

TEN EAST LAKE -White Paper

Steve Kwak

Introduction

“Public space” may be defined as a social area that is open to public use. Perhaps antithetical to its use and purpose however, the ownership of public space often remains private, and its development almost always depends on the works of a few selected groups of artists and designers. While it is the general consensus of the contemporary design practice that the process should become much more inclusive, the precise means and methods of democratic design falls rather short of such investigations.

This paper defines “democratic design” as the design process in which the designer serves not as the primary decision maker but as a collaborator in working with the public to achieve the common goal of good design. This paper seeks to understand the development of this design process, and the role of GFRY studio as a collaborator in the designing of public spaces. This paper consists of three main parts: co-design, public ownership, and service design with different design models and ideas discussed correspondingly.

Various precedent projects and publications were consulted in an attempt to form the groundwork for the fabrication of the proposed GFRY Studio design development model. Research findings are analyzed, broken down, charted, and mapped below. By breaking down and mapping the fragments of an otherwise complex system, designers are able to position themselves at each phase of the process and gain a holistic understanding of the project as well as their individual tasks.

Studio Project Timeline

Below is a set of steps GFRY studio may take in order to produce and deliver the final design product. The lists of are categorized into the four different design phases according to the principles of democratic design laid out by the Gehl Architects and service design principles developed by Mark Stickdom et al. While the phases are organized in a numerical order, it is important to note that the actual process is a spontaneous phenomenon. It also requires a substantial collaboration from the users and stakeholders during the entire process of design development from the idea conception to pilot execution and project documentation.

Phase 1: Explore

Exploratory research and goal settings
Analyze the current system

Phase 2: Design Development

Targeted research

Co-design
Prototype and Field-test ideas
Feedback from the users
Draft pilot proposals and RFP

Phase 3: Share the Findings

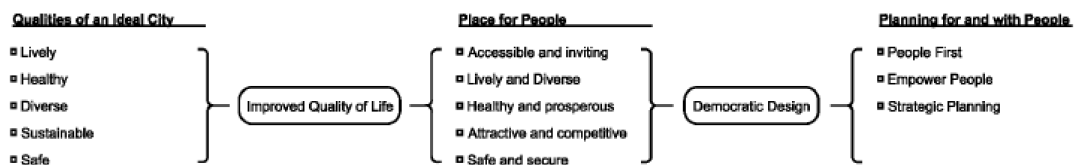
Review by the users and stakeholders
Refine the pilot proposal
Create How-To-Guide GFRY Publication

Phase 4: Pilot and Document

Implement the pilot project
Track and measure the service outcomes
Document and publish the project outcome and findings for future projects

GFRY Studio Value

Gehl Architects is an architectural firm based in Copenhagen. Jan Gehl, the leader of the group, is an architect and an urban design consultant who dedicated over 40 years of his career to researching life in public spaces. His research revolves around questions like how and why physical environment influence social interaction, and how people use and experience public space and urban quality. He has worked on various public projects world wide, including the Yerba Buena LIZ Exploratorium project in San Francisco. Gehl Architects released numerous publications on public space design, and their model of desirable city will be the intellectual framework for the establishment of the GFRY Studio value.



Project Goals

Enhance public space
Strengthen local economic development
Encourage innovation and social experimentalism
Test of the development process itself

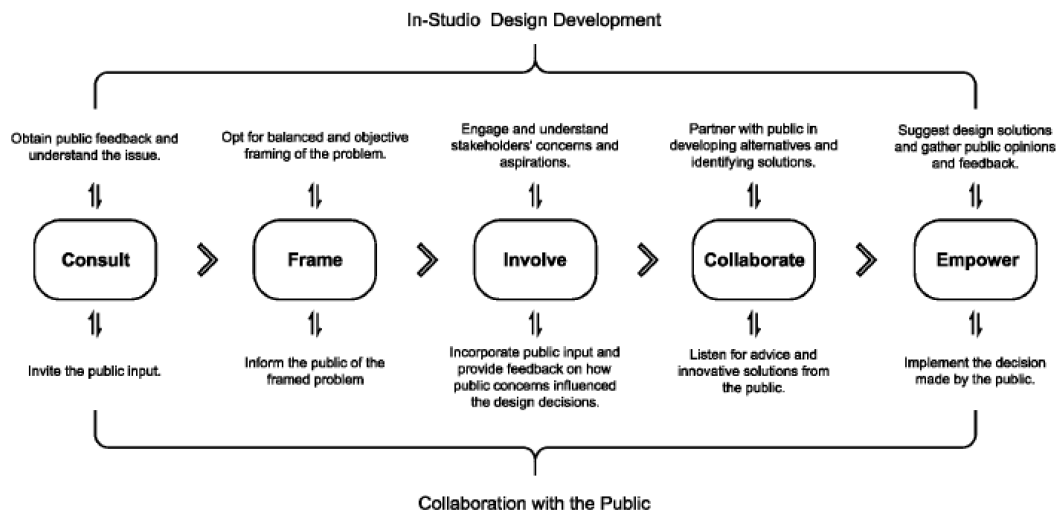
Learn the process of iterative design development
Learn the process of collaboration between partners
Learn the process of permitting
Learn financing of a public design project

Measure and document the project

Publish the documentation
Share what you learn

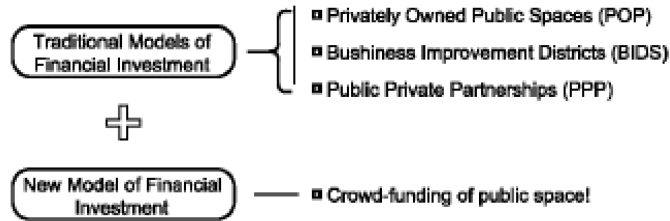
Co-Design: Initiating the Conversation

While public participation is deemed a desired and even necessary aspect of designing public spaces, finding appropriate and applicable measures may be a challenging task. The following model seeks to map the process of public participation in design, and understand its applications from the designer's perspective. The diagram below lists each stage of Co-Design. It examines how information will be handled in the design studio, and then shared with the public to invite collaboration. The study provides useful insights on the various methods of delivery of public participation in design.



Questions Regarding Public Ownership

Public space in a modern urban context typically utilizes a strategic development model. While public ownership of sidewalks and streets is generally recognized, designed public spaces and plazas are the direct results of easement of incentives provided by the government for the private sector organizations and their investments. Therefore, questions such as "Who pays for what?" and "What does it take to inspire private investments in developing quality public spaces?" are central to the discussion of the topic. Below are different financial models of investment in public spaces. Crowd-funding is a way of ensuring the public ownership of public spaces.



Crowd-Funding of Public Space?

Reclamation of the ownership of public spaces from private corporations through donation based public funding.

Model for Verba Buena Liz Exploratorium in San Francisco.

Project based online donation funding vis-a-vis project promotion website.

Philosophy of Service Design

When engaging in democratic design through public participation and civic engagement, it is important to understand design as a process rather than a unified answer to various social problems. "Service design" is a term developed by Mark Stickdom et al. to frame design process as an inquiry, rather than a straightforward problem solving activity. It's core values are listed and defined below. The students of GFRY studio may use the framework of service design as a guideline tool in achieving a truly democratic design aimed at the empowerment of the public.

The Core Values of Service Design

User-centered: Experience of user is the greatest interest of public design.

Co-creative: Both the service providers and the users are engaged in the design process.

Time-based: User experience is tracked over the duration of the journey.

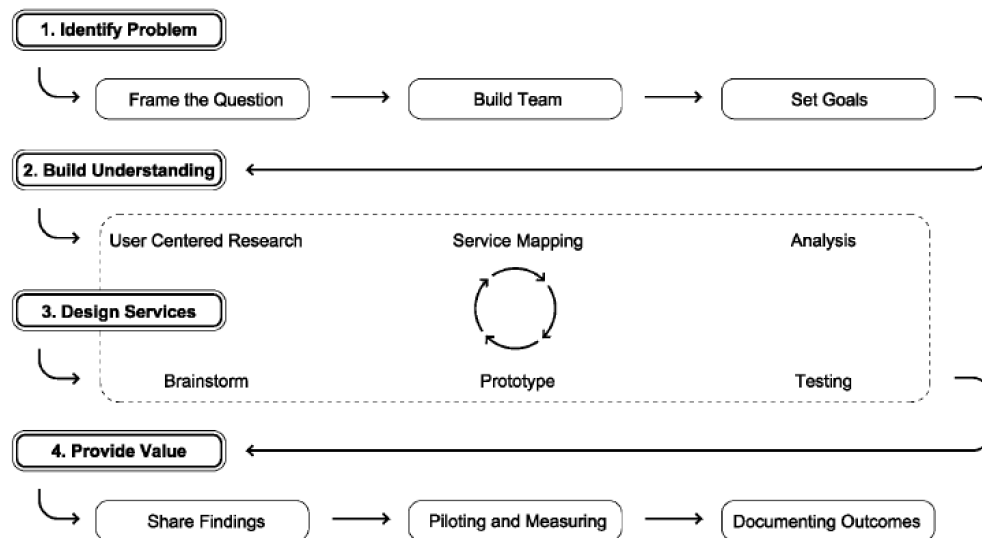
Holistic: Service to involve not only the tangible products or interactions, but all systems and processes required to make the service interactions occur.

Iterative and Visual: Multiple rounds of conceptualizations visualized, reviewed and tested in the design implementation process.

Achieving Service Design

Each step of service design is studied and mapped below. The model puts a strong emphasis on the collaboration among both the designers and the users. Service design is not a unilateral solution provision tool but rather a circulation of

spontaneous information exchange that, in the end, may generate unpredictable yet most appropriate design solutions.



Conclusion

In this paper, I have shared various design models and execution procedures GFRY Studio might take into account as design development tools. As a further exploration of the core studio values and their architectural implications, I've examined the democratic process of service design, and discussed how it might be translated and implemented into the actual design development process. While the models discussed currently function as a set of guidelines that require substantial input from the studio, I believe the discussion here provides some useful insights and deeper understanding about the roles and responsibilities of GFRY Studio in the collective and collaborative designing of public space.

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