

New life for historic cities

The historic urban landscape
approach explained



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

‘Tangible and intangible heritage are sources of social cohesion, factors of diversity and drivers of creativity, innovation and urban regeneration – we must do more to harness this power.’

– Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO at the World Urban Forum (Naples, 2012)





Plaza Grande, Quito (Ecuador). Photograph by Randal Sheppard



Urban heritage constitutes a key resource in enhancing the livability of urban areas. It fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment. This booklet calls to involve more people in preservation efforts, raise levels of awareness, and seek innovative schemes. By actively engaging public, private and civic sectors the city, historic and contemporary, can be better preserved and celebrated.

Historic Urban Landscapes

Urban heritage is of vital importance for our cities – now and in the future. Tangible and intangible urban heritage are sources of social cohesion, factors of diversity and drivers of creativity, innovation and urban regeneration.

The key to understanding and managing any historic urban environment is the recognition that the city is not a static monument or group of buildings, but subject to dynamic forces in the economic, social and cultural spheres that shaped it and keep shaping it. This booklet advocates that a historic context and new development can interact and mutually reinforce their role and meaning.

UNESCO's approach to managing historic urban landscapes is holistic; it integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development. This method sees urban heritage as a social, cultural and economic asset for the development of cities.

The recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape was adopted on 10 November 2011 by UNESCO's General Conference.

The historic urban landscape approach moves beyond the preservation of the physical environment, and focuses on the entire human environment with all of its tangible and intangible qualities. It seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions by taking into account the existing built environment, intangible heritage, cultural diversity, socio-economic and environmental factors along with local community values.

Historic cities under pressure

CLIMATE CHANGE

Flooding in Pakistan. Photograph © UN photo/WFP/Amjad Jamal

URBANISATION

Demolition in China. Photograph by triplefiveview



MARKET EXPLOITATION



MASS TOURISM



Tram in Istanbul (Turkey). Photograph by Scott Dexter.

Towards a new balance

The historic urban landscape approach sees and interprets the city as a continuum in time and space. Countless population groups have left their mark, and continue to do so today.

As an approach, it considers cultural diversity and creativity as key assets for human, social and economic development. It is an alternative method to cutting the city up through 'zoning' into separate conservation areas, which thereby become ghettos of historic preservation. To these ends, UNESCO works with cities to support the integration of environmental, social and cultural concerns into the planning, design and implementation of urban development.

In many cities this approach has had very positive and encouraging results. For each local situation a balance is reached between preservation and protection of urban heritage, economic development, functionality and livability of a city. Thus the needs of current inhabitants are responded to while sustainably enhancing the city's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

The different approaches – heritage, economic, environmental and sociocultural – do not conflict; they are complementary and their long-term success is dependent on them being linked together.

“The city of Lyon has invested in the re-enactment of historic events using the urban atmosphere during the day (colours), and at night (illuminations), with such special events as the annual lights festival; and an urban recreation park of 10 hectares along the 5 km vehicle-free embankments of the Rhône.” – Bruno Delas, Project Director, Mission “Historic site of Lyon”



“The canals are the veins of the city, the veins through which all kinds of wealth enters Amsterdam. Swathes of people, products, capital and ideas have all entered the city along its canals. It’s understandable that people still continue to come from all over the world: Amsterdam is now home to 178 nationalities. It’s also understandable that the strength of the Canal District is based on the dynamism of its residents.” – Boudewijn Oranje, Alderman of the central borough of Amsterdam for Cultural Heritage and Economic Affairs

“Urban renovation in Quito was speeded up thanks to the cooperation of the municipality, the private sector and international aid: improvement of the streets and squares, renovation of façades and churches, improvement of lighting, etc. In addition, new modes of transportation have been introduced, including a public bicycle plan.” – Ambassador Horacio Sevilla Borja

Quito



Photograph by Alex Horack

Fez



A Photograph by Adam Jones

“A study has been conducted on traditional building methods and materials and jobs in the construction industry and on the work of the ceramic manufacturers of Fez; and a Training Institute for the Traditional Building Trade (IFMTB) created. Students and professionals from different countries continue to cooperate with those responsible for the preservation of the built heritage in the region.” – Xavier Casanovas, RehabiMed network official

Layers of the city

The historic urban landscape is the result of the layering and intertwining of cultural and natural values over time. Beyond the notion of 'historic centre,' it includes the broader urban context and its geographical setting.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

INFRASTRUCTURES

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

How can a city become a stable ecosystem?

How can future generations be engaged in maintaining the continuation of urban life?

How can action and planning law work together in order to achieve climate-resilience for cities?

GEOMORPHOLOGY

Can urban conservation serve the needs of local communities, including the poor and the marginalized?



URBAN STRUCTURE

ECONOMIC PROCESSES

TOPOGRAPHY

OPEN SPACES

SOCIAL VALUES

HYDROLOGY

Which new financial tools are needed for the management of the historic urban landscape?

Can we sustain and enhance the identity of cities as a way to brand them?

How can urban conservation promote new forms of productivity and socio-economic development?

Benefiting from the historic urban landscape approach

If dealt with properly, urban heritage will act as a catalyst for socio-economic development through tourism, commercial use, and higher land and property values – thereby providing the revenues out of which to pay for maintenance, restoration and rehabilitation.

Urban heritage areas generate much higher returns than areas devoid of any cultural-historic significance. Proximity to world-class monuments and sites usually draws high-end service-sector businesses and residents, who are willing to pay more for locations with prestige and status. This is reflected in land and property values.

The 250-plus historic cities that have been included in the World Heritage List deliver very significant socio-economic benefits at the local and national levels - not only through tourism and related goods and services, but also through other functions. For instance, Salzburg (Austria) constitutes only 6 per cent of the country's population, but contributes 25 per cent of its net economic product.

Urban heritage areas often demand enhanced management, because of more and/or stricter regulations controlling and monitoring the built environment, which improves planning and design if properly executed. This, in turn, increases certainty for investors as regards the safety of their investments in the long term.



**STRENGTHENED
SENSE OF PLACE**



**MORE HIGH-END
SERVICE-SECTOR
BUSINESSES**



**HIGHER LAND AND
PROPERTY VALUES**



**HIGHER REVENUES
FOR MAINTENANCE,
RESTORATION AND
REHABILITATION
EFFORTS**



**IMPROVED PLANNING
AND DESIGN**



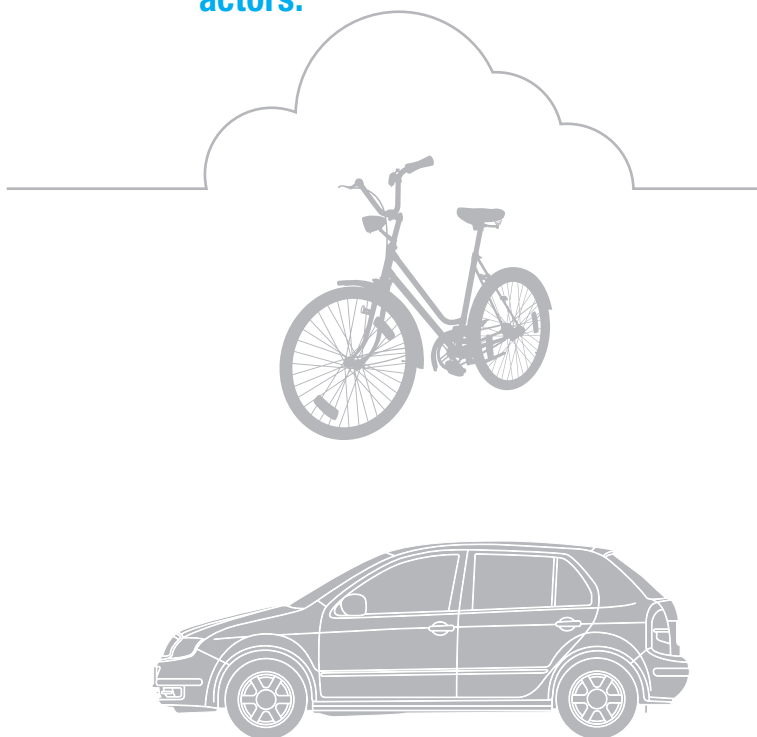
TOURISM

The historic urban landscape approach in action

1. Undertake a full assessment of the city's natural, cultural and human resources;
2. Use participatory planning and stakeholder consultations to decide on conservation aims and actions;
3. Assess the vulnerability of urban heritage to socio-economic pressures and impacts of climate change;
4. Integrate urban heritage values and their vulnerability status into a wider framework of city development;
5. Prioritize policies and actions for conservation and development, including good stewardship;
6. Establish the appropriate (public-private) partnerships and local management frameworks;
7. Develop mechanisms for the coordination of the various activities between different actors.

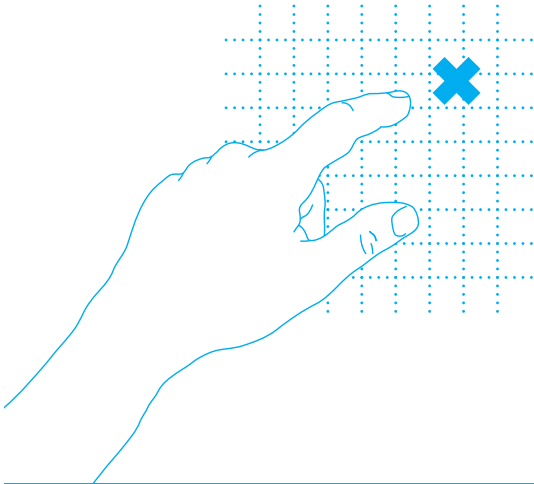


OLD + NEW



CARS + BIKES

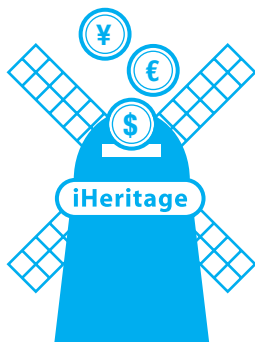
KNOWLEDGE AND PLANNING TOOLS



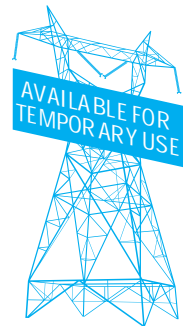
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS



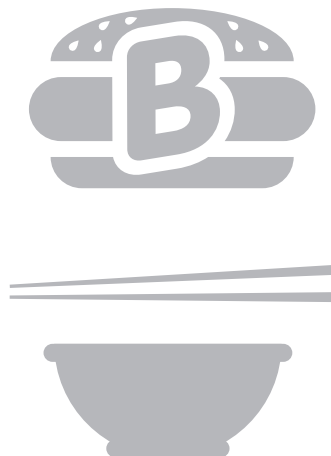
FINANCIAL TOOLS



REGULATORY SYSTEMS



MIX



TOURISTS + RESIDENTS

GLOBAL BRANDS + LOCAL BUSINESS

BEST PRACTICE



Stadsherstel Paramaribo

www.sges.heritagesuriname.org / www.stadsherstel.nl

FINANCIAL TOOLS

REGULATORY SYSTEMS

Stadsherstel Paramaribo was established as a foundation in 2011 by Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed Suriname (site manager of Historic Inner City of Paramaribo, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2002) and De Surinaamsche Bank, the largest private bank in Suriname. Stadsherstel Amsterdam supports, advises and works intensively together with this Surinam initiative, to redevelop and protect built

heritage in Paramaribo, the capital city of the South American country. This public-private partnership aims to re-establish the balance between living and working in the inner city through sustainable and commercially viable restoration and management. By giving out shares, businesses and banks can invest, with a modest dividend. In 2013 the foundation will change into a limited liability company, similar to Stadsherstel Amsterdam.

Play the City Istanbul

www.playthecity.nl

KNOWLEDGE AND PLANNING TOOLS

The Play the City foundation introduces serious gaming into city-making to test rules and constraints of a given complex urban question and co-design with stakeholders. In conditions where stakes are high and conflicting, city games feed designers with information, which only can arise from the real-time interaction of agents. Play the City has been designing city games for various urban questions internationally. Play the City helps build communities, develop tools for

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

digital urbanism and create strategies for urban development through serious gaming. One of these games was played in Istanbul, focusing on the question of how Istanbul's vast number of newcomers can be accommodated in an already high-density metropolis under the threat of earthquakes. Participants could "play" the role of the Mayor and use their RFID transport cards to express how they'd tackle urban issues.



BEST PRACTICE

Photograph by Gokhan Yorgo.

BEST PRACTICE



Photograph by Rafe Copeland.

Ushahidi

www.ushahidi.com

KNOWLEDGE AND PLANNING TOOLS

Ushahidi is a successful non-profit tech company founded in Kenya that specializes in developing free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. Ushahidi builds tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers for individuals to share their stories. One of these

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

tools is the Inherity mobile app, an application that aims to protect cultural heritage by empowering local communities and visitors to lend a hand. Users can record, take a picture and locate on a map any tangible piece of cultural heritage they think is worthwhile. This can be as small as a piece of pottery or as large as a castle.

The High Line

www.thehighline.org

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

FINANCIAL TOOLS

The High Line is a public park built on an historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan’s West Side. It is owned by the City of New York, and maintained and operated by Friends of the High Line. Founded in 1999 by community residents, the Friends fought for the structure’s preservation and transformation at a time when the historic structure was under threat of demolition.

In addition to overseeing maintenance, operations, and public programming for the park, Friends of the High Line works to raise the essential private funds to support more than 90 percent of the park’s annual operating budget. The more than 3 million people who visit the High Line annually have rejuvenated this former brownfield site.



Photograph by John Dalton.

BEST PRACTICE

Recommended reading

Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape,
UNESCO, 10 November 2011

→ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48857&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Guide for city professionals “Historic Districts for all; a social and human approach for sustainable revitalisation”, UN-HABITAT and UNESCO, 2008

→ http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/10362_1_594123.pdf

Managing Historic Cities, World Heritage Papers
No.27, UNESCO, Paris, 2010

→ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/27/>

Partnerships for World Heritage Cities – Culture
as a Vector for Sustainable Urban Development.
Proceedings from the Urbino workshop, November
2002”, World Heritage Papers No.9, UNESCO,
Paris, 2004.

→ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/9/>

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The charm and the chaos of old Phnom Penh (Cambodia). Photograph by Jonas Hansel.

Cities are dynamic organisms. There is not a single 'historic' city in the world that has retained its 'original' character: the concept is a moving target, destined to change with society itself. To preserve the urban historic landscape, strategic and dynamic alliances need to be built between various actors in the urban scene, foremost between public authorities that manage the city and developers and entrepreneurs that operate in the city.

