

Do-Able Cities Report
Chicago, June 2014
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Focus: If you design a city that meets the needs of 8 year olds to 80 year olds, you will have a well-designed city that meets everyone's needs.

Venue: Chicago. An interesting selection for a city that allowed significant walking audits/tours, and showcased how parks (Millenium) can be the great opportunities for all residents of cities.

Example cities – Copenhagen and Bogata, although Madison got a pic in a slide show about bikes on busses.

Key Points (many of which Madison is already doing)

Getting Around

- Bring back the ability to walk and bike places by limiting cars and developing safe non-vehicle pathways. (Consider a 5 - 10 mph speed limit!)
- Walking, biking and transit must be best friends that work together. Every trip starts and ends with a walk.
- Simply having sidewalks does not mean walkability – sidewalks must go somewhere. Use walkability.com to check your success.

Building a City

- Build neighborhoods to be about access to get to things, do things and get together. (No “specialization” zoning.)
- It never ends and you can fix what when wrong.
- Limit buildings to 4 to 5 stories when increasing density.
- Capitalize on existing public spaces – school playgrounds as parks
- Use outdoor spaces whenever possible but be sure they allow enough space for comfort – consider 25' with 2' protection from the cars.
- Build little centers and nodes – they don't have to be big and it's a way to re-design the suburbs
- Good case studies are available from AARP and the Project for Public Spaces.

Work Together!

- Establish an office of Civic Engagement and go where the non-engaged people are. Bring food, bring paper, hangout to start the conversation.
- Government should move from do-er to facilitator
- Use data on use, traffic, etc. not to punish or even evaluate, use the data to know what your customers want. (Parks, events, community centers)
- Beautify your spaces – it shows we care.
- Move away from best practices to best principles – align your values based on data, e.g. we have lots of kids in this neighborhood, how can parks meet that need?

Play Together!

- Try new things with parklets – take over a parking space (just one at first) and create something there. Watch it grow!
- In a dense urban environment, parks take on new meaning and importance. Don't scrimp.

Fine examples:

The Open Streets Ciclovía

A bit like the “Ride the...” but much longer and regularly scheduled. Key pieces – a travel path that runs through all types of neighborhoods so everyone can start at home in their comfort zone. Recreation comes to your doorstep.

Allow people to hop on and hop off at any point, and traffic still crosses over.

Provide activities for free all along the way – music, yoga, Zumba, bikes, food.