

# #02

In the second of this series of sessions on the future of the urban environment, Monocle invites four experts to respond to a particular urban challenge: how to make an urban neighbourhood vibrant around the block.

## THE CHALLENGE

**In the urban neighbourhoods of the future, where will we congregate?  
At transport centres?  
Around food and drink or cultural outlets?  
All of the above?**

The Singapore Sessions are a series of discussions bringing experts from diverse fields to the table, exploring the many and varied solutions that are possible when approaching various global challenges. In partnership with Monocle, each Singapore Session draws on the experience and expertise of leading urban thinkers, architects, consultants and developers – scoping out the future of the global city.

This second session will rethink the heart of the urban neighbourhood, looking at the future of how city blocks can maintain a vibrancy around the clock. It will address transportation, food and drink, cultural outlets and retail solutions. The debate finds solutions that combine a sense of local community while providing an urban hub that taps into the global city.

Monocle has always supported passionate discussion on the urban environment, introducing a new international ranking system through our annual Quality of Life survey. The Singapore Sessions give us another platform to bring together the ideas that are shaping our cities.



## THE RESPONSE

Each of the following sessionist's responses offer a glimpse into our experts' visions of how to make communal spaces vibrant.



### HAPPINESS FACTORS THREE ANSWERS JAIME LERNER, PARANÁ

What will differentiate a good city and the quality of its communal areas in the future will be its capacity to deal with three fundamental issues: sustainability, mobility and sociodiversity. In terms of mobility, give priority to all modes of public transport in the best and most efficient way. I also believe that self-service, pay-as-you-go car rental and bike hire schemes, such as the Vélolib' in Paris, will increasingly play a role in urban commutes, lessening the need for private vehicle ownership.

Sociodiversity encompasses the need to embrace and celebrate the multiplicity of peoples with different income levels, ages, religions, races and so on within the city, while at the same time preserving individual identity. This is what will ensure social cohesion, urban safety, and ultimately the possibility of encounters within cities. And hopefully, a willingness to congregate in its communal spaces – streets, squares, parks, markets, open malls.

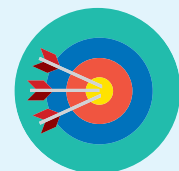
To make this happen, if you want creativity, cut a zero off your budget; sustainability, cut off two; if you want solidarity, make your identity count while respecting diversity.



### SUSTAINING OLD AND NEW THE CHARM FACTOR CHEONG-CHUA KOON HEAN, SINGAPORE

Urban communities must be sustainable communities. This requires adopting a comprehensive long-term planning approach that aims to support economic growth, provide a good quality living environment and ensure that we develop in an environmentally responsible way. For example, Marina Bay, Singapore's new city extension, is planned as a vibrant 24/7 live-work-play district – with commercial and residential buildings, shops, entertainment, public squares and parks. The area is also well-served by a mass rapid transit system and comprehensive network of covered walkways and underground pedestrian links. Outside the city centre, new mixed-use hubs will bring activities closer to homes and create attractive destinations.

Social memories and "recognition" transform urban neighbourhoods into endearing homes. Conserving significant buildings and guiding the urban design of developments retain and enhance the local character of places with unique charm. These make a city enriching and enjoyable.



### MEETING POINTS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

Amenities are conveniently located to reduce travel in towns, which are designed to be pedestrian friendly. Careful planning of public spaces and place-making initiatives, such as community events, facilitate social interaction and bonding.



### CREATIVE SPARK CONNECTING WITH ARTS AND CULTURE DAVID WILKINSON, MOSCOW

Pressure on inner city space, which is costly to acquire, develop and market, will increase the need for vision to provide integrated service offers that deliver products (goods and services) throughout the day and evening to meet the needs of consumers.

Working and leisure habits have changed significantly over the last decade with globalisation, the internet and of course the economic crisis. People now need to be able to do simple things around the clock whether it is to travel across these cities, eat, buy food, receive dental and healthcare treatment or simply get something dry cleaned or footwear repaired. Attention to accessi-

ble basics is the foundation to future success in these schemes. Communal areas within cities will offer eating, walking, sport, rest and recreation areas. Theatre and cinema also anchor urban community – culture and access to the arts is critical to alleviate the isolation and tension that some experience in metropolitan areas.

Innovative retail concepts will continue to flourish, and the connection between retail products/services and the world of art and music will be almost seamless. Performance and static art will become everyday experiences within urban retail space. Street markets will return to urban areas and be encouraged as a method for local producers to develop this connectedness with local audiences, consumers and culture.



### PERSONAL CONTACT TECHNOLOGY AND GOOD MANNERS

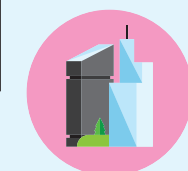
Conversation will again be perceived as the primary method of communication and mobile telephony and email on the move in these spaces secondary, or at least frowned upon as face-to-face interaction becomes foremost.



### GETTING IT RIGHT MODEL CITIES ALEJANDRO ZAERA-POLO, LONDON

For the first time in human history, more than half the world's population is living in urban environments. More than ever before, these global cities now drive the political, economic, social and cultural organisations of the contemporary world.

Urban cultural melting pots demand carefully planned spaces that allow a social exchange. Looking around to existing spaces for inspiration, the informality of Djemaa el-Fna square in Marrakesh may be a better model for an urban democratic space than the monumentality of Washington's Mall. The density of New York or Hong Kong is a powerful antidote to the ghettoization of the suburban metropolis in Phoenix, Orange County, for example. The compact public realm of Barcelona enhances physical coexistence between citizens much more effectively than the luxurious collective space allowance in Bijlmermeer or Toulouse Le Mirail. It is now essential to recognise the ways in which the physical city is a foundation stone of the social city.



### COMMUNAL SPACE SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING

Sometimes privatising the ground and constraining the scale of communal space is more effective at integrating people than providing an excessive area, which is also expensive to maintain.

### NIGHT LIFE ROUND-THE-CLOCK CONVENIENCE

People yearn for a multi-use, 24-hour city. For instance, night markets in public squares, informal street vendors working after the hours of regular commerce, corner shops that provide a reference point day and night.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To comment on the solutions you see here, visit [SingaporeSessions.com/UrbanPlanning](http://SingaporeSessions.com/UrbanPlanning)

## THE SESSIONISTS

Four figures – an architect, a retail consultant and two urban planners – whose vision and expertise are informing and changing the way we look at urban centres today.



### 01 JAIME LERNER URBAN PLANNER

Jaime Lerner is the former mayor of Curitiba, the capital of Brazilian state Paraná.

Lerner held the post of mayor of Curitiba for three terms through the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, before being elected governor of Paraná state in 1994 and re-elected in 1998.

An urban planner and architect, Lerner graduated from the School of Architecture of the Federal University of Paraná in 1964 and prioritised transport, planning and social advancement in his mayoral and governmental positions. As mayor of Curitiba, he consolidated the urban transformation and implemented the Integrated Mass Transport System, acknowledged worldwide for its efficiency, quality and low cost. Lerner also intensified a programme of social advancements that resulted in Curitiba ranking on a series of quality of life surveys.

In addition to being a United Nations consultant for urban issues he established Jaime Lerner Associated Architects in 2003. The firm has developed plans and projects for the Brazilian cities of São Paulo, Rio, Brasília and Florianópolis, as well as the Mexican city of Durango and Luanda in Angola.



### 02 CHEONG-CHUA KOON HEAN URBAN PLANNER

Cheong-Chua Koon Hean is the CEO of Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and is Deputy Secretary (Special Duties) in the Ministry of National Development.

Cheong graduated as a University gold medalist with degrees in architecture from Australia and subsequently attained a Masters degree in Urban Development Planning from University College London.

She has extensive experience in urban policy and governance, strategic planning, urban design and conservation. As CEO (URA), she is in charge of the national land use planning of Singapore, the conservation of built heritage and the real estate market. She is a key driver of major urban transformation projects, such as Marina Bay, as well as various sustainability initiatives. Cheong started the URA International Group in order to share Singapore's planning experience overseas and advises on projects such as the China-Singapore Tianjin Eco City Project.



### 03 DAVID WILKINSON RETAIL CONSULTANT

Briton David Wilkinson relocated to Moscow in 2008 to work on a series of projects on the city's dynamic retail scene.

Throughout his career, Wilkinson has worked at some of the UK's leading retailers and fashion brands and has now taken his skills and knowledge to the burgeoning retail sector in Moscow, where he has been based since 2008.

Following more than a decade working at leading London department store Harrods, Wilkinson joined rival Selfridges & Co as general manager in 1996. He was appointed to develop an ailing institution with an under-defined service proposition and left in 2000. He then worked at a series of British fashion brands before setting up consultancy Wilko in 2006. He later worked on a series of projects across three continents for Mulberry and Matches in London, Dubai-based international retail group Landmark and Italy's premier department store chain La Rinascente.

In 2008 he relocated to Moscow to work for TBOE. He is now general director of the apparel brand, conducting a strategic review of the TBOE business as it expands throughout the Russian Federation, with sales of £100m per annum across over 100 stores.



### 04 ALEJANDRO ZAERA-POLO ARCHITECT & EDUCATOR

Alejandro Zaera-Polo is an architect, educator and co-founder of Foreign Office Architects (FOA).

A London-based office noted as one of the world's most creative design firms, FOA integrates architecture, urban design and landscape architecture in a wide range of projects internationally. The work of FOA has been widely published, and it represented Britain at the 8th Venice Architecture Biennale in 2002. The firm has been recognised by awards including the three RIBA Worldwide Awards and the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale Award.

Zaera-Polo occupies the Berlage Chair in the Technical University of Delft, the Netherlands, and is a visiting professor at Princeton University. Prior to this, he has served as dean of the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam for four years, the unit master at the Architectural Association School of Architecture and has been a visiting professor at the University of California in LA, Columbia University in New York, Princeton University, the School of Architecture in Madrid and the Yokohama School of architecture, where he currently has an advisory role.