PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
Planning Principles & Design Elements

CONCEPT DRIVEN
Great places tell a story that is meaningful and memorable. The story (locale or concept) has a setting (meted), details (elements) and character (public) that are interwoven. Great public open spaces retell and renew this story.

COLLABORATIVE
Many hands make great plans. Design interdisciplinarity should should combined with other perspectives such as artists, artisans, educators & students, young & old, etc. Initial public involvement ensures future public engagement.

SENSE OF...
Place is imperative. Great public open spaces have a sense of place that is both unique and compelling. The vital link between the space and society is its sense of community. Other 'senses' include sense of discovery, time, humor, etc.

RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE
Public open spaces must be restorative and responsible. Re-affirming our capacity to change, continue, and adapt as needed and as the environment changes. Sustainability means interpersonal equity for the environment, economy and society.

REGENERATIVE
Regeneration, revitalization and renewal speak to the need for continuous community development. Regenerative design focuses on practices that enable and encourage natural harmony with sense of place.

CULTURAL & SPIRITUAL
Cultural and spiritual expression are critical open space functions. The material cultural heritage might be objects that can be held and buildings that can be explored, or songs that can be sung and stories that can be told.

SOCIAL
Great public open spaces have 'urban charisma.' The 'social life' of public open spaces includes events, festivals, parades, planned and spontaneous meetings, sitting, people watching, eating, effective capacity, and tranquility.

UNIVERSAL
Public open spaces should be open to all. The physical design should be accessible and responsive to the young and old, healthy and handicapped, and all ethnic and religious members of society.

PHYSIOLOGICAL
Sensuous design incorporates elements that stimulate sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. Specific examples include artistic lighting, the sound of water, outdoor food vending, textured pavement and seasonal flowers.

PSYCHOLOGICAL
Experiential design considers the public open space as a stage to offer aesthetic, entertainment, education and escapism experiences. When thoughtfully balanced, these experiences create transformative experiences.

SPATIAL
Imagery considers the elements that collectively define the perceived place—diameter, boundaries,Beta, landmarks and nodes. Well-defined elements provide clarity, appreciation and meaning to public open spaces.

ARCHITECTURAL
Hardscape—building, street furniture, paved surfaces, public art—provides the urban context, and each design element should reinforce the overall concept. This means avoiding junk art, stachitecture, corporate identities, etc.

GRAPHIC
Graphic design includes signage, wayfinding, shapes, symbols and color. These elements should harmonize with the landscape and landscape concept and are often associated with a graphic design movement such as Art Nouveau.

NATURAL
Landscape elements not only have aesthetic value, but also support acoustics, atmospheric purification, glare and reflection, habitat, imagery, micro-climate control, privacy / screening, progressive realization and many other functions.

TEMPORAL
Great public open spaces provide a connection between the past, present and future. The passage of time is reflected in the hardcape, softscape and histories at historical, seasonal and daily scales.

Open Space Timeline

- 2000
  - Xinghai Square, Dalian 1994
  - Hong Kong Park, 1991
  - Macroplaza, Monterrey 1980
  - Martyrs’ Square, Tripoli ca. 1930
  - India Gate Complex, New Delhi 1921
  - Times Square, New York 1904
  - Odori Park, Sapporo 1876
  - Rathauspark, Vienna 1872
  - Tahrir Square, Cairo 1870
  - Central Park, New York 1857
  - Las Ramblas, Barcelona ca. 1856
  - Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland 1886
  - Union Square, San Francisco 1850
  - Peterman Platz, Berlin 1878
  - Place des Quinconces, Bordeaux 1850
  - Trafalgar Square, London ca. 1820
  - Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney 1816

- 1700
  - Jackson Square, New Orleans 1718

- 1600
  - St. Peter's Square, Vatican City 1666
  - Tiananmen Square, Beijing 1651
  - Boston Common, 1654
  - Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris 1661
  - Place des Vosges, Paris 1605
  - Plaza Mayor, Madrid 1596
  - La Alameda de Hercules, Seville 1574
  - Jardin Tuileries, Paris 1559
  - Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome 1536
  - Plaza Hidalgo, Mexico City ca. 1521
  - Red Square, Moscow 1508

- 1500
  - Hotel de Ville, Paris ca. 1357
  - Piazza del Campo, Siena 1349
  - Tenochtitlan [tlayuhquitlan] 1325

- 1200
  - Piazza San Marco, Venice ca. 1200

- 1000
  - Public Open Space Keywords
    - agora, bania, campo, campagna, chokh, city square, civic center, commons, communage, court, estompe, espacios publicos, forum, green belt, green space, greenway, meadow, market square, marketplace, officinal Flachen, parc, parc, place, piazza, plaza, public space, public square, quadrangle, shared space, spazio pubblico, square, town green, town square, urban square, village green, waterfront, woonerf, azure belt

- 900
  - Marktplein van Goslar 992

- 600
  - Chichen Itza ca. 600
  - Forum, Rome ca. 750BC
  - Acropolis, Athens [ agora] ca. 1400BC