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R PRESCRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY CITY

In her monumental book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs wrote, "In our American cities, we need all kinds of diversity" (Jane Jacobs). A great city is undoubtedly a healthy city, and a healthy city is one that has a strong sense of community and a high quality of life. Great, healthy cities are defined by and share many positive qualities including cleanliness and walkability. Foremost among the important defining characteristics in a healthy city, though, is abundant diversity. To be healthy, a city needs to have diversity in its use of space, architectural diversity, human diversity, and diversity in the realm of intra-city transportation options. In fact, many of the beneficial qualities of healthy cities can be couched in the context of diversity. Jacobs famously compared cities to ecosystems (Jane Jacobs), saying a city's components—neighborhoods, buildings, sidewalks, parks, governmental structure—work together and interact with each other as do the elements of an ecological community. For an ecosystem, the primary indicator of health is biodiversity, that is, the variety of life present where a high level of diversity indicates an ecosystem's resilience and ability to adapt (Center for Biodiversity). The ecological advantage of diversity can and should be applied to the urban environment. A high level of the various types of diversity mentioned above is the primary indicator of urban health.

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A balance between green space and built space and mixed-use zoning are hallmarks of healthy cities. The YouTube video "Insights into a Lively Downtown" noted that suburbs and suburban strip malls are marked by their "sterility." Indeed, said the narrator, the "beautiful mess" of the downtown is what makes the downtown area of a city great (YouTube). Jane Jacobs, too, observed that "intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order" (Jane Jacobs). Zoning city areas as mixed-use prevents cities from becoming homogeneous. Designation of certain space in the city as either built space or open space/green space acknowledges the multifarious functions that cities serve; cities are places where people work, live, go to school, play, and relax. Whereas the built space functions to provide working, educational, and living environments, the open space and green space—parks, urban gardens, fields—function primarily to provide people with outlets for recreation, relaxation, and exercise (Partners for a Healthier Community). Green spaces advance physical and mental health among the people who use them, which contributes to a city's healthiness. Furthermore, a healthy city is one that has not only a healthy population, but a healthy economy.

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A healthy economy is advanced by mixed-use zoning and the resultant diversity, in a localized area, of businesses, industries, and employment opportunities. Mixed-use neighborhoods allow for denser development, of which Jacobs approved, and reduced dependence on vehicular transport. Because a variety of facilities are proximal to one another, there is also less road and utility infrastructure to construct and maintain. In all, dense, mixed-use neighborhoods are more efficient than sprawling ones, and such neighborhoods intermingled with green space satisfy all the needs of the city residents.

Architectural diversity among the buildings in a city is critical for a city's aesthetic health and enjoyment. Architectural diversity translates to the presence of historical as well as modern buildings, the presence of varying architectural styles among the buildings, and the use of diverse building materials in structures. A streetscape that displays a mix of old and new buildings, tall and short buildings, and buildings of various colors and materials is an aesthetically interesting and pleasing streetscape. A healthy city is one that preserves and revitalizes its historic structures, preserving the city's heritage in the process, and popular appreciation of historic buildings provides a strong argument for their preservation.

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As for preserving historic structures, Jane Jacobs said that, when it comes to revitalizing urban neighborhoods while maintaining their indigenous diversity, "Well we are back to waste not want not. Reusing...In nature things are living off each other. It's what makes a good ecology, and I think it makes good economy. Nature keeps reusing things and one thing keeps leading to another" (Jane Jacobs: Full Interview). A city will inevitably desire to build new buildings, but maintaining architectural diversity is critical for a healthy city.

There is much evidence to support the position that people support healthy cities' preservation and reuse of their old buildings. The interviewer of "Insights into a Lively Downtown," in fact, found that people overwhelmingly preferred to be in area of the city's downtown that had interesting and historic buildings, especially the area with small, narrow parcels. An interviewee even noted that he enjoyed assessing the architectural detail on older buildings on Ann Arbor's Main Street (YouTube). Like the interviewees of the "Lively Downtown" movie, I, too, find that I enjoy the historic, reused parts of a town above the other parts. They are usually the richest and most stimulating. Over the summer, I was thrilled to discover that a Georgetown Loews movie theater in Washington, D.C., was a renovated incinerator.

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In the center of the theater lobby, there was a 175-foot brick smokestack, a vestige of the building's former use. Furthermore, the historic buildings along Easton's "Millionaire's Row" are my favorite Easton buildings.

Human diversity is another major component of a healthy city's holistic diversity picture. A healthy social fabric in a city can emerge only when the human population itself is heterogeneous; a healthy city's people are of diverse socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. Human diversity makes a community strong, for diversity and its embrace promote understanding between people and promote community cohesion. On a personal level, people who interact with others from different walks of life are more likely to dismiss stereotypes. On a civic level, different people from different backgrounds will offer different perspectives on how to make the city great. Jacobs said this about human diversity: "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (Jane Jacobs). This is an argument for involvement of the people in city planning, but it also suggests that everybody wants something different, that a diverse community contains different people with different needs and desires. Addressing the needs and desires of these diverse people is what a healthy city does well.

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For a city is more than its people: it is the sum of all the ideas of its people. People with diverse viewpoints, interests, and backgrounds will proffer a healthy amount of ideas related to the city's operation and betterment. And the healthy city acts on these ideas. Lastly, a healthy city is also defined by its dynamism, which human diversity contributes to.

A city whose residents are dependent on their automobiles for mobility is not a healthy city. A healthy city provides its people with a variety of transportation options. The option to walk is tied to mixed-use neighborhoods and dense development, and it is the ultimate form of municipal independence. Walkability and pedestrian-friendliness are important, because people who walk about their city become more attached to it and notice more of its features. Walkers are also healthier people, and they are more likely to have positive social encounters about their city (Partners for a Healthier Community). Fixed transit systems, such as above or below ground rail, as well as fixed trams or trolleys, are also important and go hand-in-hand with walkability. Fixed transit helps guide city development and keep growth contained. Furthermore, fixed transit ensures that the streets stay active with people, for, inevitably, there will be people close to the transit corridors at all times. Non-fixed transit systems, such as a bus system, are also purposeful.

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Jane Jacobs stressed the significance of alternative transit and mass transit in response to the question, "What kinds of communities support healthy children?" She replied, "Well... [communities] where you don't have to put children into cars for everything, to transport them. Where they can go to school in groups on their own. Or on bikes" (Jane Jacobs: Full Interview). Additionally, we noted in class that parking lots and parking garages are features that detract from the aesthetic of the city. The less people need to drive in a city, the fewer parking lots and parking garages the city requires. Walking and utilizing mass transit systems are not only healthier for people and for cities, but healthier for the planet as well. Driving has a great impact on the environment, particularly the climate, whereas the alternatives do not.

In sum, it is diversity that is most important to a city's health. Jane Jacobs said that cities need diversity of all sorts: a balanced use of city space, diverse neighborhoods with mixed-use zoning, architectural diversity, human diversity, and diversity in transportation options. These are all imperative for a healthy city. These qualities, like biodiversity, render cities hearty and resilient. Residents of cities that boast an assortment of diversity types enjoy a high quality of life.

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