This Space is Mine, Yours, and Ours:
A Thoughtful Review of Public Spaces and Community Ownership

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When the community collectively owns a space, the intrinsic riches that community reaps are innumerable.
Five Metrics to Creating Community

- Functional Efficiency
- Social Equity
- Economic Feasibility
- Environmental Responsibility
- Cultural Sensitivity
Functional Efficiency

- The movement to, through and from a space.
- **Circulation** is the primary determinant of form in many environments.
- Appropriate **site programs**.
- The short-term and long-term **maintenance requirements**.
- **Safety** for all user groups.
Social Equity

• Opportunities for social interaction.
• Those occasions allow for personal growth through learning - about ourselves, each other, or something greater.
• It is important to provide spaces where all user-groups can interact.
• This allows for the dismantling of many socio-economic barriers that inhibit the equitable exchange of thoughts and ideas.
• Design, in a public setting, ultimately has one client – the public.
Economic Feasibility

• Manage the economic feasibility of a project, while balancing the overall quality of the design.

• A truly financially conscious design will consider both the near-term realities and the potential for future increased land values and tax bases.

• Urban design and landscape architecture elements are often more financially nimble.

• The inability to design due to economic and programmatic restraints will ultimately result in stagnation.
Environmental Responsibility

• The variety of scale, the degrees of impact, and the method by which it is produced will often dictate the solution or solutions that are appropriate for a given project.

• It is important to rely on the context of a site to inform the appropriate solution.

• Sustainable solutions not only increase the quality of the environment for the end users, but for all manners of life.
Cultural Sensitivity

• Acknowledging and embracing the culture of an area from a design perspective takes root in the past, present and future of a place.

• The historical perspective of what a place has been is important in informing what a place can be, from its form to its materiality.

• The present use and context is equally important as most design solutions will serve the existing.

• The champions of the proposed design solutions may very well be the end-user groups themselves, rather than the design team.
Ankeny/Burnside Development Framework

- Portland, Oregon
- Redesigned Saturday Market
- Vibrant new streetscape
- Adaptive open spaces that respond to weekday versus weekends uses
Welcome to Hemisfair!
Where San Antonio Meets

Social Equity
Hemisfair Yanaguana Gardens

• San Antonio, Texas
• Former Convention Center site in Central San Antonio
• Designed to be interactive and social play environment for children of all ages
• Design sensitive to local culture
Boston Downtown Crossing Urban Design Strategy

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Public-Private Effort
- Establish **walkable and active commercial core** in Downtown Boston
- Created new **pedestrianized streets**
- **Activated** alleyways and public plazas
- Business **Improvement District** formed
Golden Triangle

Environmental Responsibility
Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan

• Denver, Colorado
• Create walkable places
• Redesign of major roadway to include a two-way cycle track
• Landscape and vegetation
Huntington Beach Pier Plaza and South Beach Improvements

• Huntington Beach, California
• Landscape improvements and physical interventions to improve connections and enhance access
• History and Culture incorporated into design
• Design sensitive to local culture
Summary and Closing Thoughts
The public realm has belonged, and shall always belong, to the communities that define it. As designers and as planners, we are charged with the creation of places that are accessible, equitable, lasting and ultimately generate opportunities for social engagement and ownership.