

The Commons: Sharing Public Spaces event was hosted by the North Van Urban Forum and held at the Café for Contemporary Art on January 19th. The North Van Urban Forum was created to facilitate transparency and community participation in the development of the public realm in North Vancouver. This document summarizes the event and the input received from participants during the exhibition.

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North Van Urban Forum

The North Van Urban Forum was created when individuals who had previously attempted to facilitate transparency and public participation independently came together to do so as a group. The North Van Urban Forum is a registered non-profit, and its mission and vision are outlined below:

Mission: To urge and facilitate transparency and public participation in all aspects of the development of the public realm in our community. Part environmentalist, part heritage preservation activist, part urbanist, part arts and culture enthusiast, the mission of the North Van Urban Forum is to channel community energies towards a thoughtful, richly-collaborative and thoroughly community-rooted development of the urban space we inhabit; efforts that go hand in hand with seeking to ensure transparency in urban development processes.

Vision: The development of communities, and urban spaces in particular, is a collaborative, collective and cumulative effort. However, in recent years with the emerging dominance of big boxes and large towers, participation in this effort has become centred around a limited number of privileged actors and proceeds with little engagement with or from the public, resulting in urban spaces which can be perceived as alienating disappointments rather than rich sources of common pride. The North Van Urban Forum acknowledges this and envisions an approach to urban development where communities are richly engaged in the building of the place where they live and work, and where the development of the public realm occurs in a thoughtful, collaborative, transparent and widely-participatory manner; where through participation, communities are given the capacity to take ownership of, have pride in, and truly hold in common the urban environment they inhabit, co-create and will one day bequeath. It is our mission to engage in the development of our community with this vision in mind.

The North Van Urban Forum is a coalition of residents and business owners, united by a shared interest in transparent democracy and a love of North Vancouver. The group was formed in response to the massive potential of the Lot 5 development at the foot of Lower Lonsdale, coming together to ensure that as a public site it be developed to its potential, and in consultation with the community. North Van Urban Forum is open to all members of the public who are keen to get involved, and to be a part of the conversation about how we want our community to look and feel.

Our directors and founding members:

Benjamin Woodyatt, President & Founding Member

Ben developed a passion for urban design and architecture over years of travelling the world and seeing how other people live. During that time, he was filing into mental storage all sorts of possibilities inherent to great public space. Having put away his backpack and fallen into a more settled lifestyle, Ben is keen to explore some of those ideas and to be an active part of the development of his neighbourhood. With a drive toward sustainable living, ecological awareness, and creating vibrant liveable communities, Ben would like to see our neighbourhoods become pedestrian-scaled and walkable, and simply great places to be – whether as a resident or as a visitor. Having immigrated to Canada five years ago, Ben lives and works on the North Shore. Choosing to make his home in North

Vancouver, Ben would like to see his adopted city live up to its extraordinary potential. Through the North Van Urban Forum he would like to be a part of the creation of the next phase in North Van's evolution.

Tyler Russell, Director & Founding Member

Tyler's first encounters with The City of North Vancouver came in 2008/9 as he started to establish a cafe and art space in the heart of East Lower Lonsdale. With a majority of his art space's exhibitions having been centered around and motivated by an interest in community development, urban concerns and new media he has been a vibrant participant in a number of community conversations concerning developments in North Vancouver generally and most pertinently regarding the Lower Lonsdale waterfront. A proud Lower Lonsdale curator and business owner he is primarily concerned with ensuring that the urban development in this community, he is so deeply invested in, proceeds in an honorable and transparent manner that builds community while paying utmost respect and honor to the public interests of this generation and the next. He hopes the North Van Urban Forum can help address community concerns like these.

Tony Valente, Director & Founding Member

Tony's public involvement in community development began with a petition suggesting that Lot 5 become a "public green space". He engaged his neighbours and other members of the community to make a presentation to Council stressing the need for action on the site. Tony is a project manager in the utilities industry and is interested in urban planning, public consultation, and sustainability. As well, he is a proud resident of Lower Lonsdale excited about the role that North Van Urban Forum will play in development on the North Shore.

Kevin Lee, Founding Member

Kevin is a professional who works in Lower Lonsdale and wants to see the area develop into something truly scintillating. He was drawn to our Lot 5 site by last years' concerts on the new stage, the people friendly long pier and the towering cross-section of the hull – not something that every city has to work with! Kevin wants to see this precious piece of publicly owned waterfront in the centre of this developing urban space come alive in a way that is awe inspiring and incredibly functional for a wide cross section of our community and those visitors who we know will come.

Sandra Grant, Founding Member

Born and raised in North Vancouver and a lifelong resident, Sandra Grant can't imagine living anywhere else. Her goal is to work with North Van Urban Forum to encourage citizen participation in creation of civic spaces in the City and specifically at the shipyard site at the waterfront. Sandra has always had a close connection with the shipyard. Her father, Jack Mitchell, started work in 1919 as an office boy at Burrard Dry Dock and retired as dockmaster of the shipyard in 1970. Sandra spent a teenage summer as an assistant in the blueprint department at the shipyard. In a January, 2008, speech to North Vancouver City Council, she urged protection for the last remaining shipyard buildings which were facing

demolition. She has enjoyed spending time in great civic spaces in many cities around the globe and has high expectations for a prizewinning public space at the shipyard site.

Elena Giorgetti, Founding Member

Elena grew up in Italy and is a resident of Lower Lonsdale. She misses the cafes, piazzas, and the life of vibrant Italian towns. She is passionate about people and helping them achieve their full potential in their careers. Through the North Van Urban Forum Elena hopes to work with her neighbours and community to find a voice that will enable the North Shore to reach its full potential.

Marianne Ketchen, Founding Member

Marianne is a rooted lower Lonsdale resident and a long term employee of a local post-secondary institution on the North Shore. She is a recognized activist through her many and varied volunteered positions both past and present within the LoLo community. Marianne believes in the future of Lower Lonsdale and is very supportive of a public consultation in every step of any process. She welcomes your involvement.

The Event

The Commons: Sharing Public Space event was held on January 19th from 7 to 9 pm. The event was preceded and followed by public input opportunities from January 12th to 22nd. The purpose of the event was to ask ourselves and our community what the Lower Lonsdale Waterfront Commons is and what it can be in historical, contemporary and prospective terms. The public was also asked how that might translate into a commonly celebrated and embraced plan for the development of the Lower Lonsdale Waterfront.

The event sought to prime the minds of our community for more enthusiastic and informed involvement in the ongoing process. The weeklong public input opportunity mobilized the collective experiences of the neighborhood around eight questions¹:

Question 1: What is your ideal public space?

Question 2: How is the meaning of public spaces and its sense of commonality different when an assumed public space is unceded or contested?

Question 3: Does Green Space equal public space?

Question 4: How does emphasis on a site's shared history make public space more alive in the public imagination? What to do when sites have multiple competing or layered histories? How can a public space's design affect how included people who identify with a site's various histories feel, or how included outsiders feel?

Question 5: How can we gather input from the public on their spaces?

Question 6: Would our public spaces be awesome if we had more marble naked dudes?

Question 7: What makes space public?

Question 8: What is the value of heritage?

During the public input period people provided written input on sticky notes which were affixed to the questions posted on the wall. Additionally, people shared images of ideal public spaces from around the world. The culminating event was an open public forum/meet-up session led by Ben Woodyatt, the president of North Van Urban Forum. Participants shared their views and experiences of public spaces around the world while relating it to what they would like to see in North Vancouver. A summary of written input received is contained in the next section. An advertisement for the event can be found in Appendix 1.

¹ Please note that the numbering of the questions in no way indicates the importance of one question over another.

Summary of Input Received

Question 1: What is your ideal public space?



- Meeting up with friends to do an activity *Lower Lonsdale Walking Group*
- Would have to have room to: play, laugh, share, talk, be quiet + simply just <u>BE!</u>
- Dirty Markets w/ crude language in the lyrics of music locals don't understand
- Photos of people in my community and what inspires them aka that saturialist but w/ more
- Somewhere to talk, write, meet people and enjoy the view! + drink wine like the parks of Paris
- Where we can be close
- Outer space
- The Internet
- Where people are
- Where there is sunshine nature and inspiration
- A place where I'm alone; stuck in a dream
- Never stop breathing
- Narrow streets tight winding over-hanging balconies in modern cities 1/3 of space taken up by roadways!
- Respects ecosystems
- One w/ freedom of Xpression
- The outdoors...park...ocean-mountains
- Where you can walk, hang out + others are doing the same. Parks, squares pedestrian friendly!
- A society of friendly considerate people. Smiles are free
- Bloody patios!
- Think Europe city centre cafes, bars
- Spaces to people watch
- A place where there are no farts
- A place one can pass hours or a day hanging out, meeting people, having discussions and enjoy
 events for free! Inclusive!

- Proximity to good coffee
- Bars to stretch + play on
- Public discourse over backroom dealing!
- Movement + fitness
- Gas station with convenience store NOT
- Le Colonne di San Lorenzo Milan, Italy
- There are a lot of things that make public spaces attractive: something to look at, places to sit, places to be quiet, places to be noisy, washrooms where you don't have to buy something to use them, an area with rain cover/shade, some trees, buskers encouraged, events that bring people and allow them to be around other people to get to know their neighbours, pedestrian areas
- Greenspace a garden veggie gardens public agricultural space
- Spanish steps, Rome
- A build your own robot / rechrf with a lab that has tours
- Don't ask us to compete with cars!
- Piazza di Siena, Italy
- The Mind
- A cricket pitch
- Public space isn't necessarily geographic it's a place where civil society + democracy can thrive
- SOPA
- Greenery grass + splash water park for children _ this is not as expensive as an outdoor pool and will attract families – great for shopping attraction
- traditional swings wooden outdoor equipment
- Gastown in summer. Why isn't car-free? Industrial spaces that tough nature. Bikes by the sugar refinery
- Physical, environment, social...Accessible- to <u>ALL</u> a place to grow community
- Pictures of public spaces in Asia
- Picture of Campidoglio, Rome, Italy
- Harajuku Station
- Buildings & Sculptures that cause people to look and take a picture. Architecture that inspires
 and causes smiles of awe
- Picture of Spanish Steps, Rome, Italy
- Picture of skateboard park
- Shibuya
- Street level retail and foodstuffs!

Question 2: How is the meaning of public spaces and its sense of commonality different when an assumed public space is unceded or contested?



- There's a place I know, under an office with stores along the streets. It has a small park, with benches, and planted bushes along its corners. It's a very lovely public space; aside from the blasted opera and the 'no loitering' signs.
- Boundless for youth sense of i.d.
- Courage
- What is without clear definition can be changed
- A beautiful, OA filled space
- Create © unity of shared space through gratitude + celebration!
- WE should all have a say in the creation of the world.
- Only if people take lots of photos and upload them to the internet
- Get an extra cookie as a prize
- Love
- You give people stories
- Motivation
- An unceded space is by definition a non-public space as it implies ownership. A contested space
 however, is possibly the most public space as long as the public is open to and available for the
 discussion surrounding said space
- Companionship

Question 3: Does Green Space equal public space?



- If it is accessible! And FREE admission
- How much green does a space need to get to be called green space?
- It can be, but it is often private too. But even when its private it can often been from the public spaces so it contributes to them
- Not necessarily. When I move into a house it will have an overgrown backyard and this will be a green space but not a public one!
- Not always you need room for activities and clearly a significant amount of shrubbery and what have you
- It depends on one's "idea" of "green"
- But space has no colour 🕾
- Its only one form of public space
- Green space ≠ public space
- Public, green & invites community creates habitat -> inspires, energizes, revitalizes dead zones
- It Should yes! Green is welcoming + rejuvenating
- Green space and public space are ideas that is their only similarity
- An essential component (sketch of tree)
- Scribbles that look like writing
- Yes! And its inspiring to green lovers that are kids!
- Only if it is designated a public green space

Question 4: How does emphasis on a site's shared history make public space more alive in the public imagination? What to do when sites have multiple competing or layered histories? How can a public space's design affect how included people who identify with a site's various histories feel, or how included outsiders feel?

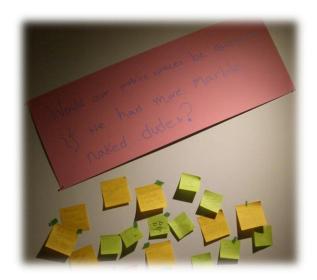
- Build on the assets created by our ancestors
- It brings warmth to the same as well as a sense of being part of something you might not have been there physically to see
- If you build it, they will come
- Emotional archaeology that we each carry to a site + walk away with
- Read the book <u>skateboarding</u>, <u>space</u>, the <u>City</u>
- Brings people together and adds a vibrancy to an area. A city can be cold without public gathering spaces that celebrate our communities

Question 5: How can we gather input from the public on their spaces?



- Empower creative imaginations, ingenuity
- Make it fun. Ask at counter when ordering
- Surveys
- By creating a common sense of urgency on matters concerning the welfare of said space
- Who cares about owning space The important issue is accessing space, for free. A la public houses right of passage and the agora
- This and other similar events?
- By asking clear questions
- Put questions on a wall + get people to write sticky note answers
- Authentic community engagement art participatory design
- You watch is it being used, how it is being used, what does it lack, what do people prefer of this space over others

Question 6: Would our public spaces be awesome if we had more marble naked dudes?



- (Stickman) poker face
- Of course
- Yes!!
- SfsIsI, SfsIsI, SfsIsI, SfsIsI, SfsIsI
- Our space would be awesome if we valued old architecture more I detest "disposal societies"
- Marble nudes will only increase the value or quality of life remember the marble nude female as well xoxo
- Oh yeah!
- Love the snatches
- One thing..No! ☺
- Naked anyhow you cut it!
- Absolutely!!! With horses!
- Think Campidoglio and Castor + Pollux with horses + Marcus Aurelius + horse
- SfsIsI, SfsIsI, SfsIsI, SfsIsI
- I don't know how I'd feel being about sculpted for multiple statues
- Gassy Jack statue causes people to gather and makes Gastown better not naked
- Me gusta
- Definitely
- How about more marble ledges
- The goddess of 2020
- Uh yeah kind of
- Only if they are shooting laser beams from their eyes!
- Certainly would also..any figurative sculpture full body
- More art of any kind would be AWESOME! Bring on the naked dudes!

Question 7: What makes space public?



- Stewardship! Right!
- A lack of privacy
- Freedom of movement allows thinking and awareness
- Lack of being private? Is this gallery public? Even if it isn't government funded?
- The fact of who owns the deed
- Intention & use if both align, the space is public
- That which is communal
- Lots of people / open to people. Duh
- Idea & ideals
- The public decides how to use it therefore not over regulated
- Inclusiveness to all sectors of the community <u>not</u> just the dominant wealthy citizens...
- Better question How is space not public?
- Use art
- Inclusiveness of welcome. Not having to pay
- People
- bodies

Question 8: What is the value of heritage?



- Honesty
- Strength
- Passion
- Heritance + Age = Heritage
- Why is society so scared of loitering??
- Sense of belonging honors those who have gone before
- How much is a melting pot worth?
- An appreciation of the people who built our community
- Roots
- Community roots
- Whose heritage?
- Inheritance
- Heritage shapes identity + world view which have a huge bearing on action and opinion
- Identity
- Although diverse, the heritage doesn't have to change. I'd like to believe people of different
 cultures and learn from each other and come to appreciate other's and also their own cultures
 and heritage more because of this
- Provides a tangible link to the past of a community
- It lets you know where you are so you can be inspired to move forward
- See reminders, but it is imperative to our heritage + history + value and identity that as the waterfront develops new and old citizens can always know and understand, who + what built our beauty city
- Fun
- It is important! To walk the waterfront & remember that just a short hundred year ago North Van was travelled to by a car ferry that the ship building was the backbone of this city. I love that I can still
- A tree is lifeless without its roots. Bishanfi
- Huge. Heritage gives value, meaning + sense of identity

Appendix 1: Event Advertisement

NORTH VAN URBAN FORUM PROUDLY PRESENTS:

The Commons:

Sharing Public Spaces

January 12 - 21

@: café for contemporary art - gallery 140 East Esplanade, North Vancouver

Meet-Up/Public Discussion: January 19, 2012, 7-9pm

As we begin a 4 month long series of exhibitions and talks regarding the re-development of the Lower Lonsdale Waterfront, from January 12 - 21, members of the public are invited to post their visual and verbal responses to these and other questions on the café for contemporary art's gallery walls. Post-its provided, print-outs welcome!

What is your ideal public space?

HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE?

What would be better?

Does Green Space = Public Space?

Does the emphasis of shared history make a public space common? what happens when not everyone shares that history?

What makes space public?

does participation make public space common?

how much input are decision makers actually looking for?

who is Frank?

How can we be motivated, empowered and enabled to be meaningful actors in the construction of shared space?

How is the meaning of public and its sense of commonality different when an assumed public space is unceded or contested?

what sorts of participation in the construction of public spaces are meaningful?

does signage in Helvetica make one space more public than another??

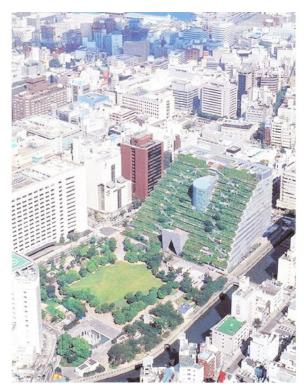
would our public spaces be awesome if we had more marble naked dudes?

how does strategic timing of official public input processes affect the publicness of outcomes?

urbanforum.wordpress.com

Appendix 2: Input Received

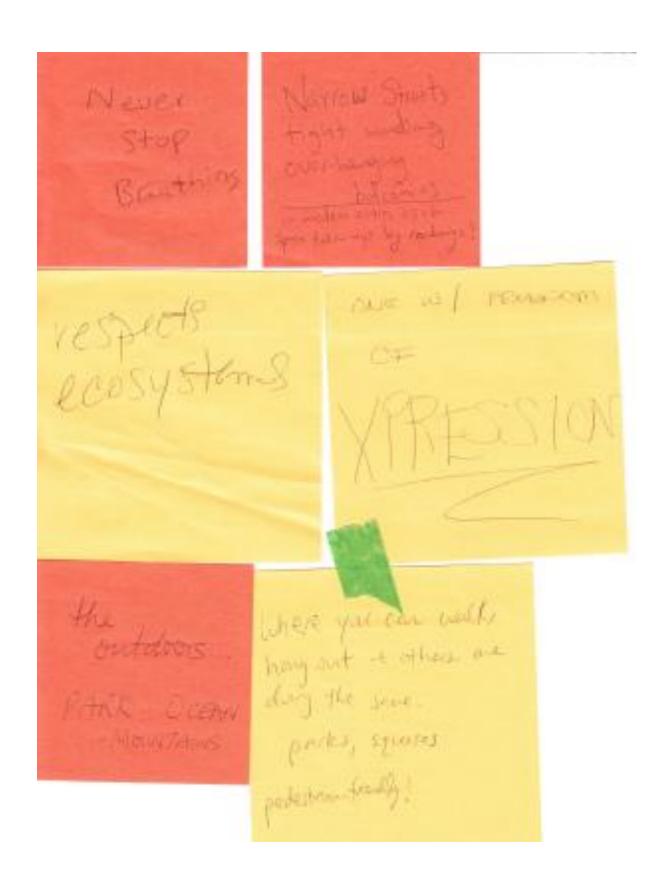
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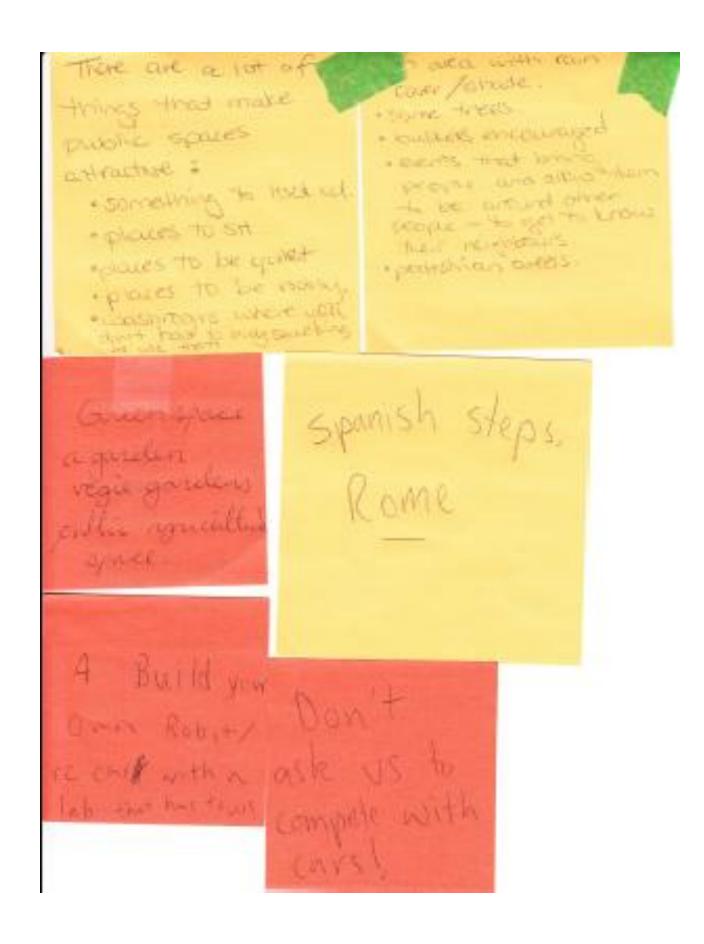




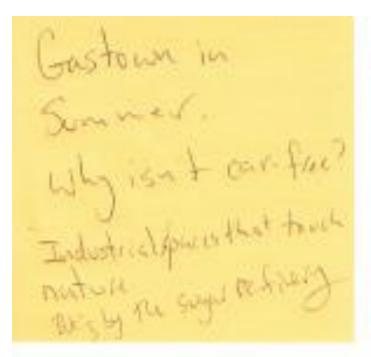






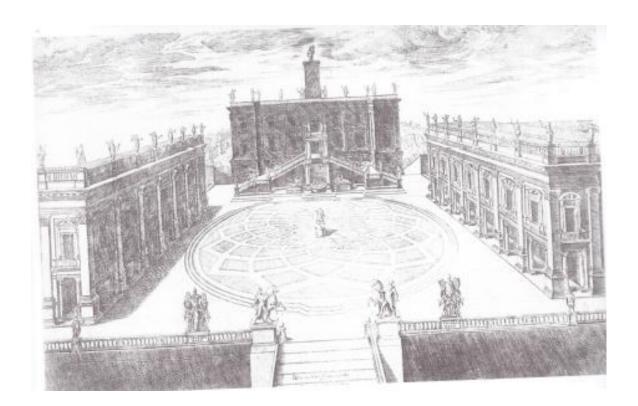








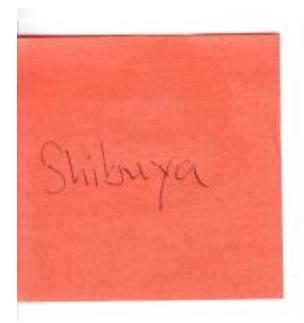




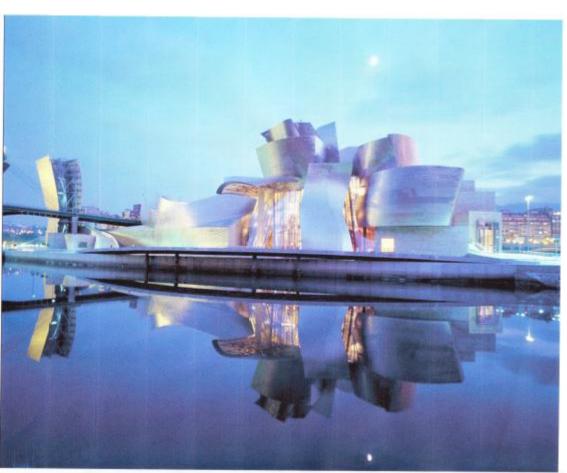
HARAJUKU STATION Buildings +
Sculptures that
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Look and take a 3
Look and take a 3
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That inspires consenses



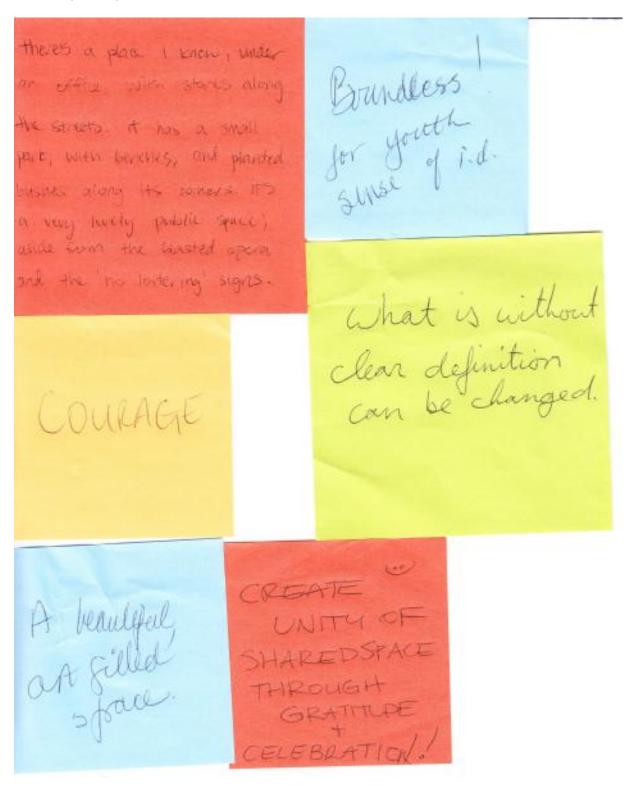








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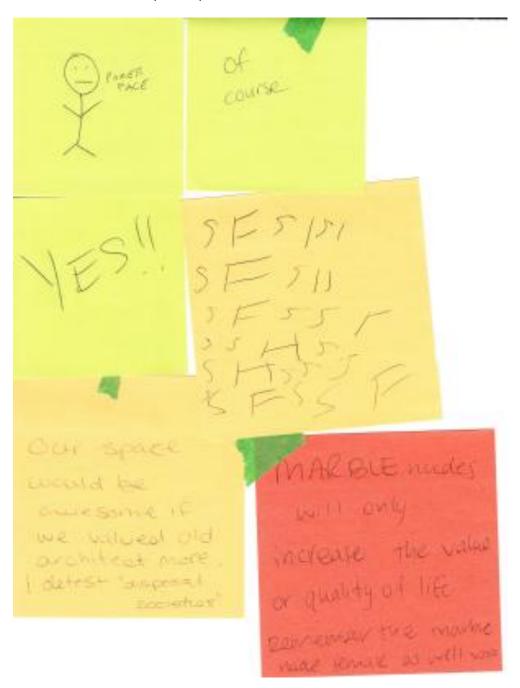
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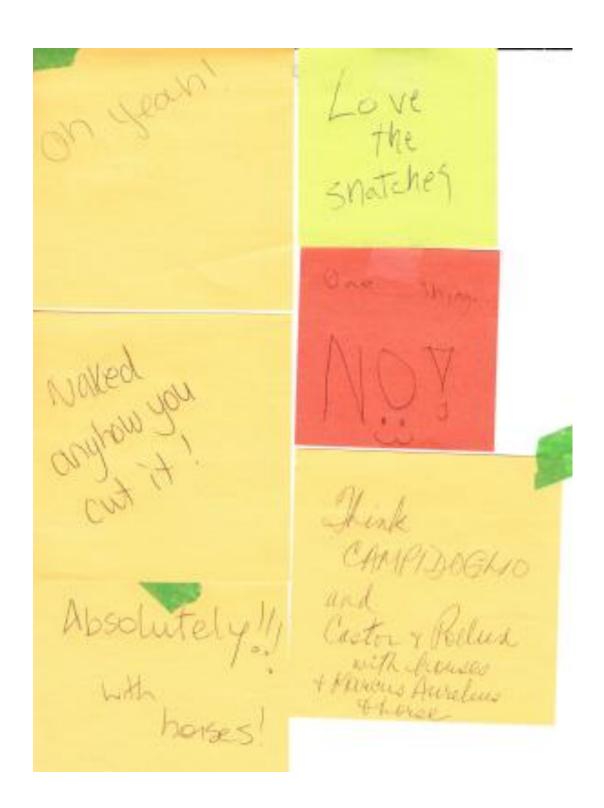
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Idea & lals!

The public decides how to we it therefore - not Over-regulated

olnclusiveness to all sectors Of the community NOT just the How is slace dominant weather atizens ... (

BETTER GUESTION

NOT PUBLIC?

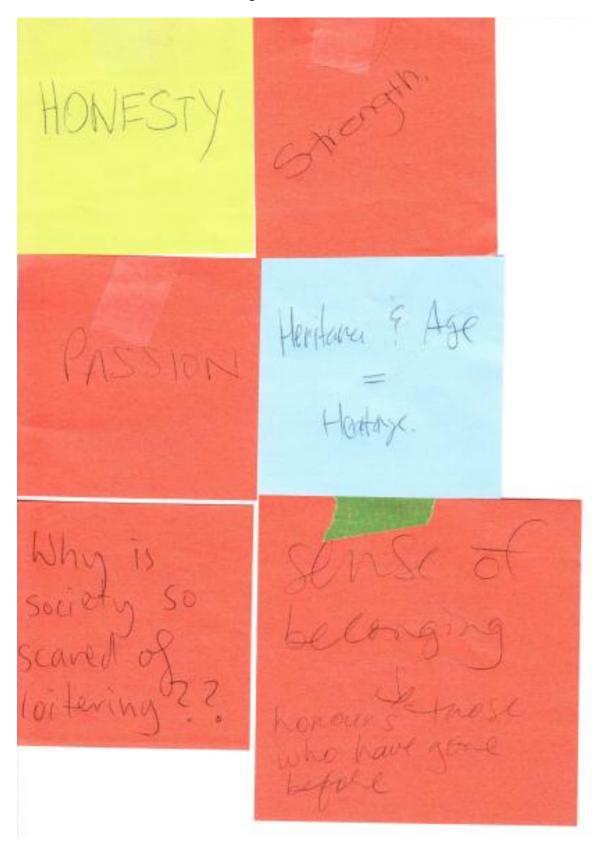
Inclusiveness of uelcome.

NOT having to pay

USE

People Bodies

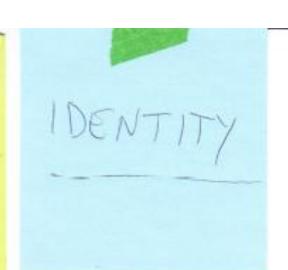
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An appreciations of the people who Built or How much is a melting Pot? community Community Roots ROOTS Whose INHERITANCE Leritage?

heritage shapes identity

+ worldown, which have
a hige hearing on action +
opinion



although diverse, the heritage doosn't have to change, in like to believe people of different cultures auditions from enin other and come to appreciate others and mice their and although more because of this.

if lets you know you where you are so you can be inspired to more forward

PROVIDES A
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see reminders, but in is imperative to our her top & history & volve and wintity that as the works front develops - new e old citizens, can alway Know e understand, who if went but on busy only It is DUTERTANT landrad year ago North Von ias travelled to by a cor early - that the stop A type to Huge -Heritage gives value, um j - sesse Althor 20