Remaking Cities Congress

Major Partners

Remaking Cities Institute, Carnegie Mellon University

The American Institute of Architects
Food for Thought

Dense, mixed and accessible cities

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CITIES IN A GLOBAL WORLD:
It’s about the people

Cities should enable residents to develop to their maximum potential. A city’s human capital should be:

- Diverse
- In constant awareness of changing contexts

For this, a city needs strong local networks with links to more global ones.

WHAT CAN THE CITY OFFER...
THE CITY HAS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY

- 33 Km of street length in 10 minutes
- Thousands of commercial establishments
- > 50 thousand residents
- 50 to 60 Has of public space: the street
BUT IT ALL DEPENDS ON

- The mix of uses
- Density
- Urban form
In England and Wales, 2002 data, in m² per capita:

- Housing: 37.4
- Retail: 2.0
- Office: 1.8

Note: housing is 10 times office and retail together.
DATA FOR INNER AND OUTER LONDON

- m²/hab - Outer London

- Housing

- Retail

- Office

- Industrial and Storage
WITH THOSE LAND USE RATIOS
How to mix them?

- Conventional Transport Planning view:
  - Office and retail account for about 60% of all journeys.
  - Concentrate those uses over Public Transport nodes.

- One problem with this logic:
  - Housing is at one end of about 85% of journeys.

  - Most of the city’s “mass” and its activities should make sense to mix it well.
DENSITY IS KEY FOR A GOOD MIX

- It is not possible to achieve:
  - A relatively homogeneous mix
  - Active buildings at ground level (shops, services)
  - Sufficient pedestrian activity for urban life
  - Good accessibility for residents and workers

- Gross densities of 2.5 to 3 m²/m² can provide this

- Six to nine storeys high buildings

- 150 to 200 dwellings/ha

- Not necessarily for the whole city, but a significant part
DENSITY AND TRANSPORT MODE

Dense cities are accessible

Density Bands (residents/Ha) for UK and Bilbao
WHEN ACCESSIBILITY DIMINISHES…
Modal split changes in the UK over time

% journeys by car
% journeys on foot
WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE
For Post-Industrial Cities

- Despite the success of dense central urban areas:
  - Most planning regulations would prevent them!
  - Density is stigmatised
  - Planning standards are often less than half of density levels that have proved workable
  - The impact on accessibility and street life is not understood

- Post-industrial cities usually have plenty of land left over:
  - Which could only be done at fairly low densities

- The need for more infrastructure is costly (more later)
THE COST OF CITIES
THE ISSUE OF REPLACEMENT COSTS
How much would it cost to rebuild my city?

- Few cities I know ask themselves this question
- But once cities stop expanding and start ageing it’ll become more and more relevant

- Up till now, some of these costs go under the maintenance heading or perhaps "investment"
- A quick calculation:
  - With infrastructure/building lifespans in the 50/100-year range
  - Dedicate over 1% per year of total cost
- If Bilbao has invested 10bn € over 20/25 years
- If that were 10-20% of total accumulated infrastructure it would mean close to 1bn € per year
IS THAT AFFORDABLE?

• Will cities over the next 25/50 years be able to afford that?

• I don’t know, but more compact ones should be in a better...
THANK YOU