The Street COMPLETE - MON A09

This panel examines Boston’s Complete Streets Guidelines from concept to implementation. Additionally, case studies investigate ongoing application of the principles. The premise is to transform lackluster streets into great public spaces with complementary multi-modal transportation and green infrastructure.

Moderator: Shauna Gillies-Smith, ASLA, LEED AP
Principal
Ground Inc.

A quick glance at google earth reveals that streets and sidewalks comprise the majority of public space in our urban centers; 56% of total land owned by the City of Boston for example. Given the extent of this undervalued public resource, this panel examines how the street can be all of: a great public space, a multi-modal transportation network and a strategic link in a system of a green infrastructure.

The panel will investigate fundamental principles of the complete streets movement and substantive planning principles such as those behind the Complete Street Guidelines for the City of Boston. Specific examples of local complete streets on the road to implementation in Boston and Cambridge, will illustrate the discussion.

Speaker 1: Corey Zehngebot, AIA, AICP
Senior Urban Designer and Architect
Boston Redevelopment Authority

Using the City’s Design Guidelines in Projects

The City of Boston recently unveiled the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines. The current edition adds “green” and “smart” dimensions to the traditional multimodal emphasis. Since 2011, this initiative has enabled public agencies, developers, engineers, architects, and landscape architects to design streets from a single frame of reference. Come learn about the development of both the visual and narrative content of the Guidelines, as well as the steps the City is now taking to implement the Guidelines throughout the City of Boston.
**Speaker 2: Adrian Nial**  
Senior Associate,  
Reed Hilderbrand

**Innovation in the Seaport District**

The emerging Seaport District is the largest urban development currently underway in Boston and one of the first neighborhood scale projects to integrate the City’s new Complete Street Guidelines. As the district’s landscape master planners, Reed Hilderbrand has been responsible for the district’s public realm, including new streets, sidewalks, parks, and squares. Find out about Boston’s emerging 21st century neighborhood also known as the “Innovation District” and the guidelines that envision streets as comfortable resilient environments that support all modalities of traffic and reflect a comprehensive understanding of a street’s performance.

**Speaker 3: Chris Matthews**  
Associate Principal  
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

**Alexandria Center, Cambridge MA**

The 11-acre development just north of MIT in Cambridge is a major driver in the emergence of this formerly industrial neighborhood as a world-class innovation hub of life sciences research. The project comprises six city blocks, with 1,500,000sf of life sciences laboratory and office buildings, 220 residential units, and over 2 acres of new public open space.

A major part of MVVA’s scope was leading the reconfiguration of the city streets and sidewalks around the development to privilege the pedestrian, create new bicycle facilities, and extensive new street plantings. The landscape infiltrates stormwater and provides optimal growing conditions for street trees through an innovative use of designed soils, special paving bases, and an under-sidewalk aeration and irrigation system. The combination of technologies and horticultural acumen, points towards a new way of designing sidewalks and street plantings that may have wider applications. Construction of the first of these Alexandria landscapes is being completed this month.
Speaker Bios

Shauna Gillies-Smith, ASLA, LEED AP
Principal
Ground Inc.

Shauna Gillies-Smith is the principal of Ground Inc., a landscape architecture practice with a focus on artful and sustainable landscapes in urban settings. Gillies-Smith received a MAUD degree from Harvard’s GSD, a MArch from the University of British Columbia, and a BA (Econ) from Queen’s University. Trained first as an architect and urban designer, her shift to landscape practice was motivated by the desire to reveal the potentials of surprise and pleasure in the urban experience. Gillies-Smith has taught design studios at a number of institutions, has lectured widely and both she, and her firm, have been honored with numerous awards.

Corey Zehngebot, AIA, AICP
Senior Urban Designer and Architect
Boston Redevelopment Authority

Corey Zehngebot works as a Senior Urban Designer and Architect for the Boston Redevelopment Authority at the City of Boston. She was the project manager and the lead designer for Boston’s Complete Street Guidelines while at Utile Architecture and Planning, where she was a Senior Urban Designer and Planner. She received a B.A. with distinction in behavioral neuroscience and history of art from Yale University, and a M.Arch. from Harvard Graduate School of Design. She lives in an 1867 rowhouse in Charlestown, and loves commuting to work by ferry from the Navy Yard.

Adrian Nial, ASLA
Senior Associate,
Reed Hilderbrand

Adrian Nial ASLA, is deeply familiar with building in Boston’s public realm through his involvement with master planning the Seaport Square District and the design of several parcels now in development. He has over fifteen years experience in the field and is an alumnus of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse University.

Chris Matthews
Associate Principal
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

Chris is an Associate Principal and design leader at Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates in Cambridge, and a Visiting Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Chris has over 18 years of experience in the practice of landscape architecture in London, Tokyo, and Cambridge. Originally from England, Chris earned a Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Architecture with honors from Heriot -Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland. He received a Master of Landscape Architecture from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. He has been a guest critic at Rhode Island School of Design, the University of Illinois, and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design.
Outline

I. Introduction: Understanding the Street COMPLETE
   a. Session overview; introduction of panelists with bios and presentation highlights
   b. Defining the initiative’s approach.
   c. Global examples of complete and semi-complete streets
   d. Understand the implications of innovative city planning guidance on shaping the public realm at a district and site scale.

II. Boston Complete Streets Guidelines: Conceptualizing the Street COMPLETE
   a. Outlining the objective of how Boston’s streets can become multimodal, green, and smart.
   b. Graphically describing principles and guidelines for Street Types, Sidewalks, Roadways, and Intersections.
   c. Outlining the guideline with Boston Complete Streets objectives
   d. How different street types, sidewalks, roadways, and intersections can become multimodal, green, and smart.

III. Transforming the Street into a Great Public Space: Multimodal Streets
   a. Incorporating pedestrians, people with disabilities, bicyclists, transit users, motor vehicles
   b. Multimodal level of service (LOS) informs roadway design.
   c. Ensuring that streets are shared by all users and not dominated by cars.

IV. Improving life quality: Green Streets as Infrastructural Systems
   a. Incorporating street trees, rain gardens, bio-swales, paving materials, and permeable surfaces, with plants and soils collecting rain water to reduce flooding and pollution.
   b. Green design elements promote an environmentally sensitive, sustainable use of the public right-of-way.

V. Developing the Street COMPLETE: Case Studies for Implementing projects
   a. Case study Boston
   b. Case study Cambridge

VI. Conclusion: Embracing innovation
   a. Summary of key points
   b. Audience Q&A

Learning objectives:

1) Understand the sustainable benefits of complete streets.

2) Learn how the design of complete streets can create public space.

3) Recognize strategies of multi-modal transportation that provide for shared use streets.

4) See the street as a link in a green infrastructure system.