Historic Urban Landscapes:
New UNESCO Tool for a Sustainable Future

The Historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as a result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of historic center or ensemble to include the broader urban context and setting. UNESCO HUL

Patricia M. O’Donnell, FASLA, AICP
ICOMOS-IFLA ISC Cultural Landscapes
IFLA Cultural Landscapes Committee
Heritage Landscapes LLC
Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners
UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation

Presentation Outline:
2. HUL Recommendation: dynamic living cities & integrated change management
3. Explore the HUL Tool Kit toward interdisciplinary urban heritage preservation:
   - Civic Engagement Tools
   - Knowledge & Planning Tools
   - Regulatory Systems
   - Financial Tools

Urban Heritage Conservation Evolution

- from monuments to include living cities as cultural landscapes
- from restoration and development to management of change and regeneration
- from expert mono-disciplinary to integrative, participatory, collaborative, partners
- from development to sustainable urban environments, and local quality of life
- HUL from World Heritage initiative to UNESCO Recommendation for 21st Century
“The Historic Urban Landscape approach aims at preserving the quality of the human environment and enhancing the productivity of urban spaces. It integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation with the goals of social and economic development. It is rooted in a balanced and sustainable relationship between the built and natural environment.”

http://whc.unesco.org
21st Century Urban Heritage Pressures

- Global urban population 50%+ results in uncontrolled growth
- Projection of 75% world population in cities by 2030
- Universal desire for healthful, vital urban environments largely unmet
- City population decline & devastating losses of urban fabric and heritage
- Socio-economic transformations & functional changes questioning values
- Climate change, environmental disasters, impacts of armed conflict
- Degrading impacts of infrastructure, transportation upgrades
- Global competition for economic growth and tourism income
- Development pressures, starchitecture, city branding
- Appropriation of urban heritage for corporate gain

Tourism & Heritage Urban Pressures

- Choices based on Urban Heritage & Historic Urban Landscapes
- Authenticity is the Magnet, Unique Culture is the Draw
- Integrate Resident & Visitor Needs
- Quality of Place & Quality of Life
- Tourism Growing Economic Engine
- Global Competition for Tourists $
- Experience Economy
- Personal Choices
Historic Urban Landscape - Tangible Resources

- Natural Systems, Geomorphology, Hydrology, Topography
- Land Uses, Patterns, Spatial Organization, Visual Relationships
- Vegetation, of all Types
- Circulation & Transportation Systems
- Water Features, Natural and Constructed
- Buildings - Mass, Scale, Form, Details, to include Informal
- Structures - Bridges, Walls, Tunnels
- Vocabulary of Urban Art, Sculpture, Site Furnishings & Objects

Intangible Heritage Residing in the Historic Urban Landscape

- Traditional festivals, rituals, music, dance, performance
- Spiritual worship, pilgrimage, religious celebration
- Iconic shared places, symbols that embody the shared urban identity
- Places of memory, marking events, joy-suffering, commemoration
- Urban and ex-urban farming, practices, crops
- Regional and local cuisine, everyday foods
- Traditional arts and crafts, materials, work places

*Documentation is a baseline, led by local voices & values*
Tools to Address Continuity & Change in the Historic Urban Landscape

1. Civic Engagement Tools
   - Accessible, multi-platform urban planning vision processes
   - Public forums about aspects of the urban future
   - Web based local heritage games
   - Urban heritage issues web exchange blogs, chat rooms
   - Planning charrettes with open dialogue
   - Documentation projects, oral interviews and videos
   - Community heritage stewardship skill development workshops
2 HUL Knowledge and Planning Tools

- Documentation of tangible & intangible community heritage
- Urban viewscape mapping for building envelope height and location
- Planning for conservation of natural & cultural resources
- Targeted urban preservation, management and tourism plans
- Green infrastructure knowledge applied with heritage considered
- Plans for shared public heritage of streets, public facilities, parks,

Holistic planning and design processes that incorporate - heritage, economy, sustainability

Old Havana WH City

Planning- Edinburgh Defining the Sky

Courtesy Hal Moggridge
3 HUL Regulatory Systems incorporating Heritage

- Zoning ordinance underpinned by urban heritage database
- Conservation easement law
- Historic district commission law
- Traditional and customary systems, indigenous peoples
- Legislated climate change targets
- Tree protection ordinance
- Urban viewscape controls (Edinburgh example)
- Multi-purpose overlay districts, for economy, heritage, aesthetics
- Legislation specifically addressing urban heritage stewardship/management
Vote for Conservation Fund Taxation

- Charlotte, Vermont on Lake Champlain, Population 4,500
- Citizens Voted to approve Conservation Tax Fund Legislation
- Small Town Land Trust
- Private Donations Add to Financial Base
- Purchase, Resale, Easements
- Shared Values of Scenic & Agricultural Landscape
- Multiple Parcels Conserved with Easements & Partnerships

4 HUL Financial Tool Examples

- Public Capital Improvements - Current ARRA Funding National Mall Project
- Private Public Partnership targeted funding for Urban Heritage
- Heritage Property Donation, Purchase, Conservation Easements, TDR, etc.
- Revolving Loan Funds addressing Historic Structures
- Grant Programs for Urban Intangible and Tangible Heritage Actions
- Taxation Laws Favoring Preservation Investments
- Private Building and Property Maintenance
- Ongoing Public Maintenance Staffing & Budgets
NYC Green Infrastructure Funding

- Green Infrastructure Commitment
- New York, Chicago, Philadelphia
- Funding for bioswales
- Green band between street –sidewalk
- Averts costly combined sewer work
- Infiltrates water
- Quells urban heat island
- Recaptures traditional street pattern
- Acceptable managed change
- Eliminate 1.5 B/gal/yr sewer
- 2012-100 R-O-W Bioswales
- $2.4 B public/private - 18 years

HUL Example: Historic Charleston SC, USA
80 Years of Guided Community Change
HUL Example: Historic Charleston SC, USA
80 Years of Guided Community Change

- All Four Groups of Tools Employed: Engage, Plan, Regulate, Finance
- 1931 First USA Historic District
- 1947 Historic Charleston Founded
- 1950-59 Building Crafts Training Program, Revolving Fund for Neighborhood
- 1962-66 Threatened Buildings Acquired, District Expansion
- 1968 Broad Street Project trees, buried power, signage, building color scheme
- 1974 Historic Preservation Plan & Comprehensive Inventory 2,288 buildings
- 1983 Restoration of Charleston’s oldest graveyard
- 1987 700-acre Mulberry Plantation purchased for conservation resale
- 1989 Hurricane Hugo response, damage assessment, funding
- 1994 US DOE award for weatherization of 100 low-income homes
- 1999-2002 NRHP nomination for 30,000 acres Cooper River Properties
- 2004 Charleston Antique Show begins, earned income
- 2010 Charleston Green Plan, integrates Preservation & Sustainability

UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Approach

Festival Fatehpur Sikri, India
UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Approach

HUL broadens the framework for our global commonwealth of urban heritage, through recognition that tangible and intangible heritage is valued for differing reasons and motivations by residents, tourists, politicians, employers, municipal governments, developers and the preservation community.

HUL approach is collaboration for all urban heritage, capacity building, research, information, communication & action.

Stewardship of urban heritage as a shared integrative undertaking, affirming that diverse heritage as a sustainable element of the future.

Thank you