

Session Name: Democratizing Access to Public Space

Date: Nov. 6, 2018

Notes

Topic	Key themes or ideas shared, questions & discussion
<b>Democratizing Access to Public Space</b>  <b>Jennifer Goodwin</b>	<p><b>Trying to create access to the public to space.</b></p> <p>Opening - Started to really respect the process and the negotiation process involved to access space</p> <p>What are you already doing that already works about providing access to space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interesting artworks often come from artists protesting the use of space</li><li>- FLASH (Moncton) – media arts and lights festival; light up a dismal dark time of year; was known as a drive through city; light up the downtown with media artists; lightwork – paired with musicians and put them into spaces you wouldn't know about eg. Cathedrals, Masonic Temple, artists were able to re-create the space; more spaces that are closed downtown, we could re-tool them and create new venues from spaces that already exist</li><li>- What can we do to shift our concept of the use of space?</li><li>- How can we experience something differently</li><li>- All the building on the waterfront are on the roadside, no windows on the riverside because the river was yucky, having events on the river and celebrate the assets that we have (eg. mudfest); sometimes we forget the point of having people in the space; revisit what is the purpose of having people in the space; what can I show you about your city that you don't know or that you forgot</li><li>- Oakville – figuring out what the level or your organization needs to be; coming from institutions defines the boundaries of what your participation can be. Often easier for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to come in and do something really cool than for an organization to do. Eg. Oakville – lots of community art, but they as an organization are driving the event portfolio; not as much community involvement; recently been called out for not working and bringing to light indigenous stories; the community was invited to lead this</li><li>- Coquitam – abandoned lot in the middle of the city; 4 managers created a pop up park using the abandoned space; created a 65 foot mural with a local artist; the public can animate the space, it's free but they need to provide their own liability insurance; music worked really well to animate the public space</li></ul>

- US example Museum Hack – take over other peoples museum spaces; they sell their tours to a new audience; base product is a tour but they also work on branding your new space;
- Trafalgar Square – 4 plinths and 1 is left empty for the public to participate for a limited period of time to become part of the exhibition
- Canadian museum of nature in Ottawa last Friday of everyone month Nature Nocturne. Sells out every month different way to experience a museum as a typical museum. Good for the institution; great revenue source
- Brandon Manitoba – rurban community (urban but also very rural); arts and culture is embraced but is very young; temporary pop up public art for youth; first year had problems with the planning and building division of the city with bylaws; they are beginning to turn aournd; second concept was to turn the cross walks into piano keys but again ran into roadblocks with planning and building; used a magazine where the public had a voice and aired very polarizing views between the older, rural community and more progressive thinking; other ideas couldn't get past the planning dept.
- City of Toronto – it will depend what department you want to partner with; TTC is a tricky partner; they have a hard time getting past the regulations and safety concerns; recent project – performances on the TTC; they do something already called “sketch the line”; they wanted to build the concept and include some performance art; frame it in a way where they can't say no because; 4 months of trying to get somewhere; Nuit Blanche – a decade of conversation about trying to make some exhibitions with Nuit Blanche to stay longer
- City of Calgary – safety concerns are around putting events in places that were never designed for art, events, mass gatherings;
- Good strategy – look at your proposal and figure out where your holes are before you present.

How to you balance public enjoyment/placemaking vs event space?

Send letters prior to an event (Nuit blanche)

Is there a limit to how many events you can do in a space?

City – puts a limit of 4 events in a major city park; council adopted a policy to restrict mega events;

If they can't do it there – where are they going?

Just opened up a 2<sup>nd</sup> park with amenities appropriate for large festivals

Their parks are at capacity with traditional events; how to you encourage new

festivals?

Town of Oakville – everything is permitted;

Need to build capacity for new events

Partner with a community organization or a business; city permits; the organization learns event skills with the city; building expertise and capacity;

Town of Oakville – has organized regular outreach meetings; they have developed a process to get 1 permit (instead of 7);

Forms are a barrier but we need them and we need them signed;

Walks and marches just show up at times; stand back and cross your fingers;

Prince George – people just show up; run by volunteer organizations and don't understand they need permits, safety checks, garbage plan etc; staff are constantly trying to be in the know about what is going on in the community; all 3 community organizations are doing events on the same weekend in June; city suggested they combine all the events together and execute over one week-end; we can help facilitate and introduce community members together; leverage events and move together; not working in silos and better communication;

Reengage parade on night of Nuit Blanche – have to watch; saw through social media how it was being organized; want to be outside of the system and didn't want to use the process; the city works with the police to try to keep everyone safe; we recognize there are costs to things that are outside our programming but are required to keep people safe;

Environmental footprint that results from democratizing space

Is it an important principle that it be free access? It's hard to provide space to groups who are intending to charge or be free.

- City of Toronto has a mandate that they rent space for only free admission;
- Recognize that sometimes you need revenue

Foot print of clean up needed – are municipalities charging back? Is the city footing the bill?

- There is a policy that says we have to charge back organizers but it is inconsistent
- Sometimes additional charges are happening to organizers who have to pay for clean up in streets between venues;

- Enhancement fund – 4 pillars of sustainability; event that has a 0 waste festival would get an incentive
- If the city is giving money to events that are generating tremendous waste and are not educating and are not cleaning up – they should be held more accountable; developers have to clean up after themselves; they should be cleaning up after themselves and have sustainable events;
- Sustainable policy – events have to have 0 waste; light permit
- 0 waste festival policy; money goes back for city services; city subsidizes the blue and green carts but not the black carts; small businesses popping up to do the diversion at festivals; instead of allowing all waste going into black cans and then going into landfills
- Indigenous Advisory asked for what’s your plan to get better with dealing with waste
- Do something for 7 years and that’s when the impact is made; capacity building

Is there anything that people are not doing that we think should be implemented:

How do you support and fund artists setting up at City Hall?

- Have budget to provide permits; exhibits at city hall and the artists are paid; artists outside of the core at different spaces are not paid; the we book the space for everyone; we try to book it for all the artists; we facilitate and handle the city paperwork in order to make it simpler; we are part of helping to permit that space; and we pay for staff to go check on every exhibit during the night; want to try to give them money for their exhibition – we are invested in your prexentse in this festival

Are there parts of Nathan Phillips Square that can be permitted for free?

- There are chargebacks for cleanup;

**A lot of events that are coming through our office are private events; rentals, weddings, birthday parties;**

**Private events are completely separate from community events; staff are funded by chargebacks;**

Other departments issue permits so that staff are free to educate community organizers on how to execute events

We are thinking about he gropus as partners; we are tryint to support them differently that just rentals;

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Who gets priority? Who gets funding?

We currently have a grandfather policy. The historical events get booked first; anyone new gets whatever is left over; if you have a strong festival that you want to be in the park, it's great; when a festival is not successful and is tired, it's much harder to get it out of the park.

How could we open our space up further?

- Toronto is exploring artists in residence – what does this mean? We could put forward the poet laureate
- Pushed city hall to use it for a cultural event; would like to use it more and there should be more space available; turn city hall into a rec room; who else can come in? differently installations can come in; theatre presentations; seeing City Hall in a different way
- The Mayor said he wanted City hall to be a place for people. Now it's recognized that City Hall can be used as a place for people;
- Sometimes its about finding the 3<sup>rd</sup> party that can break the rules so that the boundaries are pushed and you can then operate in a bigger space;

A corner of our park could be used for programming; if someone wanted to show their art in that corner.

I want to go after the LRT stations to put temporary public art; performance art in bus stations;

Find the right person to talk to .

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## Notes

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### Topic

### Key themes or ideas shared, questions & discussion

Is there anything you are doing in your municipality that is working to democratize the space?

- STEPS Initiative – leading temporary public art workshops with community to collect feedback on what they want to see the spaces look like. This is an engaging process vs. just collecting surveys. In turn, are providing spaces as well as temporary public art projects.
- Waterloo doesn't have community centres but recreation centres. Instead are working to use the parks as community spaces. Doing a call for artists to make the parks specific to their community (picnic tables). This will be a series across the city. To animate them, will do dinners throughout the city, working with neighbourhoods.
  - Recreation centres is not targeted to all audiences
- Vancouver - Art Centre has a huge atrium and offers a lot of programs. The atrium is a public space and an art gallery. Added tables and chairs a few years ago and it changed how people use the space. It is used as a 'third space', for families that live in surrounding condos. Looking for ways to engage people.
  - It is set up for more comfort, conversation
- Important to look at what our assets of the space. Access to space is a barrier; unaffordable and forced to close. What public space can we invite people to? How can we rethink the space.
- Resource: Places for the Common Good

What isn't working?

- Innisfil – benchmarking what libraries doing in Europe – allowing access to citizens 24/7.

What incentives can we give back to people?

- Newmarket – York Region Arts Council uses Space Finder. Goal is to showcase available spaces.

Who uses our spaces? Do we create room for new users? How are you letting people access your space?

- Toronto Council Chambers were booked for a performance.
- Innisfil allowed a drumming group to rehearse in the centre of the library on a Friday night.

How did you identify available spaces for Nuit?

- Choose a geographical area they are going into and exploring.
- What spaces can be turned into rental spaces? Plan to identify this over the next several years.
- What corporations want to get on board? What are the incentives?
- Work with 3<sup>rd</sup> party who surveys the audience to gather metrics
- Staff at each exhibition are completing reports on numbers.

Culture Days – asks for reports from event organizers to gather metrics. Bigger measure of success is their annual contribution to the arts community.

How do we measure success? Is it just based on attendance? What's the value? Value in transforming spaces, value in creating memorable experiences. Ask questions like – how did you feel?

- Waterloo – paying artists is an important measure for them.

How do you incentivize the private sector to come on board?

- Nuit focuses on partnerships. What's in it for them? Exposure for their brand, bringing people to them.

## Table 8

### Social Responsibility of Festival Organizers

#### Topic

#### Social responsibility

- **Understanding documents – democratizing space.**
- **Equality and access to something**
- **Making application processes in laymans terms**
- **Technical RFPs are difficult to understand – the process is too complicated.**
- **Management needs to oversee changing processes. Trying to be responsive to artists.**
- **Calgary – public art and procurement; separate process for procurement – involving the artists**
- **Mississauga created a separate policy for procuring performers.**
- **Toronto also created a separate policy.**
- **Do people need access to events? Are we putting municipal resources into private spaces (Waterloo's City realm strategy).**
- **Working with private spaces – are we getting spaces for free and bringing people/promotions**
- **How do we work with privately owned public space; like Scarborough mall**
- **Toronto offers free public space to artists**
- **Toronto applies for permits for artists to use parks and recreation spaces**
- **How did Toronto communicate artists the free spaces? Via application process.**
- **Toronto is partnering with AGO/ROM to become a venue sponsor (major institutions) Nuit Blanche specific applications.**

- What does the partnership look like for a private space; i.e. Scarb town centre – Toronto is programming in their mall
- Toronto works with Sponsorship and a developer as a layered sponsorship
- What about when a developer wants to control an event that happens in your space; working with curators and properties on the art in their spaces.
- When the artwork is not what the venue wants
- The model with Nuit Blanche comes from Paris.
- Social responsibility – bars opening to 2am; should they go to 4am? Not socially responsible.
- Understanding what is happening at the surrounding areas (baseball game or concert letting out)
- Democratizing public space; Calgary light rail transit; relationship between the commuter and the community; city spaing stops with higher density living;
- There was a tension between transit and people places
- Waterloo experience was that Region was a barrier; used a business case to working with the Region’s transit. New promenade was supposed to be a node with power but it got cut. Sometimes it depends on the people in charge – when you have that advocate it will make your business case
- Power is the most important thing to animate a space
- Try and think about why someone say no and answer their questions for them
- Running the public square; access is important – for example
- Feeling like that you are welcome – how do we do that?
- Access to the artist to perform
- Co-creation experience at City of Brampton (Co-creation agreement)
- How do we make commitments to emerging artists
- Building capacity
- Artists is residents impact
- Social responsibility
- How do we bring the artist voice in government
- City-run events at Brampton – non-profit org will work for the City and program; how do they select who they will work with (Community-led partners).
- How do you ensure a fair process (what to do with “grandfathering” events)
- Cambridge is in the process of a strategy to help new festivals get into spaces
- Caps on timelines
- What thing could you start working on – if you could start next week:
  - “what would they say no to?”
  - Trouble-shooting in advance of a conversation where you think in the barriers are
  - How do we make sure the City understands artists groups