Transforming Cities through Public Spaces

Peter D. Ellis
Urbanscapes Team
May 29, 2017
Big Opportunities

492 million
Urban residents currently in SAR

112 cities
Additional cities with more than 300,000 persons by 2030

$830 billion
Infrastructure backlog - roads, water, sanitation

Big Challenges

200+ million
People living in slums

42 percent
SAR’s share of world’s poor; 1/3rd of total population

$80 billion
Direct losses from natural disasters between 1971 & 2009
Urbanization has been messy and hidden

- Messy urbanization associated with expansion into areas formally classified as rural
- This has contributed to hidden urbanization
- Urban settlements governed as rural

Tri-temporal nighttime lights image for Sri Lanka – red indicates new lights that emerged 2002 - 2012
For many major cities, sprawl accompanied by stagnating urban cores
Manufacturing moving-out of major urban centers

Manufacturing moving out of Indian metro cores

Declining manufacturing specialization in Colombo Metro Region

Sub-urbanization of garment manufacturing in Dhaka

De-concentration presents opportunity to move land to higher value uses (e.g. higher value-added services)
Not a livable city, by many measures

Sources: Mercer Quality of Living Survey (2012); United Nations Statistics Division (2014)
Congestion is Pervasive in South Asia
Successful cities are busy cities

- Reflected both on the streets & in property markets:
  - London traffic moves at approx. same speed as in 19th century
  - London, Hong Kong, Singapore & New York amongst world’s most expensive property markets
- Willingness to bear high costs because of strength of agglomeration economies
- SAR – high congestion costs balance agglomeration economies at much lower productivity levels

Source: WB staff team based on Global Property Guide data
Public spaces occupy a big part of the city
Public spaces are not just “nice to have”

**Safety & Inclusion**
- Metrocable/Public Spaces
  - Medellín, Colombia
- Increased social inclusion

**Recreation & Resilience**
- Sabarmati Riverfront
  - Ahmedabad, India
- Increased civic pride

**Downtown Renewal**
- Cheonggyecheon Stream
  - Seoul, Korea
- Increased access to public infrastructure

**Streetscape Improvement**
- Times Square
  - New York City, USA
- Improved pedestrian safety

**Environmental Transformation**
- Nanjido Park
  - Seoul, Korea
- Increased biodiversity

**Historic Preservation**
- Historic District
  - Lahore, Pakistan
- Increased tourism

**Ecological Integration**
- Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park
  - Bishan, Singapore
- Increased biodiversity

**Innovation & Engagement**
- Living Innovation Zones
  - San Francisco, USA
- Increased civic engagement
More inclusive, livable, and vibrant cities need #BetterPublicSpaces

SDG Goal 11, Target 7

Access to green spaces and better public places
Public spaces are assets, yet ...

Vehicles displace pedestrians; poor walkability

Streets have become major sources of congestion; public spaces unusable
Many cities have managed to transform themselves by leveraging their public space assets.
Examples of rapid results interventions

Crosswalks and traffic calming

Garbage collection

Pedestrianization

Sidewalk seating

Neighborhood Markets

Playgrounds

Safety features

Burying cables

Street markets

Shade & lighting

Vendor kiosks

Neighborhood parks
Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project (KNIP)

» Immediately following the Karachi City Diagnostic

» $100M, Board approval in April 2017

» Focus on enhancing public spaces and mobility in 3 strategic neighborhoods

» Framework approach to select and appraise sub-projects during implementation

KNIP uses highly visible, yet low-cost improvements to demonstrate potential for city transformation, build consensus and political buy-in, and lay the institutional groundwork for deep reforms and long-term engagements.
Buriganga Riverfront Redevelopment, South Dhaka

Conceptual Design

- River ports infrastructure
- Cultural heritage preservation
- Pedestrianization
- Linear parks
- Landscaping & Lighting
- Garbage collection
- Sidewalk seating

Riverfront Promenade (during dry season)
Riverfront Promenade (during rainy season)
Gulshan Avenue Walkability and Traffic Improvement, North Dhaka

Conceptual Design

- Street vendors & market
- Landscaping & Lighting
- Road safety features
- Active ground floor
- Burying cables
- Raised block for blind
- Seating & Garbage bins
- Permeable paving
- Low height street curbs

- Permeable paving
- Raised block for blind
- Seating & Garbage bins
- Low height street curbs

- Burying cables
Ahmedabad: BRT and Redevelopment

- City has well connected ring & radial roads corresponding to built-up areas
- BRT system helps improve air quality and has had a positive impact on urban development
- Land readjustment used successfully to redefine land-use and finance BRT

Ahmedabad CBD Densification

Existing Street Network

Proposed Street Network

Existing Low-Density Development in CBD

Proposed High-Density Development in CBD

Key Ingredients of a Metropolitan Transformation Strategy

Key ingredients of a metro area diagnostic and transformation strategy

1. **City leadership**
   - Shared vision and action plan
   - Proactive metropolitan planning
   - Coordinated institutions

2. **Planning and Investments**
   - Actionable planning documents
   - Catalytic interventions
   - Adequate financial resources

3. **Meaningful consultations**
   - Local communities
   - Private businesses
   - Civil society & NGOs

Comprehensive data-driven approach to analyze the economy, livability and key infrastructure needs

Identify key challenges and opportunities for transformation as a livable and prosperous city
Moving towards prosperous and livable cities

- Policymakers must focus on alleviating both current and future congestion pressures

- Strengthen urban governance and finance

- Manage urban sprawl and expansion

- Focus on city core rejuvenation