Rethinking Public Space

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https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-africans-tire-lengthy-viral-restrictions

Definition of Public Space

- Public space is the space that is open and freely accessible to people of all social identities, economic class, and physical form.
- Public space should be developed through inclusive processes that promote equitability, safety, efficiency and social interactions.
- Public space should promote:
  - multifunctional areas for social interaction
  - economic exchange
  - cultural exchange

https://newint.org/blog/majority/2010/04/08/lagos-up-close

Impact of Coronavirus on Public Space

Physical distancing and restricted use of public space (key policies during the pandemic) have resulted in:

- Inaccessibility
- Restricted movement
- Maintenance of infrastructure and public space delays
- Public transport restrictions

From **Makgosi Letimile** we have learnt that changing the way we use public space is vital to the City's response to Covid-19.

The Lavender Hill CAN project is one such example of:

- transforming a public space
- once home to gang disputes, now a space from which children can obtain their daily meal.

https://m.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=207217344040319&id=112598156835572&set=a.2072166673 73720&source=49&refid=13&__tn__=%2B%3D

Design Guideline: Safety

Our past has created unsafe, degrading, open spaces

Upgrading urban spaces to improve urban safety

E.g. The regeneration of Public Spaces in Braamfontein to promote safety and encourage people to use those spaces
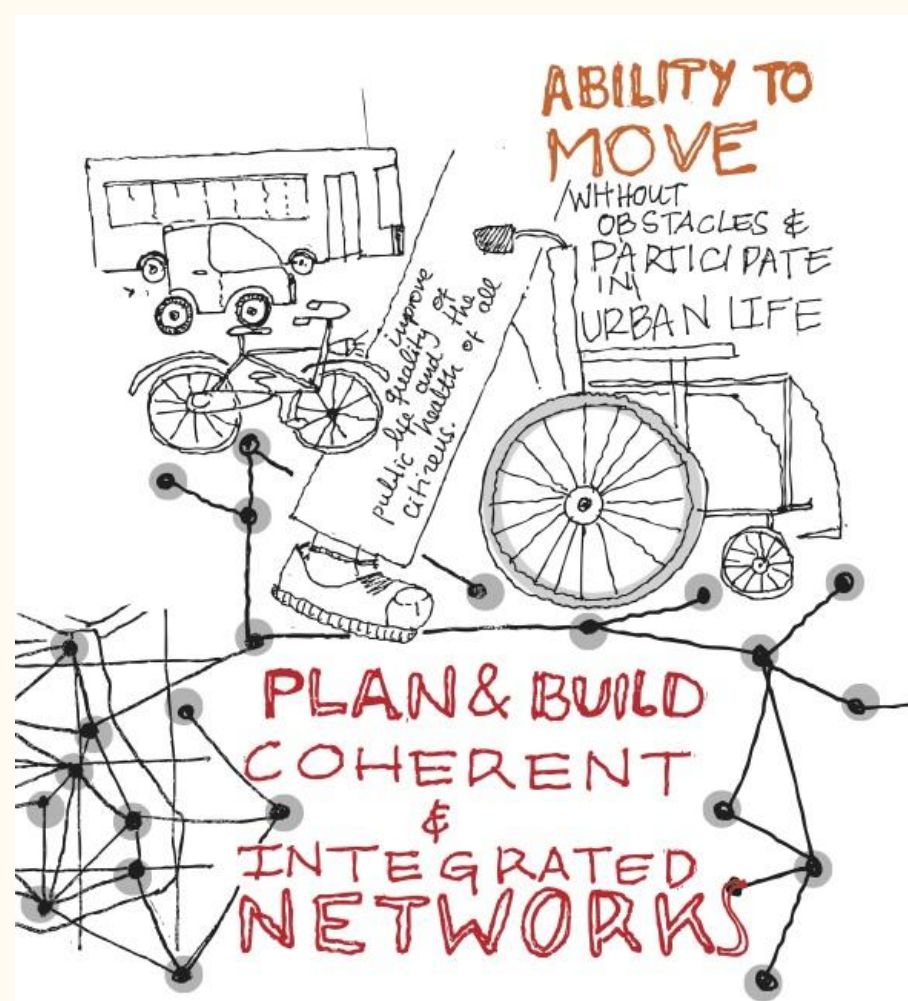

Illustration by Leani De Vries
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Parks-in-inner-city-Johannesburg-illustration-Leani-de-Vries_fig2_305714861

Design Guideline: Mobility

Public spaces should be accessible to all non-motorised movement

Public spaces should not be designed in isolation but rather linked in a network to facilitate flow/mobility

Because when citizens can move, they can participate in urban life.

Design Guideline: Political Movement/Expression

We imagine it as the setting for important civic events, where large groups of people come to celebrate, protest, and mourn.

"The public square should not be represented (or designed) as the city's gated property or as a walled garden. It should be a space that provides citizens with opportunities to engage in political and social debates" -Majdi Fehli

Design Guideline: Flexibility

Promote flexibility in use of public spaces
by all users at the preference of their own time

Promote public spaces that are cared for, welcoming to
all, managed and well maintained as people often
gravitate to cared for spaces

Ensure that public space offer safe and comfortable
space for all users

Introduce different uses of public spaces, social
distancing signs for communication purpose to ensure
that the well-being and health of the users is at the
forefront in such a pandemic

Image 7: *Play area for children,*
Source: *magnolia dell park caters for all - Bing*

Image 8: *Space for car guards and the homeless to rest*
Source: *magnolia dell park caters for all - Bing*

Design Guideline: Public space and economic development

- **Public space and informal sector**
  - 72% of employment in Sub-Saharan Africa
- **Voids in inner city:**
  - used as key trade market place
- **Roads and streets:**
  - Informal transport sector
  - Retail (1) detached/unfixed (2) detached/fixed
- **Implication of Covid:**
  - Hard-lockdown
    - Restricted trade and income with limited social security
- **Implications on disability:**
  - Narrow and high street curbs limit wheelchair accessibility
  - Lack of signage to assist blind or aurally challenge

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www.alamy.com

https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-nakasero-market-in-the-heart-of-kampala-75825484.html

Conclusion: Post-Pandemic Public Spaces

How do these design guidelines contribute to effective post-pandemic public spaces?

Adapting public spaces for social distancing and managing flows of people

Reclaiming public Spaces

Re-allocating space to support business

Embedding flexibility into urban planning

Building safer, flexible and vibrant public places

Conclusion

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