenities that draw the broad spectrum of visitors, such as comfortable seating and planters.

In order to reduce horn honking, which tends to register as anger and aggression among both drivers and pedestrians, stagger the timing of traffic signals along congested routes to distribute red light wait times.

Slow down: use architecture, tenant choice and sidewalk design along market streets to attract pedestrians and encourage stopping.

Action examples

Prioritise small retail, restaurant and service spaces along market streets.

Draw and retain pedestrians by ensuring a broad range of different uses and opportunities along every high street block.

Allow for the creation of temporary, seasonal or permanent parklets. A parklet is an expansion of the sidewalk into one or more on-street parking spaces to create people-oriented places (<http://peoplest.lacity.org/parklet/>).

Engage with events: support novel events and happenings that draw interest and leverage community assets.

Action examples

Create and pilot new online tools to support community-led development and promotion of public space events.

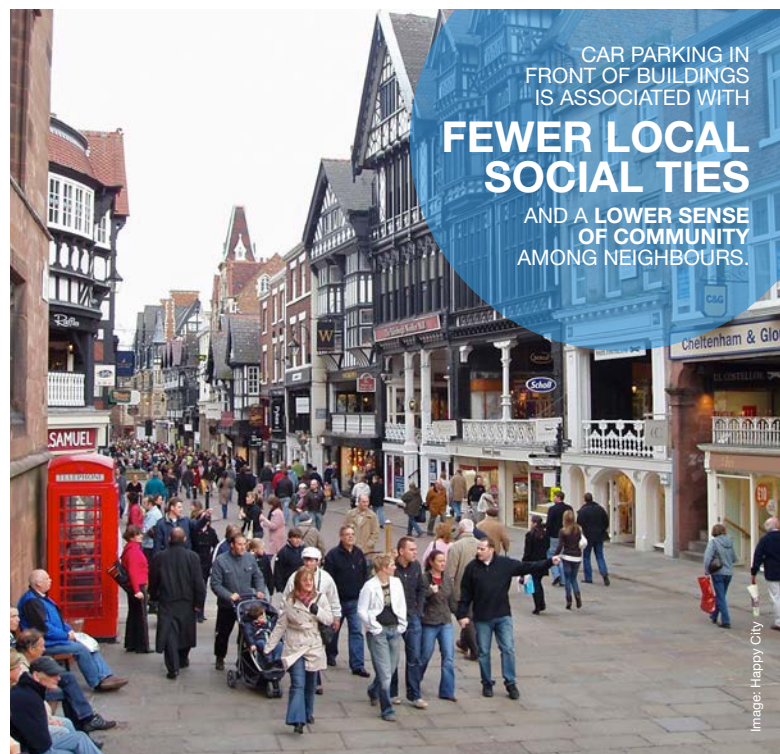
Create a public space action association or committee that supports community members in leading and participating in public space initiatives, including services, installations, interactions and experiences that encourage engagement between local people, organizations and businesses.

Ensure that all internal project briefs include a dedicated budget line for communications and engagement and that the proper staff time be allotted to facilitate building relationships with stakeholders.



Image: Happy City

COUPLES WHO COMMUTE FOR MORE THAN 40 MINUTES BY CAR ARE
45%
MORE LIKELY TO BE DIVORCED AFTER TEN YEARS.



CAR PARKING IN FRONT OF BUILDINGS IS ASSOCIATED WITH
FEWER LOCAL SOCIAL TIES
AND A LOWER SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG NEIGHBOURS.

Image: Happy City



Sociable places: possible metrics

- Percentage of people that identify support networks of four or more people in the area.
Method: Utilise social surveys either in person or online.
- Ratio of active versus passive building facades along street edges.
Method: Map doors, windows, openings, transparent surfaces, number of distinct opportunities, etc, using methodologies described in *How to Study Public Life* by Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre. Could engage urban planning student cohorts for research.
- Pedestrian volumes, average speeds and dwell times.
Method: Utilise methods described in *How to Study Public Life* by Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre. Could engage urban planning student cohorts yearly to conduct longitudinal studies.
- Levels of trust in strangers on site held by pedestrians.
Method: In pedestrian surveys, using the question: "In general, how much do you think people using this street can be trusted? Please rate the trustworthiness of people on this street on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being very trustworthy."
- Number of pedestrians in visual field from key viewpoints in public space. According to pioneering public life surveyor Holly Whyte, the daytime target should be at least 16 per location.
Method: field pedestrian counts.

Case Study

New Road, Brighton: paving the way for an enjoyable city centre. Brighton, UK

Project team

Gehl Architects, Landscape Projects and Martin Stockly Associates.

New Road, at the heart of Brighton, had become a run-down back alley and was not attracting small businesses or visitors. The city council considered closing the street to all vehicles. Instead, Brighton got the UK's first 'shared space' street where cars are welcome – but on people's terms.

A team led by Gehl Architects started by conducting a Public Space/ Public Life survey to gain a detailed understanding of the street: its physical features, who used it, and how they moved. It was noted that people sat along the sunny edge of the Pavilion Gardens, using a shabby ledge as well as electrical transformer boxes.

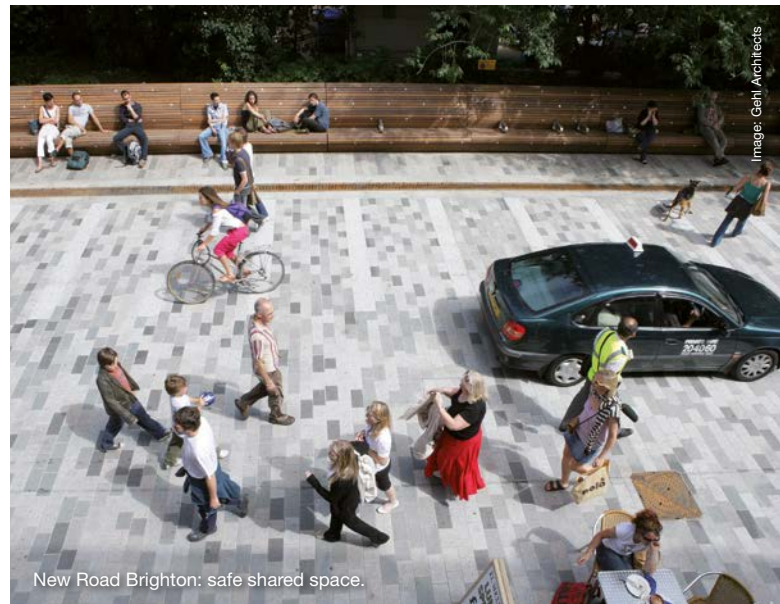
The new street was designed as a natural stone surface, smoothing out kerbs, enabling people to move freely over the entire area, and giving them priority over all other users. New Road's new centrepiece – a single, finely crafted, long wooden bench looking onto the public space, was placed along the edge.

The new paving and seating have opened up New Road to people, made interaction and social encounters likely, and changed the dynamic of the street. Local citizens have been quick to embrace the change and the design has transformed the area, which is now contributing to the city's thriving economy.

After the conversion, the team assessed the impact of the design. Motorists can still access New Road, but auto traffic levels dropped by 93 percent, while the number of cyclists increased by 22 percent and the number of pedestrians has increased by 162 percent. There has been a sixfold increase in the number of individuals lingering. People clearly enjoy being here.

Today 86 percent of respondents would like to see more areas like New Road in their city. Previously, visitors used words like *indifferent*, *unsafe*, and *vulnerable* to describe their emotional connection with the street. Now those words are replaced by *comfortable*, *happy*, *safe*, and *relaxed*.

By Gehl Architects.



New Road Brighton: safe shared space.



New Road Brighton: an active street with new paving and seating.



New Road Brighton: space for public gatherings and events.



Places of delight maximize the pleasure and minimize the pain of urban experience.

Goals

- People express feelings of happiness, satisfaction and comfort.
- A diversity of people regularly come together for informal relaxation, sharing, and play.
- People experience moments of surprise and delight.
- People have a variety of opportunities to participate in arts and culture.
- Minimize daily conflict and frustration.

Rationale

Urban places and systems have a clear and immediate influence on how people feel every day. They deliver pleasure and pain, and wellbeing effects that last far beyond the moment. That's because most people's happiness is determined not just by what they are experiencing in any given time, but by memories of previous good and bad experiences.

This matters for placemakers. Positive memories generate return visits and place affinity. If we want to create thriving places that attract people for work, shopping or play, we need to design more good moments and fewer painful moments into people's experience of place.

Neuroscientists have found that sharp angles and blank walls trigger feelings of fear and aversion, while rounded shapes and nature views calm us down and cheer us up. Sights, scents, or experiences cause the human brain to retrieve positive or negative memories. Thus the designers of Disney theme parks employ nostalgic architecture, bright colours, and even the scent of baking fudge to trigger memories of an idealised past. Busy market streets such as Copenhagen's Stroget accomplish this naturally.

Extreme highs and lows have a disproportional impact on our memories and our feelings. So placemakers should minimize unnecessary moments of extreme discomfort and hardship. This means reducing exposure to garbage, graffiti, and disrepair, which produce feelings of alienation and depression, especially among the elderly. It means limiting exposure to loud and unpredictable noises and frustrating queues. It means providing access to amenities such as benches, public toilets, and shade (see Inclusive Places).

But placemakers should pay special attention to opening up possibilities for joy. People are attracted to novelty, to new sights and sounds that surprise and delight us without triggering fear. Public art and leisure attractions can draw people to places through more hours of the day.

Most of us experience our greatest moments of joy when interacting with other people. When place managers support unique events and happenings that leverage the talents and passions of local communities, they are not only sparking moments of delight. They are investing in the future of place.





Design for emotions: use architecture, places and systems to create positive psychophysiological effects.

Action examples

Since spaces with little or no views of the sky create feelings of claustrophobia, avoid boxing in narrow exterior spaces with extremely tall walls.

Minimize unpleasant smells, which linger in memory longer than most other sensory experiences.

Add texture elements to walls and paving to invite touch to bring people into more intimate contact with their surroundings.

Create comfort: minimize exposure to noise pollution and constricting crowds.

Action examples

Use features that create or foster delightful sounds such as running water, wind rustling trees, birds, and playful children. These produce soothing white noise, reducing exposure to traffic noise and other urban noise pollution.

Provide a range of locations in which to linger, sit, eat, drink, and converse that are not compromised by loud, unpredictable noise.

Distribute public seating and gathering spaces to generate a level of social chatter that will enable people to carry on conversations without being drowned out by others.

Triangulate: situate street amenities, services, and activities in ways that attract people to key nodes of interest, novelty or social potential.

Action examples

Work with the local community to determine what role transit facilities should play in the neighbourhood and what specific program of activities should be designed and planned around transit stops. Transit professionals, elected officials, designers, developers, and the public should all participate.

Ease transportation wait experiences: Activate transit stop facilities but also immediately surrounding environment with local restaurants/cafes and businesses.

Every place intended for public gatherings should feature at least ten attractors, or reasons for stopping. These range from mobile vendors and water fountains to benches, public art, or toilets.

Nurture public life: enable individual and collective acts of creativity and spontaneous activity.

Action examples

Allow the community to decorate utility boxes or post boxes.

Activate sidewalks by including playful and artistic features such as hopscotch outlines, golf courses, or foursquare spaces.

Develop seasonal activities to activate spaces and draw people together. These may include temporary skating rinks and festivals.

Commission artists to work with local communities to create collaborative programmes, events, and installations. At Regent's Place, British Land facilitated the creation and display of creative public artworks by schoolchildren from Camden's Out of School Learning Service and local professional artists.



Connect with nature: bring biophilic features into everyday experiences.

Action examples

Infuse building interiors with green walls and natural building materials to ensure incidental contact with nature through the course of each employee's day.

Utilise curves and organic shapes and patterns reminiscent of those found in nature to soften built form to reduce feelings of stress among space users.

Encourage self-expression: provide opportunities and venues for creativity and community expression.

Action examples

Allow more and better places for visual communication by groups and individuals (lost cat notices, block party invites, or leaflets on issues of public interest). This may include providing more poster cylinders on high streets and commercial areas.

Support the creation of spaces for creative production, including artist studios, workshops, and workrooms with public access.





Places of delight: possible metrics

- Track sales at local shops, restaurants and services.

Method: Reporting from businesses.

- Measure event attendance including breakdown of intentional and incidental visitors.

Method: on-site and/or in-person surveys.

- Use ‘photo elicitation’ – the use of images taken of or by participants - to capture people’s reactions to and interactions with arts installations.

Method: Use social media hashtags to collect images and comments.

- Gather public reactions to site activation and programming/events.

Method: Use public art installation to solicit responses with the prompt: “This is what made me feel great here today.”



- Percentage of people offering positive comments after community events.

Method: use direct surveys of attendees in person and online.

Case Study

Granby Park: a collaborative popup intervention produces joy and engagement. Dominick Street Lower, Dublin, Ireland

Project team

Upstart Artist Collaborative with members of the Dominick Street residential community.

A 10-acre parcel of land in Dublin’s city centre had been left vacant for several years, earmarked for new social housing. The derelict site and its associated blight had isolated residents of the surrounding social housing community from the wider district.

Dublin City Council commissioned the artist collaborative, Upstart, to create a pop-up park along with local residents. The goal: to build community relations as well as improve the visual and cultural impact of the site.

Upstart designed the park and its cultural programming in collaboration with the local community over a year, gaining their trust and ensuring the space was created to meet community needs and desires. Outreach was creative. Team members distributed gardening toolkits to local households. Doorstep conversations led to many community members helping to build and staff the park.

Granby Park was open for the month of August 2013. It featured 30 art installations, a café, a library, a meeting hall and more than 100 arts and community events. More than 50 community groups were involved, and the park had in excess of 40,000 visitors during its short existence.

The space created a significant splash in Dublin’s culture and became a regular – and loved – place for socialising, children’s play, and film, live theatre and music performance. Dubliners revelled in this colourful, extraordinary, and fun space. The park offered respite from inner city life for all. For local residents, it activated a sense of pride in place, community cohesion, and individual and group creativity.

The community also used the space as a meeting and workshop space to vision the future for the site and the area. These conversations built a new spirit of trust with the city administration and developers. Due to Ireland’s subsequent austerity politics, the site still remains derelict and plans for social housing are on hold.

By [Cara Courage](#)



Granby Park: site, pre-development.

Image: Upstart



Granby Park: community-built children's playground.

Image: Upstart



Granby Park created a spirit of playful engagement.

Image: Upstart



Places that matter enable tenants, visitors, and residents to build a greater sense of meaning and belonging.

Goals

- People feel a positive sense of attachment to place.
- People participate in the stewardship and care of place.
- Places feel unique and reflect local context and history.
- People feel as though they can influence place.

Rationale

Psychological wellbeing is about much more than contentment or pleasure. It involves feeling that our lives matter, that what we do has meaning, that we have the ability to change our world, and that our relationships with other people are positive and impactful.

People who feel a sense of meaning and belonging in their life are healthier, more productive and live longer. Most commonly, meaningfulness comes through our relationship with other people and the places we care about. At the same time, psychologists have found strong correlations between happiness, social trust, and a sense of belonging to a place or a community. The good news for placemakers is that by nurturing a deeper sense of meaning and belonging, we can also create a greater sense of loyalty and attachment to employers and local businesses.

How can we create places that matter more to people?

A study of dozens of American Cities by Gallup and the Knight Foundation found that several factors consistently drove people's attachment to their communities. Jobs, safety, and the economy were not among them. The top drivers of place attachment were: social offerings, or places for entertainment or social encounters; openness, or how welcoming the place feels to all people; and aesthetics, or the physical beauty of the community.

There's a direct correlation between place attachment and local GDP growth.

When residents appreciate their community's offerings, they are more likely to spend their money on local activities and businesses. There's a direct correlation between place attachment and local GDP growth. So building vibrant, beautiful, social places is good for wellbeing as well as business.

But efforts to boost meaning, belonging and place attachment should reach beyond physical design. People feel a greater sense of meaning when they feel ownership over the places they use. This comes when they are both invited to help shape those places, and empowered to participate in their stewardship. Studies on happiness have found that one of the more powerful ways to improve individual happiness is to give people the opportunity to work with other people on a meaningful cause. People who volunteer become happier and healthier over time.

This is great news for placemakers. By creating opportunities for volunteerism and common cultural expression, we can not only build happiness, but also greater feelings attachment and care for the places we build and manage.



Image: Happy City



Image: Ciaran Cuffe



Places that matter: strategies

Consult and co-create: meaningfully consult local communities on design, programming and placemaking initiatives.

Action examples

Start with the community, not a design – ensure that place designs emerge from community visioning process, and that the “involvement” is not just asking local people to comment on a pre-determined plan.

Invite community members and place managers to perform an “audit” of existing place uses together.

Appoint a community liaison officer to consult with the community on a regular basis throughout design and construction of new developments.



Create stewardship opportunities: find ways for people to get involved in the programming of, and care for, public places and amenities.

Action examples

Create an “adopt a street/plaza” program to empower local groups to care for public spaces, while also creating a sense of ownership.

Challenge and fund local schools to co-produce events in public space.



Don't finish what you started: leave room for local people to put their stamp on a place.

Action examples

Offer unfinished exterior areas for community members to landscape and garden.

Create opportunities for local cultural expression by leaving “blank canvass walls” and banner infrastructure for future community art or local identity.

Honour history and culture: conserve heritage assets by protecting, preserving, and restoring important historical features.

Action examples

Survey the local community to identify and designate historically or culturally important buildings, sites and districts.

Where there is an existing feature of heritage value on or near the site, consult with English Heritage and the local authority at the outset of the project to determine suitable protection and enhancement measures.



IN 2014 BRITISH LAND GAVE
£1.4 MILLION
TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY
BUILDING AND
TRAINING INITIATIVES
INCLUDING HOSTING 98
APPRENTICES AT BRITISH
LAND PROPERTIES AND
DEVELOPMENTS.



Places that matter: possible metrics

- Place attachment; a measurement of the emotional tie between people and their community.
Method: use standard survey techniques such as those employed by the Knight Foundation Soul of the Community initiative: <http://knightfoundation.org/sotc/overall-findings>.
- Site users' aspirations for future programming.
Method: use interactive public art to solicit ideas
- Percentage of head office staff who volunteer during paid work time (83 percent in 2014/2015).

Case Study

Campus Martius Park: turning traffic into a place that matters. Detroit, USA

Project team

Project for Public Spaces, Detroit Mayor's Task Force, Detroit 300, Rock Ventures, Southwest Airlines, Downtown Detroit Partnership, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation.

"I love the feeling of being a part of something bigger than myself... I'm proud to be a Downtown/Midtown resident and Downtown employee to play my role in the renaissance."

- Downtown resident and employee, from Downtown Detroit Survey

Detroit did not fare well during the post-WWII deindustrialization period that hit many American cities. The city has lost well over half of its population since 1950, and anchor businesses fled to the suburbs. Years of "urban renewal" projects failed. But a new focus on activating public spaces has turned the tide.

In 2004, a traffic artery was transformed into a 1.6 acre public square. Campus Martius Square is designed to maximize the number and types of activities that can take place there. It is flexible enough to allow for evolution of use over time. Now more than 200 events, ranging from the Detroit International Jazz Festival to a story hour for kids, are held each summer. The defining activation strategy is The Beach, a seasonal installation complete with sand, colorful seating, umbrellas, and a beach bar.

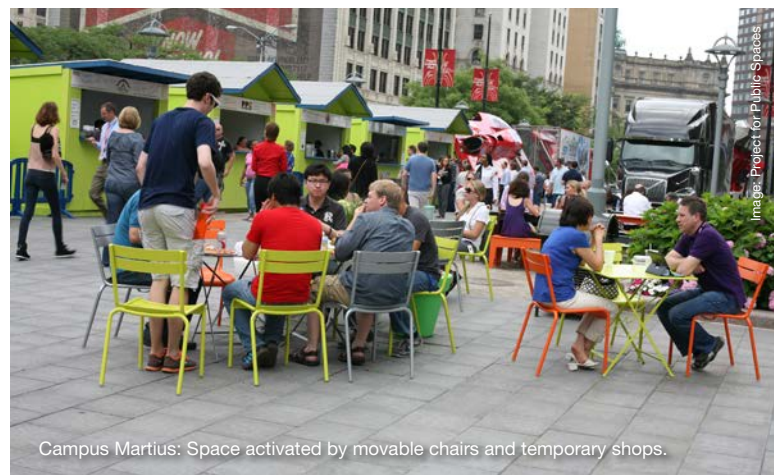
Campus Martius now draws an average of one million people/year to a downtown that had been nearly abandoned. The park has proven to be a major draw for both businesses and residents. The area has attracted \$454 million in investment and major businesses. More than

two million square feet of new or renovated space has opened or is under construction. Several hundred new private housing units are planned immediately surrounding the park, and downtown as a whole now has 98 percent residential occupancy.

While Detroit regularly tops the list of the most dangerous cities in the U.S., the increased activity downtown has led to a Central Business District that is safer than its counterparts in other U.S. cities. Of residents polled in 2014, 91 percent believe it is safe, and 91 percent believe that Detroit's downtown is improving every year. A full 96 percent believe that Detroit is full of potential. 92 percent of Downtown residents say that it is a place that they like to bring visitors, showing pride in the neighbourhood in which they have chosen to live.

By investing in a public place that matters to people, Detroit has revitalised its economy and fundamentally changed people's feelings about downtown.

By Project for Public Spaces.



Campus Martius: Space activated by movable chairs and temporary shops.



Campus Martius: People enjoying The Beach, a seasonal installation.



Places of ease help the people who use and move through them experience a greater sense of control, comfort, and agency.

Goals

- People are able to meet basic needs.
- People feel empowered and inspired to explore.
- Places are easy to navigate, and destinations easy to find.
- People feel a positive sense of control, freedom and dignity as they move around.

Rationale

People who feel able to navigate and thrive amid daily challenges are happier and more resistant to disease. They live longer. They are more productive. They feel good. This is the condition that psychologists call mastery. Some people are simply more prone to this healthy mental state. But urban design, places and systems can enhance or corrode this ability to cope with everyday challenges by making commuting, wayfinding, socializing, or working, easy or difficult.

Places of ease offer users a sense of freedom rather than constriction. They empower us to move as we please, not feeling stuck and frustrated. They meet our basic needs for comfort so we are not stressed and uncertain about our immediate future.

Some paths to ease are straightforward. For example, when places provide access to drinking water, shelter from weather, and toilets, people are less prone to stress and uncertainty. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared

When places provide access to drinking water, shelter from weather, and toilets, people are less prone to stress and uncertainty.

sanitation to be a basic human right, but according to The Guardian, the number of public toilets in London had declined 40 percent since 1999.

Some paths to ease are not immediately apparent to placemakers, but are equally as important. Since every urban journey begins and ends with a walk, we should ensure that movement on foot is easy, comfortable, and intuitive. Destinations should be easy to reach on foot or by bicycle. While clear signage helps, design itself is the key to enabling easy wayfinding. Neighbourhoods can be configured so that place users and outsiders can navigate them intuitively. This involves a combination of tools, from architectural cues to clear sightlines to straightforward routes.

Placemakers do not have to rely on their intuition when making significant investments. The intuitive user-friendliness of existing places can be measured and understood using spatial analysis and modelling techniques, such as those employed by Space Syntax at More London (see case study). Of course there is no substitute for the sense of ease that comes from having humans available on site to answer questions.

Places of ease offer direct benefits for property owners. They draw pedestrians to local retail. They make commutes easier and more pleasurable for employees. They make thoroughfares more lively and safe. And they help property owners reduce risk when situating retail spaces.



Image: Gil Penalosa



Image: Claran Currie



Remember the basics: provide access to drinking water, toilets, and shelter from weather.

Action examples

Provide access to water fountains or water bottle refill stations in all public parks and plazas, and in public-private realms such as interior food courts.

Provide access to public toilets within a five-minute walk of every location on site.

Provide baby changing facilities and/or Baby Care rooms (large enough to fit a double wide stroller) accessible by all parents/guardians.

Provide clear and legible information on the time of day, current weather, and temperature.

Use visual cues: design environmental and architectural features to help people orient and navigate places.

Action examples

Include memorable architectural, landscape and artistic landmarks to mark routes and help visitors orient themselves. This includes public art sculptures, water fountains, spires, etc.

Ensure consistent use and organization of sensory cues. This may include using tactile pavings to alert impaired people to the presence of landscape features (such as street furniture or cross walks).

Locate public spaces at the intersection of important routes and pedestrian desire lines so they function as navigation aids or 'stepping stones'.

Comprehensive, cohesive, and consistent signage: use signage to help define place and improve vehicular and place patterns.

Action examples

Reduce visual clutter of commercial signage. Eliminate non-compliant billboard advertising and other corporate signage in order to prevent the proliferation of advertising and branding 'noise'.

Provide an electronic kiosk, with touch screen interaction to help visitors identify their destination and the best route to take to get there.

Use progressive disclosure on wayfinding infrastructure, provide only enough information necessary to get the visitor to the next decision-making point.

Make it personal: provide visitors, tenants, and employees with easily accessible face-to-face services.

Action examples

Provide visible call boxes for visitors to connect with a service individual or security officer.

Align location of services with the route hierarchy. That means placing public services on the more accessible and busier parts of the network to reach as many potential users as possible.

Provide easily accessible visitor information centers and information desks. Visitor information centers should provide basic information about services, procedures, and locations of departments, bathrooms, and restaurants.



Promote permeability: link paths, parks, and plazas to increase connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Action examples

Create an intuitively readable hierarchy of routes and spaces. People are accustomed to certain changes in character and land use when they move from a main road to a side street.

Align intensity of usage with street and path grid permeability. Busy places can draw enough people to support many routes and small blocks. Quiet places can support fewer street and path networks.

Create sustainable levels of pedestrian through-movement at different scales of journeys by linking global and local movement networks. This will support public space activity levels, retail viability, safety, and urban inclusion.



Image: Happy City



Image: British Land



Places of ease: possible metrics

- Network walkability.

Method: Use figure-ground diagrams of built and unbuilt space as well as block size (area and circumference) to show the fabric of built space and pedestrian networks.

- Twenty-four hour pedestrian movements.

Method: Analyze pedestrian activity by undertaking detailed pedestrian movement surveys at different times of the day and week to identify spatial and temporal patterns.

Case Study

More London: designing ease and access into a new urban district.

London, UK

Project team

Foster and Partners, KSS Architects Limited, Arup, Roger Preston & Partners, Townshend Landscape Architects, Davis Langdon and Everest, Space Syntax Limited and others.

This large site on the Southbank of the Thames River, between London Bridge and Tower Bridge, had been largely unused since the 1970s. How could a new master plan balance the needs of needs of a diverse group of users, including locals, office workers, and tourists? How could it ensure convenient access for pedestrians from London Bridge Station, a major commuter hub, towards the new development and other destinations in the wider area?

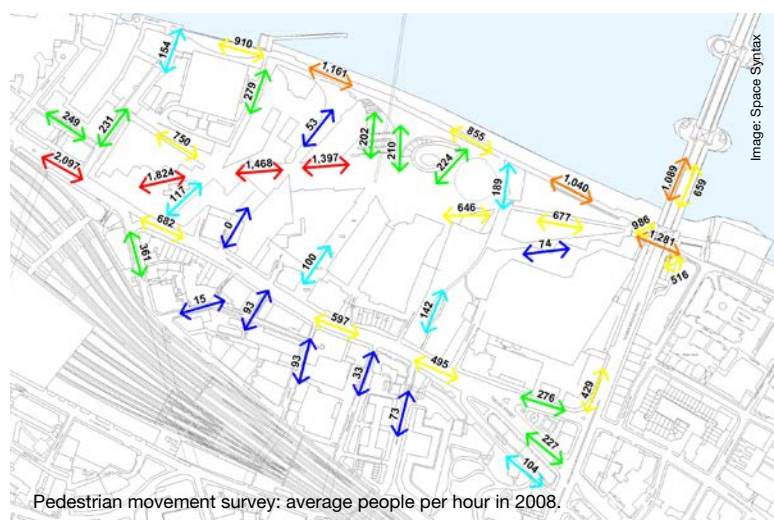
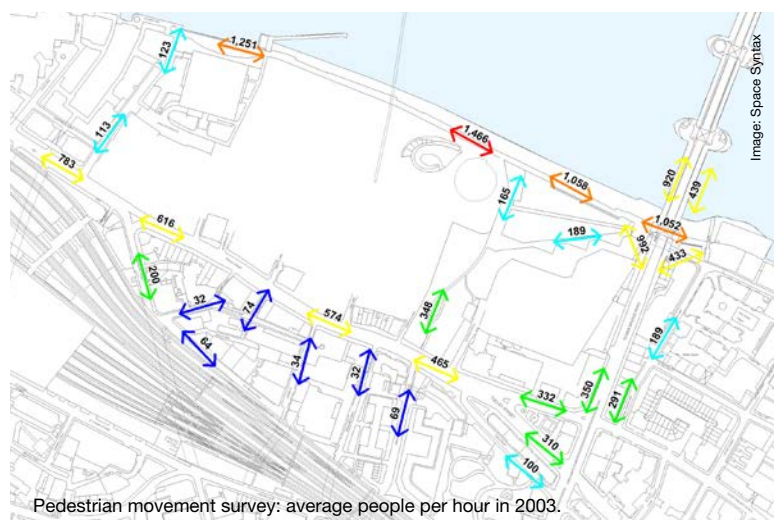
The solution demanded an understanding of the relationship between place geometry and pedestrian behaviour. The design team invited Space Syntax to study how the location and urban layout of the area directly influenced people's route choices and overall activity patterns. Based on this analysis, the design team developed spatial layout, building massing, landscaping, and land use strategies for a new master plan. Various alternative design proposals were then modelled to see how they influenced pedestrian activity throughout the area.

The resulting master plan was organised around a prominent, diagonal pedestrian street that linked London Bridge Station, City Hall and Tower Bridge along a direct sight-line via a series of public open spaces.

The layout now provides a convenient and legible network of routes for a mix of user types who naturally activate thoroughfares at different times of the day and the week. Shops and restaurants on the ground floor along the diagonal induce lingering, increase 'eyes on the street' and thus feelings of safety in the public realm. Soft landscaping, trees, and outdoor seating additionally supports comfort and co-presence.

More London now welcomes 35,000 visitors a day. Post-occupancy pedestrian movement observations show that the diagonal pedestrian street has become a vibrant thoroughfare. In other words, a plan that makes pedestrian access easy, legible, and intuitive did not just make life easier for site users. It ensured a predictable flow of pedestrians to support thriving retail, restaurants, and other destinations.

By Space Syntax Limited.





Resilient places nurture the ecological, economic and cultural diversity that help communities and places stay strong over the long term.

Goals

- Places harness natural systems to boost both comfort and efficiency.
- People are able to respond to disasters and disruptions to day-to-day life.
- Places draw investments that boosts local employment, entrepreneurship, and economic activity.
- People pay the full societal costs associated with their choices.
- Places can adapt to changing needs and conditions over time.

Rationale

Resilient people have the resources, knowledge, flexibility, and wherewithal to maintain their wellbeing despite disruptions to everyday life. Resilient places need to do the same.

More than half the world's population now lives in cities. On the one hand, our cities are prime consumers of scarce resources, and emitters of the greenhouse gasses that are responsible for rapid climate change. On the other hand, cities and their residents are expected to experience significant impacts of climate change, from rising temperatures and more frequent and intense storms, to migration and economic shocks.

For individuals, resilience and everyday happiness are closely connected. According to a study from the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory, the social experiences that create small daily moments of joy and satisfaction also build resources and connections that can help people rebound better from adversity and stress, and ward off depression. These networks do more than just cheer us up. As residents

of New York City learned during hurricane Sandy, the social supports that contribute to everyday life satisfaction also keep people strong in the face of significant disruptions.

At the same time, place wellbeing depends on our ability to create systems that allow communities to adapt, respond, recover, and thrive creatively and collaboratively in the face of social, economic, and environmental change. This requires a holistic approach. Both risks and opportunities arise from the interconnected nature of our social, environmental, and economic systems.

We can build resilience by harnessing the power of natural systems of sunlight, rain, and nature. We can build it by ensuring that buildings do not merely generate lower environmental impacts, but that they can respond to rapid environmental changes. We can build it by ensuring that buildings and infrastructure can adapt to changing needs over time. We can build it by diversifying the kinds of tenants and customers that places serve. In short, more diverse neighbourhoods, ecosystems, economies, and social systems are better able to respond to interruptions or change.

But we also need to acknowledge that in an interconnected world, authentic happiness means considering the wellbeing of all people affected by our actions. Placemakers can accomplish this by ensuring that users pay the full costs associated with their consumption and behaviour.

The social supports that contribute to everyday life satisfaction also keep people strong in the face of significant disruptions.





Design dynamic systems: architecture and public space employ passive, ecologically responsive designs to create comfort and beauty.

Action examples

Use passive design strategies such as careful building orientation to naturally control climate and daylighting of interior spaces.

Regulate, reduce and capture stormwater. Use rainwater gardens (bioswales) to capture storm water on street edges and parking lots to both provide visual exposures to nature and buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

Employ an ecologist or biologist to review project site and surrounding habitat to suggest ways to strengthen ecosystem processes and systems. This may include creating a wildlife corridor or bird migration corridor.



Design for change and uncertainty (future-proofing): favor flexible and adaptable designs to accommodate a variety of uses over time.

Action examples

Design and construct (or renovate) buildings to handle severe storms, flooding, wildfire, and other impacts that are expected to result from a warming climate. This includes modeling systems based on future climatic conditions as much as possible, rather than relying on past data.

Design with flexible use in mind. For example, ensure abundant distribution of electrical outlets to accommodate a variety of workspace configurations.

Foster local social & economic capital: foster robust local social and professional networks. Design for and incentivise a diversity of businesses and space uses.

Action examples

Foster a sharing economy. Provide the infrastructure (physical space and social media platforms) for people to share equipment and resources. This may include tools, cleaning equipment, products, office space, ridesharing, and knowledge/training.

Add shallow liner buildings as a retrofit strategy for auto-dominated retail locations: One-story "wrapper" buildings or canopies can screen parking lots and blank walls while providing leasable space for local retailers (See case study).

Use a Community Toolkit to support project teams in achieving targets in local procurement, local employment and training, as well as ideas for educational projects, volunteering activities, fundraising events, and community projects.



Get ready: build preparedness and planning capacity for disruptions to everyday life.

Action examples

Make sure that each development has an emergency preparedness plan, which refers to and includes the City of London's Strategic Emergency Plans and Frameworks.

Have redundant systems, including (most importantly) building-level water and energy systems. Redundant electric systems should have at least minimal backup power capacity, such as a solar-electric system with islanding capability.

Create community facilities (resilience hubs) that can serve as gathering places during emergencies and/or interruptions in services. Outfit such facilities with water, electricity, heat, and supplies.

Design systems able to handle and capitalize on the increase in severity and volume of local climate and weather changes. This might include increasing stormwater capture capacity in order to create community cisterns and dedicated fire protection reserves, while also reducing the impacts on local stormwater systems.

Support sustainability: build physical and administrative systems that encourage and reward efficient, smaller-footprint behaviours.

Action examples

Reduce or eliminate trash cans in offices and increase the size and number of recycling/compost stations.

Use transparency to teach. Use clear plastic trash cans that make garbage visible. This encourages proper sorting and reduces the amount of waste that ends up in our landfill.

Create an active commuter program which offers cash rewards to cycle commuters to acknowledge their lower healthcare and insurance costs.



Image: British Land





Resilient places: possible metrics

- Percentage of tenants who can name at least three of their neighbour tenants.
Method: Survey.
- Percentage of tenants who use the services of their neighbour tenants.
Method: Survey.
- Sustainability ratings, via LEED and BREAM.
- Percent of waste diverted from the landfill.

Case Study

Mashpee Commons: a thriving suburban downtown retrofit. Mashpee, USA

Project team

Imai Keller Moore Architects, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, & Cornish Associates Limited Partnership.

Twentieth-century suburban retail models have proved to be less than resilient. They are carbon-intensive, and dependent on cars and increasingly distant consumers. But these facilities can be retrofitted into thriving, walkable urban centres.

One of the best cases of transformation is Mashpee Commons. Here, a highway and auto-oriented grocery store-anchored strip center, built in 1968, was retrofitted into Mashpee Commons, a thriving and walkable mixed-use town center development.

The first phase increased square footage and converted the single-sided retail strip into double-sided shopping “streets” by flipping the back of the strip to a new front with a liner row of shops. It also added civic space and introduced upper story mixed-use. Since then, the transformation has been incremental and evolutionary. An entire network of blocks and streets was planned for the property in a mid-1980s charrette and over several decades individual new buildings of one to three stories have been added. These additions define new streets branching from the center by lining surface parking lots with businesses and extending out to adjacent areas.

Lease spaces of diverse sizes support local businesses. Today, 70 locally owned businesses operate there – representing 60 percent of the total number of shops and restaurants. Community-serving uses incorporated into Mashpee Commons include a post office, a public library, a small plaza called Central Square, and the 1.8-acre town green.

The site has become much more resilient through the construction of a private wastewater treatment facility which enables the introduction of clustered housing. Mashpee Commons currently has 40 rental apartments and Live/Work units and 53 additional units are in construction, of which 13 (25 percent) will meet affordable housing standards. After the first phase of retrofit average rents increased from \$6-12 per square foot to the \$10-12 range. Apartment residents – many of whom are older adults – are able to walk to shops, a rarity in the area. The owners have maintained a lengthy waiting list for the 40 existing units and the new apartments are eagerly awaited.

The Commons has now become the acknowledged downtown of Mashpee.

By June Williamson.



Mashpee Center in 1950.



Mashpee Commons: Main Street after retrofit.

Mashpee Commons: Small-footprint sites create opportunities for small local business.



Image: June Williamson

Image: June Williamson



Inclusive places offer access and opportunity across the spectrum of human diversity.

Goals

- A diversity of people feel welcome, invited and safe.
- People are able to gather in groups for social and cultural expression.
- Shops, services and housing are available to a wide range of people.

Rationale

“One of the requirements of happiness is equality. Maybe not equality of income but equality of quality of life and, more than that, an environment where people don’t feel inferior, don’t feel excluded.”

– Enrique Peñalosa

When Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogota, Colombia, set out to design a happier city, he was right to recognise the link between human well-being and social inclusion.

Equity and social inclusion matter for wellness. The more that all people are empowered to participate in economic and cultural life, the stronger we all are. Meta-studies have found that societies with a narrow gap between rich and poor are both happier and healthier than less equal societies. So while the push for more equity in cities has an ethical basis, it is also pragmatic for people of all social classes.

It’s also important to recognise that status differences have a powerful psychological effect. High-status individuals are healthier and live longer than those with low status, even when they receive the same healthcare. Hypertension, high

cholesterol and more frequent sickness – all of these come with low status. Changes in social status affect our brain chemistry. Being low in status is like standing in a shower of stress hormones every day.

While urban placemakers may not be able to solve societal inequality, they can use design and management practices to ensure that the broadest spectrum of people can participate in and contribute to city life. As the British Design Council argues, inclusive environments are places that work better for everybody, at all stages of life. That means they are also good for business. (The spending power of people with disabilities in the UK alone is \$212 billion.) Inclusive design and policy is also a mark of good corporate citizenship and neighbourliness.

Removing physical and visual barriers to access is the first step towards inclusivity. But we must also ensure that places actually feel safe and welcoming for everyone. Since the people who use and work around city spaces come from diverse backgrounds, there should be an equally diverse set of goods and services available. And because barriers to access are often social or psychological, we must ensure that the people who manage places or greet the public have the skills and training to truly welcome everyone.





Inclusive places: strategies

Spaces for all: ensure public spaces are welcoming and inclusive for all ages, abilities and socio-economic classes of people.

Action examples

Conduct place-based demographic research, site surveys, and review of trends in population change to ensure places serve the diverse set of user groups that will be using them in future.

Create a range of spaces and facilities for all ages and activities, from skate parks and playgrounds to nature paths and contemplative gardens.

Integrate and overlap designated space uses to avoid segregating people through specific uses. For example, combine a senior's centre with a child daycare and other uses.

Access for everyone: remove physical and visual barriers to access.

Action examples

Where primary site access is not inclusive, provide alternative access with sufficient width and surface materials for wheelchair travel.

Ensure all individuals can access public services, in particular those which help to meet people's basic needs (toilets, water fountains, seating, etc.) by ensuring, for example, that pedestrian crossings and public toilets are at ground level.

Meet the access regulations laid out in: Building Regulations 2010 Part M: Access to and use of Buildings, and the British Standard 8300: 2009 Design of Buildings and their Approaches to meet the needs of Disabled People – Code of Practice.



Enable groups to gather: enable groups to gather, provide the spaces and policies that allow for people to collectively gather and express themselves.

Action examples

Ensure the legal right to assembly by including publicly-owned and controlled spaces in the area mix.

Design an integrated system of core and neighbourhood plazas and squares. From a formal core grand gathering place which accommodates a range of activities year round, to a variety of connected neighbourhood scale spaces of varying shapes and sizes.

Expand and encourage the creation of 'temporary' public spaces. This may include creating temporary parks or gardens on future development sites or seasonal road closures.

Provide space or financial or in-kind support to enable the local community to meet in welcoming and informal spaces, such as cafés, public houses, or shops, to discuss local issues.



Safe active spaces: ensure that all public places and thoroughfares feel safe for all.

Action examples

Avoid designs that include entrapment sites, or locations where individuals might feel unable to escape from physical threats, by ensuring all public spaces have more than one exit.

Pedestrian crossings should have signals with audible cues at a pitch and timing suitable for elderly and disabled people.

To project a sense of ownership, spaces should be clearly delineated and defined as public, semi-public, semi-private, and private spaces.

Open arms: ensure tenants and place managers have the skill and training to provide welcome and access to all.

Action examples

Provide "Travel Training" to help employees and tenants with learning disabilities negotiate the site and local transport options. This should also include ongoing support through in-person one-to-one help, information provided by video, by telephone, or recordings.

Identify and nominate an Accessibility Coordinator (ideally an existing staff member) for each site to participate in planning and policy meetings.

Affordable and accessible: ensure there is a diversity of goods and services available to people of various abilities and social/cultural status.

Action examples

Create a local economic strategy to ensure a diversity of shops and services are available to serve the needs of employees and visitors.

Lease small spaces to local businesses that cater to a growing immigrant groups in order to invigorate and diversify market centres and streets.

Stagger service hours of shops and services to provide access for people with various work schedule. This will activate community spaces for longer periods of the day, creating safer areas populated by a diversity of people.

Inclusive design processes: invite a diverse range of people into the process of design and place management.

Action examples

Include a diversity of people from the local community in the planning and design process for new developments. This may mean using creative engagement methods, such as the baking classes utilised by Homebaked (see case study).

Schedule design and management meetings so the community can attend and provide more opportunities for community members to present on motions and/or reports. Evening meetings allow a broader spectrum of people to attend. Convenient locations and childcare services for participants broaden the spectrum of participation even further.

Provide a project website with current information on the status of construction and any changes to design.



83%
OF DISABLED PEOPLE HAVE 'WALKED AWAY' FROM MAKING A PURCHASE BECAUSE THEY WERE BLOCKED BY PHYSICAL FEATURES OR UNWELCOMING SERVICE STAFF.

Image: British Land



Inclusive places: possible metrics

- Percentage of site visitors who respond positively to the question “I feel welcome/safe here.”
Method: use streeter and/or online surveys.
- Report on experienced helpfulness and welcome from site representatives and employees.
Method: user experience research methods, such as undercover observer.
- Network map showing the distribution of routes and destinations that are materially and psychologically accessible to disabled people.
Method: Hire accessibility consultant to move through and survey entire site.
- Number of unplanned public gatherings on site per year.
Method: Conduct people counts at events involving more than 50 people.
- Gender/visible minority mix on senior placemaking design and management teams.
Method: Human resources staff survey.

Case Study

Homebaked: a model of community stakeholder inclusivity. Anfield, Liverpool

Project team

Liverpool Biennial, Jeanne van Heeswijk (lead artist), URBED (architects), other artists and the people of Anfield.

The area of Anfield, in the shadow of the of the Kop stand at Liverpool FC stadium, was suffering from urban blight caused by depopulation, the boarding up or demolishing of houses, and the loss of social amenities. This was an outcome of the area been designated for demolition under a Housing Market Renewal Initiative. Remaining residents were suffering planning consultation fatigue, but were keen to see improvements and investment in their locale.

In 2010, Liverpool Biennial commissioned artist Jeanne van Heeswijk to lead an installation at a vacant former bakery at 199 Oakfield Road. The artist asked the community for direction, and the unanimous request was to re-open the bakery. The response was Homebaked, a co-operative Bakery and Community Land Trust (CLT).

The development process was unique. The design team consisted of local community members who worked in an open, ongoing, and collaborative process along with design professionals. Collaboration took the form of community workshops and design charrettes led by the project team. They used arts and baking classes to solicit feedback, as well as conversation in the bakery with customers. The informal setting was ideal for generating conversations about needs and ideas.

Homebaked is now a thriving retail enterprise that employs six local residents. However Homebaked does much more than serve baked goods. It is a space for the community to gather, to express and come

to understand their lived experience of local change. The bakery has created a community not just of local people, but all those involved in the project. It is a catalyst both of community engagement and stakeholder interaction.

This inclusive approach has given this community a valued and listened-to voice in the planning process. Now Homebaked is host to ‘Build your own High Street,’ a community-led design programme. Participants meet in the bakery and are planning mixed-purpose design interventions to further to improve the Anfield community and economy.

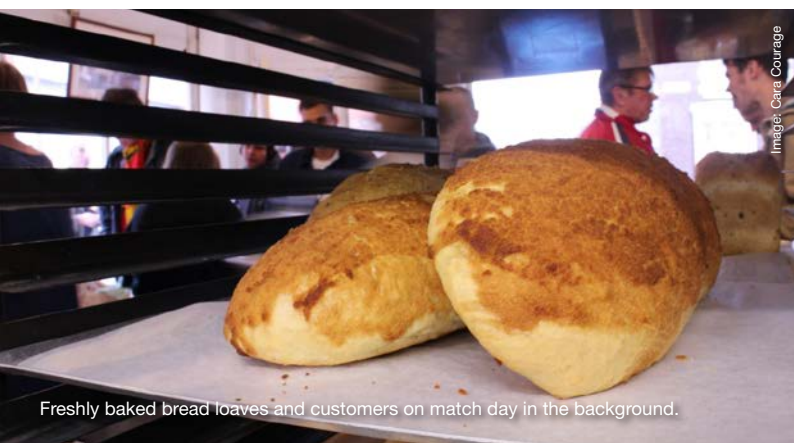
Meanwhile, the bakery has increased pedestrian traffic in the area outside of match days and become a city and tourist destination. The initiative is proof there can be a synergistic relationship between local inclusion, sense of place and economic development.

By Cara Courage.



Local community member baker looks on over a batch of 'Shanky pies'.

Image: Cara Courage



Freshly baked bread loaves and customers on match day in the background.

Image: Cara Courage



Exterior before its first opening day.

Image: Cara Courage

Moving forward

This report is intended as a framework around which British Land may develop policies to boost wellbeing through its placemaking activities. It builds on British Land's solid foundational work in health, wellbeing, corporate responsibility, community engagement and place design. We encourage British Land to continue this journey.



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Appendix Key British Land documents reviewed

Reports

- ✓ 2020 Sustainability Strategy
- ✓ Sustainability Progress Report 2015
- ✓ Sustainability Full Data Report 2015
- ✓ Corporate Responsibility Summary Report 2014
- ✓ Corporate Responsibility Full Data Report 2014
- ✓ Our Carbon Footprint 2014
- ✓ Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) Report 2014
- ✓ Stakeholder Engagement Report 2014.

Policies

- ✓ Sustainability Policy
- ✓ Supply Chain Charter
- ✓ Sustainability Brief for Management
- ✓ Sustainability Brief for Acquisitions
- ✓ Sustainability Brief for Developments
- ✓ Service Commitment, Health and Safety Policy
- ✓ Health and Safety Policy for Developments
- ✓ Health and Safety Policy for Managed Properties in the UK
- ✓ Complaints Procedure
- ✓ Community Charter
- ✓ Community Toolkit for Developments
- ✓ Charitable and Community Funding Guidelines
- ✓ Position on Climate Change.

Stories

- ✓ July 2015 – Community Day – Making a Positive Difference
- ✓ Our Sustainability Strategy – Social Focus
- ✓ Sustainability – Creating Shopping Parks People Prefer
- ✓ Creating a Place People Prefer – York House
- ✓ Our Position on Climate Change.

