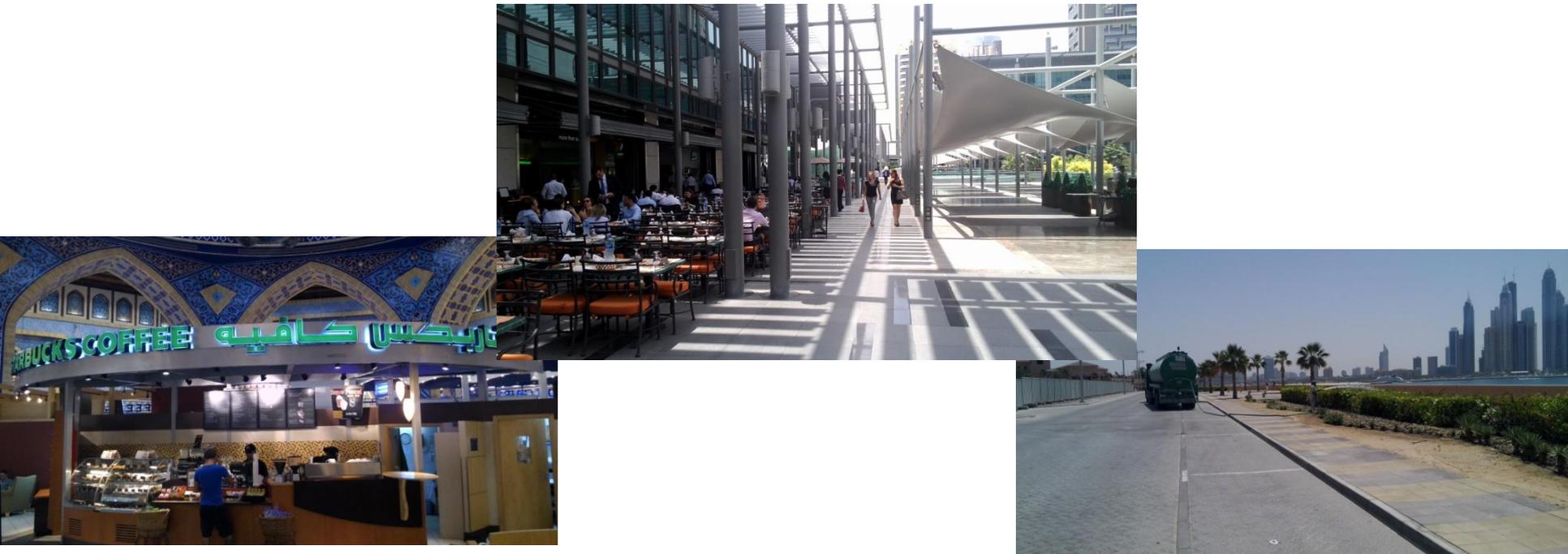


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Phoenix Group Presentation
Gloria Venczel
September 17th 2014

Public Realm + Sense of Place



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Public Realm + Sense of Place

Sense of Place

1. Genuine climatic design response
 2. Architectural infusion of local materials, forms
 3. Clear design intent for public realm or bldg
- 1 out of 3 good, 3 out of 3 outstanding.
 - Left- Emaar “stroll” Dubai; right- Financial District , Dubai
 - Rate them



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Public Realm

Public Realm + Sense of Place

1. Primarily, a western concept of public life. However, mostly absent from many US cities post 1960s “urban renewal” program (think bulldozing downtowns).
2. Public realm is a public good- used to be based on good neighbour policies (families in same spot for 300 years+), but now negotiated through democratic values.
3. In a global economy with diversity, public realm is where we work out our differences and build our civil society, one coffee at a time. Pedestrian oriented retail is more than about selling shoes.



Dubai left, very similar to newer US cities-min. of public realm

Vancouver right pedestrian oriented + public realm + cars



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Public Realm + Sense of Place

- These are some of the basics , the “nuts and bolts” around the functions of the “public realm” and “sense of place”. But as an industry, why should you care?
- On a macro scale, investor dollars are mobile globally. The region has a lot going for it, good business climate, low corruption rate, educated work force and a strong, livable environment etc.. Have to build on the livable region to compete with other world cities.
- On a micro-scale, developers would like their successful projects to be competitive and well loved by buyers which equals pedestrian oriented. Left-East Vancouver, right-Kitsilano . Rate them 1 to 10 for pedestrian friendliness.



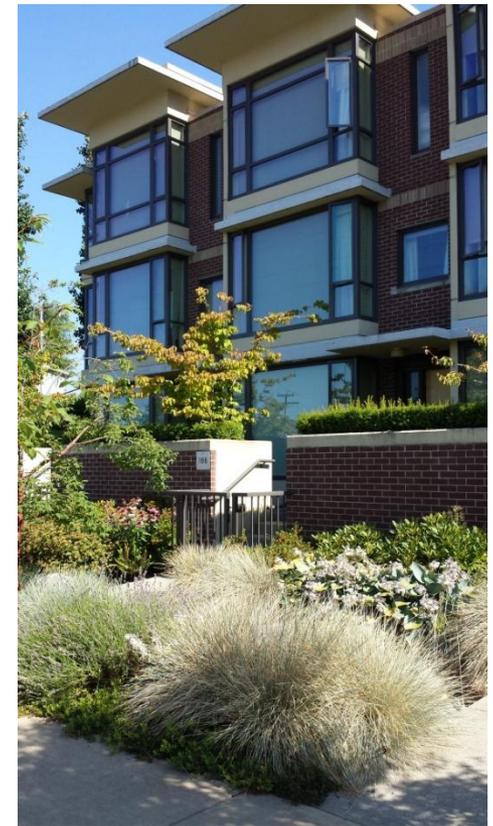
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Public Realm + Sense of Place

➤ Public Realm- Residential

- Layering of spaces to create privacy and visual boundaries for both the residents and pedestrians.
- Public :sidewalk (right)
- Semi-public: rain garden (right) where you could go and get your frisbee.
- Semi-private: the patio- not completely hidden from view, but you need an invitation (right).
- Private: inside.
- CPTED- visual cues that anyone could pop out- “anonymous” behaviour difficult.
- More urban settings (left), slightly different treatment for townhomes.



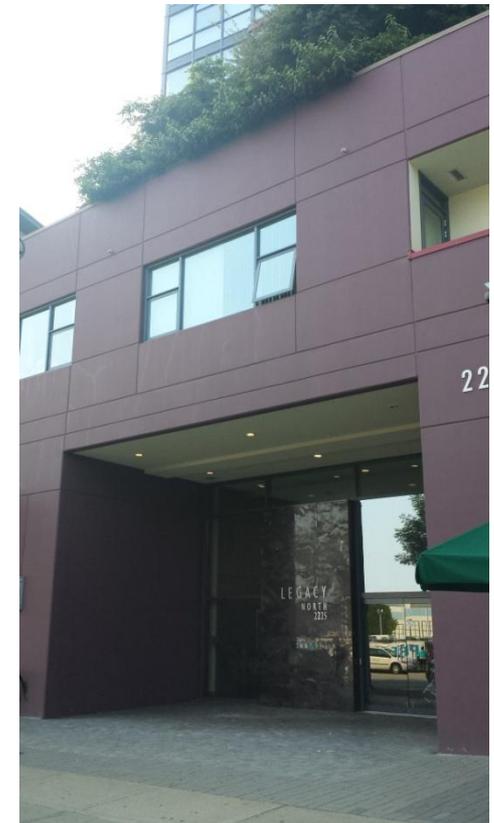
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➤ Public Realm- Residential

- Patio (left) too close to the sidewalk- no change in elevation- appears to be uncomfortable to use- what are the visual cues?
- How much time would you feel comfortable spending on this patio(left) ?
- The entry to this residential tower (right) is hard to find unless you are really looking for it- does not contribute to CPTED or a sense of identity.



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➤ Public Realm- Mixed Use

- Olympic Village-mixed use- residential
- Retail opens out to the sidewalk (below) facing layered landscaping and public square
- Patios (bottom right) seem to be well used and set back enough for privacy (layering of columns, planters etc.)
- Not all edge programming of mixed use bldgs can be retail- residential patios work well.



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Public Realm + Sense of Place

➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail

- Redevelopment tends to need consolidated lots for it to “pencil”
- Below is an excellent example of learning from the context of former streetcar suburbs.
- It is a consolidated lot development that architecturally allows for customized retail expressions as per the former streetcar retail pattern.
- All new CRUs originally had the standard commercial glass but structurally allowed for individual expression as seen below.
- 25' (or 2 x 12.5') storefronts. Note the variety in awning styles.



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➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail: Suterbrook + New Port Villages

- Left- While Suterbrook Village's big box Thrifty's does not follow the multiple of 25' storefront widths, it does create a successful public realm through scale, layering of architectural materials, well designed sidewalk display area, layered paving and definition of the edge with the trees + seating.
- Right- New Port Village uses the 25' storefront rhythm which also creates a strong pedestrian environment



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➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail

- While the (left) retail strip is attractive enough, it appears to be somewhat uniform like a mall.
- Retail design(right) uses the 25' storefront width but the tenant ends up renting most of the floor, papering doors and windows, turning its back on the public realm.
- Need to architecturally plan for tenant layouts so that the retailers can easily have the space they need, but *limit* their frontage to absolute max. of 50' width, one per block. 25'store frontage ensures more pedestrian/customer traffic.



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➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail

- Banks and liquor stores (N.V. + Suterbrook Village) have security issues that need to be addressed- can't have permeable café-like walls.
- However, try to avoid locating them on corners or in prominent public spaces; tend to create dead zones for public spaces-impacting other retailers' viability.
- But the market dictates, banks and liquor stores are high value tenants.
- Plan ahead, allow for 25' – 50' storefronts max for banks etc. and either move the rest of the CRU sq footage upstairs or behind other shops.



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➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail

- While the CRUs along Cambie St. have beautiful, functional patios at 25'-50' intervals, the Home Depot on the corner at 8th promises much but has a hard time delivering.
- There is min. edge programming of uses other than the plain entry to Home Depot, w/elevators and emergency exits.
- Such a prominent corner public space needs at least three more “window-shopping” style stores w/ edge programming, including the Home Depot entry, to draw pedestrian activity + commerce.



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➤ Sense of Place- Pedestrian Oriented Retail

- Try to anticipate architecturally unintended uses by retail tenants.
- “This is not an entrance” signage below indicates a conflict between design intent and actual usage.
- Underutilized stage –right image.



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➤ Enhanced Marketing: Sense of Place

- Developers do lifestyle marketing extremely well - something that the sustainability community aspires to.
- Who is UBC Alumni? How many have been to Benny's Bagels (below) ?
- Benny's Bagels type of retail create a "sense of place" vibe that helps sell the Kits lifestyle for condo marketing .



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Public Realm + Sense of Place

➤ Enhanced Marketing: Creature Comforts

- Ensure “creature comforts” in the public realm like benches in a variety of configurations and forms- focus on the experiential for your “buyers”.
- Design for “tete a tete” conversations, sitting solo or in groups.
- Shade trees, water features, multiple experiences in the same space.



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➤ Enhanced Marketing: Public Art

- Gives a sense of sophistication- moving away from the basics- differentiation in the market.
- Element of surprise and serendipity. These are some of the reasons that so many flock to Europe- use these design elements locally.



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➤ Enhanced Marketing: Knowledge = Power

- To enhance lifestyle marketing strategies, understanding some of the “nuts and bolts” of pedestrian oriented urban design can be helpful.
- Consider architecturally planning ahead to place high value tenants in their preferred locations but only for a 25' storefront so as to not restrict pedestrian traffic, negatively impacting other retail tenants who rely on window shopping pedestrians.

